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Still from Gabrielle Brady's *Island of the Hungry Ghosts*

## New Directions in Memory Studies: MemoryHub@ANU Inaugural Symposium

The Australian National University  
November 15-16 2022

MemoryHub@ANU  
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences  
ANU College of Asia & the Pacific

# CONVENORS

Rosanne Kennedy  
Shameem Black  
Lia Kent

School of Literature, Language and Linguistics, College of Arts and Social Sciences  
School of Culture, History and Language, College of Asia and the Pacific  
School of Regulation and Global Governance, College of Asia and the Pacific

## PROGRAM

**Day One**

**Tuesday, Nov 15th**

Venue: Crawford Building,  
Canberry Springbank Room

9:15 – 9:30am	Introduction to MemoryHub@ANU: a CASS-CAP Initiative
9:30 -10:45am	<b>Keynote:</b> Prof Jenny Wüstenberg, Director, Research Centre on Public History, Heritage and Memory, Nottingham Trent University <b>Slow Memory in a Time of Accelerating Change: Remembering Extinction</b> <b>Chair:</b> Rosanne Kennedy, School of Language, Literature and Linguistics
10:45-11:00am	Coffee
11:00am-12:45pm	<b>Panel 1: Hauntings, Traces, Erasures</b> <b>Chair:</b> Nayahamui Rooney, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU Rachel Hughes, School of Geography, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, University of Melbourne <b>Bangsokol as Transnational Requiem: Remembering Cambodia's Dead and Scattered</b> Lia Kent, School of Regulation and Global Governance, ANU <b>Re-membering Timor-Leste's Unruly Dead</b> Rosanne Kennedy, School of Language, Literature and Linguistics, ANU. <b>Multidirectional Eco-Memory and the Aesthetics of Care: Gabrielle Brady's Island of the Hungry Ghosts</b> Claire Loughnan, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne, and Una McIlvenna, School of Language, Literature and Linguistics, ANU <b>Remembering, Survival and Erasure in Immigration Detention</b>
12:45-2:15pm	Welcome to Country and ANU Campus Tree Carving interpretation by Paul Girrawah House (Ngambri and Ngunnawal custodian); Picnic Lunch
2:15-4:00pm	<b>Panel 2: Remembering Silenced Histories in Australia</b> <b>Chair:</b> Maria Nugent, School of History, ANU Mike Jones, Deputy Director of the Research Centre for Deep History, and Ben Silverstein, Postdoctoral Research Fellow in History, ANU <b>Remembering Thangoo</b> Rebecca Hamilton, Post-doctoral research fellow, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU <b>Our Misremembered Natural Heritage: A Case for Integrated Ecologies</b> Sulamith Graefenstein, Visiting Fellow, Museum and Heritage Studies, ANU <b>Transnational Reverberations of the Holocaust: European Atrocity Education and Australia's Colonial Past</b> Kasia Williams, Centre for European Studies, ANU <b>The Unfinished Journey of Frank Kustra's Diary</b>

## Day One (Continued)

Tuesday, Nov 15th

4:00-4:15pm	Coffee
4:15 – 5:45pm	<b>Engendering Memory: A Zoom Webinar</b> Zoom link: TBC  <b>Chair:</b> Chris Diamond, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU  Anuparna Mukherjee, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal <b>Home and the Empire: Nostalgia and the British Women in Narratives of the Raj</b>  Geoff Piggott, PhD candidate, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU <b>Sporting Nostalgia and Reconciling Australian Settler Masculinity</b>  Avishek Parui and Merin Simi Raj, Centre for Memory Studies, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras <b>Gender and the Digital Archive</b>
6:00pm -	Launch of MemoryHub@ANU website and network by Prof Kate Mitchell, Research School of Arts and Humanities

## Day Two

Wednesday, Nov 16th

Venue: Crawford Building,  
Seminar Room 7

9:30 – 11:15am	<b>Transnational and Diasporic Memory</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Fabricio Tocco, School of Literature, Language and Linguistics, ANU  Leslie Barnes, School of Literature, Language and Linguistics, ANU <b>The White Building: Art, Architecture, and Refracted Memory</b>  Mamta Sachan Kumar, PhD candidate, School of Culture, History and Languages, ANU <b>Why I U-Turn for Japan: Childhood Memories, Sindh and the Productive Power of Nostalgia</b>  Francesco Ricatti, School of Literature, Language and Linguistics, ANU (presenting) & Barbara Pezzotti, European Languages, Monash University <b>Mapping Transnational Memories: Dislocation and Reorientation in Elizabeth A. Povinelli's The Inheritance</b>  Monique Rooney, School of Literature, Language and Linguistics, ANU <b>(Anti-)Memory of a Female Wanderer: Agnes Varda's Sans Toi Ni Loi (1985)</b>
11:15-11:30am	Coffee
11:30am-12:30pm	<b>Keynote:</b> Prof Sandy Young, English Literary Studies, University of Cape Town <b>Intimate Archives, Violence and Public Remembrance: Towards an Embodied Feminist Praxis</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Shameem Black, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU
12:30 – 1:30pm	Lunch
1:30 – 3:15pm	<b>Panel: National Institutions, Monuments and Memory Activism</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Lia Kent, School of Regulation and Global Governance, ANU  Kylie Message, Director, Humanities Research Centre, ANU <b>Museums and Memory Activism: Contemporary Collecting in a Culture of Crisis</b>  Sally Zwartz, PhD Candidate, School of Literature, Language and Linguistics, ANU <b>Loud Fences: Activating the Memory Archive</b>  Greg Raymond, Coral Bell School of Asia-Pacific Affairs, ANU <b>Memory and Ontology: The Case of Thai Military Monuments</b>

Myra Abubakar, PhD Candidate, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU  
**Selected Memory: Heritage, Tourism and Commemoration of National Heroes in Indonesia**

3:15–3:30pm

Coffee

3:30–5:00pm

**COMMEMORATE: A Hands-on Workshop**

**Chair:** Shameem Black, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU

**Presenter:** Bianca Williams, School of Literature, Language and Linguistics, ANU

Through experiments with tactile materials, this workshop invites participants to explore questions of commemoration with their hands.



Still from Gabrielle Brady's *Island of the Hungry Ghosts*

## ABSTRACTS

### **Keynote One**

*Slow Memory in an Accelerating World: Remembering Species Extinction*

**Prof Jenny Wüstenberg, Nottingham Trent University**

Shaped very much by the experience of the Holocaust and the world wars, memory studies and remembrance policies have focused almost exclusively on how humans make sense of extreme events – war, atrocities, disasters – that are located in specific places and happened at definable moments. I argue that scholars and societies have not found equally evocative ways of addressing histories of gradual change and slow violence, despite the fact that these have been and continue to be at least as transformative for our everyday lives. Slow change is often as devastating and traumatic as armed conflict or dictatorial repression. And conversely, it can bring the most profound progress in human relations. Using an activist project to build a memorial to extinct species on the Isle of Portland (UK) as a case study, I discuss how we might reconsider slow memory in an accelerating world.

Jenny Wüstenberg is Professor of History & Memory Studies at Nottingham Trent University and the Director of the Centre for Public History, Heritage and Memory there. She is the co-founder and past Co-President of the Memory Studies Association, as well as Chair of the COST Action on “Slow Memory: Transformative Practices in Times of Uneven and Accelerating Change” (2021–25). She is the author of *Civil Society and Memory in Post-war Germany* (Cambridge UP 2017, in German LIT Verlag 2020) and the co-editor, most recently, of *Agency in Transnational Memory Politics* (with Aline Sierp, Berghahn 2020), the Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism (with Yifat Gutman, 2022) and *De-Commemoration: Making Sense of Contemporary Calls to Remove Statues and Change Place Names* (with Sarah Gensburger, forthcoming in English with Berghahn, in French with Fayard). Her research interests concern the contentious politics of memory, slow-moving change, and methodology in memory studies.

## Keynote Two

*Intimate Archives, Violence, and Public Remembrance: Towards an Embodied Feminist Praxis*

Prof Sandra Young, University of Cape Town

Feminist performance art that testifies to the brutality of gender-based violence in South Africa has enabled a kind of shared mourning within public life. Summoning the affective force as well as the intimate register associated with embodied practice, the works confound the apparent separation between the individual and the collective, between the personal and the political, and between what is considered “intimate” and what is considered “public.” In response to the prevalence of gender-based violence and femicide, feminist artists have sought to activate a space of public feeling not typically associated with the even-tempered register of statistical reporting, shocking though these statistics undoubtedly are. Eschewing the verbal testimony and discourse of “healing” that infused early post-apartheid public culture, more recent examples of embodied performance art have worked to install a challenging new mode of engaged, affective citizenship in public life. But there are difficulties associated with this mode of representational encounter. For one, an imaginative encounter with the brutality that gives rise to the work risks reproducing the violated body as spectacle for yet another moment of violation. It is this risk that Saidiya Hartman has in mind when she asks, “How does one revisit the scene of subjection without replicating the grammar of violence (*small axe* 26: 2008, 4)?” For another, creative work risks being relegated to an affective realm outside of historiography, however pointedly it engages the past in its call for more just futures. This paper explores the strategies employed by feminist performance artist, Gabrielle Goliath, in marshalling personal memory in the pursuit of public reckoning: her work, *Personal Accounts*, refuses the reproduction of violence as spectacle and the focus on victimhood associated with trauma and, instead, confronts viewers with the limitation of their understanding and with an opportunity to align themselves with justice. There are lessons to be learned from this creative practice about the relationship between representation and violence, and about self-reflexive modes of witness that galvanize political action.

Sandra Young is Professor of English Literary Studies at the University of Cape Town. Her research pursues questions of social justice in works both imaginative and historical. She is the author of *Shakespeare in the Global South: Stories of Oceans Crossed in Contemporary Adaptation* (Arden Shakespeare, 2019) and *The Early Modern Global South in Print: Textual Form and the Production of Human Difference as Knowledge* (Ashgate, 2015), which traces the emergence of a racialized ‘South’ in early modernity. She has published on contemporary cultures of memory in a range of genres, including testimony, life narrative, visual art, museum practice, and even organised protest, and is at work on a manuscript titled, ‘An Intimate Archive: Personal Memory and Public Commemoration in the Aftermath of Apartheid’.

### Panel 1: Hauntings, Traces, Erasures

#### Rachel Hughes

*Bangsokol as transnational requiem: remembering Cambodia’s dead and scattered*

The article analyses the ways in which a recent multimedia requiem invites remembrance of the Khmer Rouge dead. Composed by Him Sophy, the requiem builds on a traditional *bangsokol*, a funereal ritual. It combines liturgical chanting or *smot* with the music of a Khmer orchestra and soloists, and a Western chamber orchestra and chorus. The musical performance is framed by a projected triptych of moving images curated by Cambodian filmmaker Rithy Panh and is accompanied by stage performance elements such as procession, gesture, drumming and dance. This paper draws on interviews with the key creatives involved in the development of the requiem and observations of its premiere performance at the Melbourne Festival in October 2017. Following Elisabeth Grosz, I argue that the performance deterritorialized existing memorial refrains and connected diasporic and wider audiences through a shared experience of affective intensification.

Rachel Hughes is a Senior Lecturer in Geography at the University of Melbourne, Australia. She studies public remembrance in late twentieth-century Cambodia and justice-seeking for historical crimes and has published extensively in these fields. Her current projects focus on the politics of the recent judicial reparations for Khmer Rouge crimes, and on transnational campaigns in solidarity with the Peoples Republic of Kampuchea from the period 1979-1989. Rachel has also worked collaboratively to research museum exhibitions and visitor experiences

## Lia Kent

### *Re-membering Timor-Leste's Unruly Dead*

Thousands of people lost their lives during the 24-year Indonesian occupation of East Timor (1974-1999), many in conditions that did not allow for a proper burial. This presentation reflects on the evolving forms of vernacular memory-work that are responding to the affective, material and spectral legacies of this 'massive bad death' (Sakti 2020). Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, I consider how, through practices of searching for, exhuming and reburial of human remains, constructing memorials, and commemorative rituals, the living are not only remembering the dead but *re-membering* them (Langford 2009: 701), bringing their remains and restless, unhappy spirits back from the forests and mountains into the community. These practices are enabling the living and the dead to forge new reciprocal relationships oriented towards stability and intergenerational wellbeing. Yet they are not only reparative. They disrupt the state's 'necro-governmental' (Rojas-Perez 2017: 19) logics that aim to control, contain and relegate massive bad death to a past temporality, reminding political leaders of unfulfilled obligations. I conclude by reflecting on what we might learn from this vernacular memory-work about the embodied and more-than-human dimensions of memory, and its political possibilities.

Lia Kent is a Senior Fellow/ARC Future Fellow in the School of Regulation and Global Governance at the Australian National University. Her research focuses on the myriad ways in which communities make sense of legacies of state violence and protracted conflict. She has pursued these questions through projects and publications on transitional justice, reconciliation, state formation, memory, and the missing and dead.

## Rosanne Kennedy

### *Multidirectional Eco-Memory and the Aesthetics of Care: Gabrielle Brady's Island of the Hungry Ghosts*

When Gabrielle Brady ventured to make a film set on Christmas Island, the location of a notorious refugee detention centre, she faced the challenge of breaking through to an anaesthetised Australian public. Her film, *Island of the Hungry Ghosts*, illustrates perfectly what I call, building on the work of Michael Rothberg, "multidirectional eco-memory" (Kennedy, 2017). I argue that Brady's focus on the remembrance rituals that island locals practice today, to appease the hungry ghosts of Chinese indentured labourers who died unmourned on the island, generates a productive multidirectional framework which enhances the memorability both of that forgotten history and of recent asylum seeker stories of perilous journeys and lives in limbo. Through practices of slow, observational cinema, Brady's experimental "hybrid documentary" engages viewers in an immersive sensory experience of the island. With an up-close focus on the ubiquitous red crabs, tangled tree roots and whistling blow holes, the camera extends the multidirectional framework beyond anthropocentric histories to encompass non-human agents and forces, thereby enhancing memorability of the island as a site of eco-memory. Another multidirectional frame emerges around practices of care. Drawing on feminist work on an aesthetics of care, I consider care both as a thematic and the film's own practice of caring for memory. Through this analysis, I contribute to discussions about the role of the arts, with the aesthetic capacity to create stories that stick in our memories and move us, in transmitting memory to the public, and potentially making the political manifest.

Rosanne Kennedy is Associate Professor of Gender, Sexuality and Culture and Literary Studies at the Australian National University. Working at the intersection of cultural memory studies, life writing, trauma studies and environmental humanities, her research explores the diversity of cultural forms through which writers, filmmakers and activists mediate and activate the past in the present. Her research appears in *Memory Studies*, *Signs*, *Biography*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, *Studies in the Novel*, *Australian Feminist Studies* and elsewhere. Her most recent publication is "Domesticating Humanitarianism: Stephanie Land's Maid, "This American Life", and the Imaginative Politics of Need." *a/b autobiography studies* 37.1: 2022. Contact: Rosanne.kennedy@anu.edu.au

## Claire Loughnan and Una McIlvenna

### *Remembering, Survival and Erasure in Immigration Detention*

On his release to New Zealand, Behrouz Boochani, Iranian journalist and writer, and former immigration detainee in Papua New Guinea, declared 'I am happy because I survived.' His sense of survival is profound, in light of the presentiment of death that has haunted the men held in detention in Papua New Guinea, with several deaths many of them preventable. Yet survival does not signal the end of trauma, whether for those detained, or those doing the detaining. Former refugees, as well as detention guards, have spoken of the ongoing suffering which is endured as part of this survival.

As a testament to suffering, the memorialisation of sites such as concentration camps, and carceral institutions, often works to recall injustices in order to transform the future. When these sites are razed to the ground, we might ask: what possibility remains for the memorialisation of suffering for those who survived, and for those who didn't?

In an effort to preserve the memory of what was done at Manus, an interdisciplinary and international research team came together to build a 3D digital representation of the now dismantled site – *Against Erasure*. This paper explores the technical and conceptual process of reconstruction and reflects on the camp at Manus Island as a site of (historical) violence. This paper explores the ramifications and challenges of enduring, and remembering past and present violence, for those who have survived living and working in immigration detention

Claire Loughnan is a Lecturer in Criminology in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne. Her research focuses on the modes, practices and experiences of confinement in places of 'care' and control, ranging from detention and prisons, to aged care, for example. She has published widely, in journals such as *Incarceration*, *Globalizations* and *Crime Media and Culture*. Her first monograph, under contract with Routledge on the institutional effects of mandatory immigration detention, is due for release in 2023.

Una McIlvenna is Honorary Senior Lecturer in English at ANU, and has held positions at the Universities of Melbourne, Sydney, Kent and Queen Mary University of London. A literary and cultural historian, she researches the early modern and nineteenth-century pan-European tradition of singing the news, and the history of crime and punishment. Her monograph *Singing the News of Death: Execution Ballads in Europe 1500-1900* (OUP, 2022) explores the phenomenon of the execution ballad, songs that spread the news of condemned criminals and their often ghastly ends.

## Panel 2: Remembering Silenced Histories in Australia

### Mike Jones and Ben Silverstein

#### *Remembering Thangoo*

Looking over Roebuck Bay from Broome, the main town on Yawuru Country in northwest Australia, it's possible to glimpse a large tamarind tree on the opposite shore. That tree marks the main homestead on Thangoo pastoral station, and a significant cultural landscape filled with springs (jila), law grounds, and places of sustenance and life for Yawuru and other First Peoples over tens of thousands of years. In this paper, we draw on a series of recent conversations with Yawuru people to discuss memories of life on the pastoral station where Yawuru, Karajarri, Nyigina, and Mangala people lived and worked from its establishment in the mid-nineteenth century until the 1950s–60s.

The Yawuru people with whom we are working today remember growing up on Thangoo and enduring an atmosphere of threatened and actual physical violence, while they or their parents worked in conditions of extreme deprivation that they often liken to slavery. They also describe idyllic childhoods in which they were well provided for and where they and their communities were able to practice ceremonial and cultural life. We explore the relationships between these memories and the apparently smooth coexistence of what may appear to be contradictory representations, tracing and analysing some of the ways they reveal complex articulations between pastoral colonialism and Indigenous ways of relating on and to Country.

Dr Mike Jones is an archivist, historian, collections consultant, and Deputy Director of the Research Centre for Deep History (Australian National University). His research explores the history of collections-based knowledge, and the ways in which contemporary technologies and public history initiatives can help to develop and maintain relationships within and between collections, communities, and their histories. His first book, *Artefacts, Archives, and Documentation in the Relational Museum*, was published by Routledge in 2021.

Dr Ben Silverstein is Postdoctoral Research Fellow in History and Lecturer in Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University on Ngannawal and Ngambri Country, where he researches in colonial and Indigenous histories. He is the author of *Governing Natives: Indirect rule and settler colonialism in Australia's north* (Manchester University Press, 2019), editor of *Conflict, adaptation, transformation: Richard Broome and the practice of Aboriginal history* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2018), and is a co-editor of the journal *Aboriginal History*.

## Rebecca Hamilton

### *Our Misremembered Natural Heritage: a Case for Integrated Ecologies*

The practice of geohistory and use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge are commonly overlooked in the practical management of today's natural landscapes. In Australia, conservation policy is largely embedded in the physical sciences, with targets directed at the preservation or restoration of pre- or early-European ecological benchmarks. For example, federal and NSW environmental legislation strives to protect "Endangered Ecological Communities" (EECs). These purportedly represent remnants of naturally occurring groups of plants, animals and other organisms. In many cases, however, classifications of EECs are made in the absence of any long-term data, making it unclear as to whether the "natural" community that is being protected is indeed "natural". This talk draws on geoarchaeological, historical and Traditional Ecological Knowledge to reconstruct the long-term socio-ecological history of Sydney's once-extensive freshwater wetlands – classified as an EEC under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW)*. In doing so, it demonstrates that what is being conserved today is remarkably different from the pre- and early-European landscape, and highlights how quickly we can come to "misremember" landscapes of the past. This highlights the importance of long-term, multidisciplinary data from both the social and physical sciences for developing evidence-based conservation policy. More broadly, it highlights flaws in post-colonial approaches to environmental management.

Rebecca Hamilton is a research fellow in CHL at ANU, and is funded by the Max Planck Institute for Geoanthropology in Jena, Germany. Her work focuses on mapping the long-term socio-ecologies of biodiversity hotspots in Australia and Southeast Asia. She is passionate about using her work to inform the conservation of resilient, high value places in a changing world.

## Sulamith Graefenstein

### *Transnational Reverberations of the Holocaust: European Atrocity Education and Australia's Colonial Past*

In 2019, Australia became a full member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). The IHRA comprises 35 largely European member countries and is arguably the most influential supranational institution of Holocaust education and commemoration. It has been suggested that Australia's membership not only offers an opportunity for the country to strengthen its commitment to Holocaust education and commemoration, but also to use the Holocaust as a prism through which to address the dark past of Australian settler colonialism and advance the ongoing process of reconciliation. Using educational materials provided to schools and educators by the IHRA, this paper explores how they facilitate an engagement with Australia's difficult memory of colonial violence. In doing so, it proposes that while Australia can and should learn from teachings about the Holocaust when addressing its own troubled past, the country's position on the fringes of dominant Western memory cultures such as those represented by European organisations like the IHRA may also help bring the reality of the ongoing suffering of Europe's former colonial subjects 'home'.

Sulamith Graefenstein is a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies at the Australian National University. She works in Memory Studies and Museum Studies, focusing on the political uses of public history in museums and memorial museums to promote notions of (trans)national justice and solidarity. Her current research projects engage with human rights museums and their representations of violent pasts in an era of circulating Holocaust memory and human rights.



## Kasia Williams

### *The Unfinished Journey of Frank Kustra's Diary*

A great number of refugees evacuated from the USSR, from gulags in Siberia, Kazakhstan and Turkestan, were among the displaced persons resettled to Australia under the post-war mass migration scheme. Going through quarantine points in refugee camps, such as the one on the Caspian Sea port of Pahlevi in Iran, the survivors had to leave their few possessions behind. Frank Kustra, who managed to reach Iran from remote parts of the Soviet Union, buried his tiny diary in sand, eventually unearthed it and smuggled it out. The diary is a peculiar example of life writing, capturing in a few broken sentences not much more than temporal-spatial moments of Frank's harrowing journey that started with his deportation from Lvov to Siberia at the age of 14. It is also an interesting memory object. Not bigger than a palm and enforced by its metal covers, it looks like it was meant to survive to tell its poignant story. Yet, since the "Soviet story" is largely missing from the understanding of World War Two in Australia, the diary remained silent, resurfacing from Frank's pocket occasionally as a curiosity rather than testimony of Soviet ruthless repressions. It became a token of subaltern memories – memories suppressed in Frank's homeland for over four decades after WW2, but also rejected as unfitting in post-war Australia. Frank passed away in 2017, but his diary's journey continues, and so does Australia's WW2 remembrance marked by erasures.

Kasia Williams is deputy director at the ANU Centre for European Studies. Her research focuses on migrant and diaspora cultures, particularly life narratives, transfer of memory between generations and communities, mediation of memory and constructions of the self within the contexts of migration, displacement and transcultural belonging.

## Engendering Memory: A Zoom Webinar

## Anuparna Mukherjee

### *The Home and the Empire: Nostalgia and the British Women in Narratives of the Raj*

Positioning my work within the rubric of nostalgia studies and its fraught intersections with gender, affect, sensory and spatial memories, this paper explores the question of 'homesickness' and its multiple ramifications in the context of Britain's colonial empire in India.

It was believed that the life of myriad uncertainties in the empire was notoriously unsuitable for European women, whose absence in the early accounts of the Raj, coupled with the conditions of bodily suffering in the dust and the heat of India, engendered a body of literature that spoke of the imperial settlers' persistent nostalgia for 'Home in England.'

Taking off from this initial premise, the paper sets out to explore the role of women in the imperial mission who came to India in subsequent times braving the tropical weather. The enduring wives and unmarried maidens in the prospect of a lucrative match slowly ventured into the outlying colonies with the onerous task of creating a semblance of that much-romanticised English domesticity in vexing situations. These women took up the task of home-building in the service of the empire, with ideas, practices and cultural memories transported from their native country to radically different spaces. It was believed that the proficient running of the empire called for such womanly skills of home management with an eye for detail and the prized ability to improvise things with limited resources. This brings forth a distinctly gendered narrative behind the embattled constructions of 'place' which taps the affective politics of nostalgia that thrives on the necessity, albeit, the impossibility of replication.

My presentation will specifically delve into the literary and visual representations of the empire through the autobiographical and fictional memoirs of three women, Phebe Gibbs (-1805), Miss Emma Roberts (1791-1840) and Flora Annie Steel (1847-1929) to locate how the imperial narratives of nostalgia – with its manifest sensory, visceral or pathological dimensions appended to conflicting desires, meanings and identities – in the colonial space, irrevocably altered the vernacular, pre-colonial communities to set forth the ambivalent transition to 'modernity'

irrevocably altered the vernacular, pre-colonial communities to set forth the ambivalent transition to 'modernity' that opened up multiple, new modes of consumption and exploitation in the colony.

Anuparna Mukherjee is assistant professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at IISER Bhopal, India. She previously taught in the Department of English at St. Xavier's University. Anuparna holds a PhD degree in literature from the Australian National University. Her research engages with colonial modernity, spectrality, affect and environment, through the literature on urban space. Anuparna has guest-edited a special issue on "City, Space and Literature" with Arunima Bhattacharya. Her article, "After the Empire: Narratives of Haunting in the Postcolonial Spectropolis" was published in *South Asian Review*. Her recent publications include "viral nostalgia" in *EPW* and "Knots of Time Reading Nostalgia in Bengali Literature from 13th to the 19 Century" in the anthology, *Retelling Time* by Routledge. Anuparna's essay on "waste and spectrality" is included in the anthology on Nabarun Bhattacharya by Bloomsbury. She looks after the "Book review" section of *Sanglap: Journal of Literary and Cultural Inquiry*.

## Geoff Piggott

### *Sporting Nostalgia and Reconciling Australian Settler Masculinity*

Nostalgia is a way of remembering often viewed with suspicion in academic discourse. From its pathological origins as a term used to describe the disease of homesickness to its current association with longings for a return to empire, it is commonly seen as regressive and "at worst...deeply exclusionary and atavistic" (Atia and Davis 2010, p.181). But can it possibly also provide a way of reconciling an emotional connection with pasts whose values appear increasingly anachronistic?

My research examines nostalgia through the lens of contemporary Australian sport, specifically cricket, a cultural practice deeply imbued with the hypermasculine frontier ethos of white settlerism. In recent decades, Australian cricket has been forced to reckon with challenges to its implicit sense of racial superiority as India has risen to a position of power in the sport, and to adapt to society's demands for sport to be more inclusive of women. Alongside these changes, there has been an explosion of nostalgic content in the online sports media. Footage and discussion of games, events and characters from the past now commands significant popular attention, with official and unofficial channels and social media groups attracting millions of viewers.

Through analysis of a range of online media material, I ask if the popularity of this content represents a backward-looking yearning for a return to a cosy colonial past, or if it is facilitating what Svetlana Boym calls reflective nostalgia, an emotion which allows reconciliation between the past and present because it "savours details... cherishes shattered fragments of memory [and] can be ironic and humorous" (2001, p. 49). In doing so, I hope to add to the broader debate on the role of memory in shaping the present.

Geoff Piggott is a PhD candidate in the Department of Gender, Media and Cultural Studies at the Australian National University. His research focuses on the relationship between Australia and India in the sport of cricket, looking at the challenges to conceptions of masculinity in the Australian national imaginary posed by India's rise in the sport and asking how cultural fields with colonial legacies might adapt to shifting national values and cross-cultural power dynamics

## Avishek Parui and Merin Simi Raj

### *Gender and the Digital Archive*

This paper will examine the entanglement of gender and the digital archive by proposing the concepts of *epistemological fluidity* and *inclusive accessibility*. Through an examination of the processes and practices, this paper situates the digital archive as a mediated site of interactivity and narrativity, with aesthetic, experiential, and hermeneutic dimensions. By discussing how digital archives – including mobile museums and immersive knowledge networks – reterritorialize and re-ontologize the physical properties of erstwhile systems of preservation, the paper will highlight how such changes also have implications on gender at the level of archived content as well as access associated with the same. The study will show how the classical archive – the magisterial mansion of knowledge preservation as defined by Derrida – was always already embedded in politics of privilege including, but not limited to, gender, race, and social status. Such grammar of preservation, which included spaces more accessible by able-bodied men, also shaped the content of the archive in overt and covert ways. The digital archive, we argue in this paper, instead produces and promotes a more fluid culture of conservation and access, also fostering a more inclusive content, whereby the discursive design of the archive also contains affective, liminal, and intimate entities as scholarly specimens to be studied and exhibited. Drawing on Katherine Hayles's and Anne Balsamo's conception of the digital archive as a hyperlinked, hypermediated, interactive, and automated space, this paper demonstrates how it signals a departure from traditional hierarchical models based on questions of accuracy, authenticity, and legitimacy which were historically validated via institutional channels of history and

knowledge. A case in point is the digital archive called MemoryBytes created by the Centre for Memory Studies at IIT Madras and exhibited in the recent annual international conference titled Memory in a Digital Age.

MemoryBytes is an AR (Augmented Reality)-enabled mobile application which presents the history and lived experiences of the Anglo-Indian community, a 500-year old mixed-race transnational community of Portuguese, Dutch, French, British, and Irish descent. The hyphenated history of the community and its situatedness outside of the many discourses of legitimacy are captured in the collaborative, multi-layered, multimodal digital environment through texts, images, sound, and artefacts that may be augmented and animated in a phygital (physical + digital) environment. In this transitional and translational act, MemoryBytes seamlessly integrates born-digital content with digitised material, thereby enabling the archiving of documents and oral histories as well as material objects and private rituals of remembrance which are vital to the transnational and diasporic identity of the community. In doing so, this phygital museum foregrounds the culinary, domestic, and affective aspects of Anglo-Indian identities and histories, including popular cookbooks, cartoons, and personal letters to relatives. MemoryBytes thus also initiates an exploratory discussion on how the category of gender is reconfigured and performed in the digitally mediated archival worlds, blurring the lines of disciplinary, discursive, and spatial practices, while also showcasing how the domestic is always already discursive, requiring academic attention as much as public memories and monuments do. Departing from the teleological assumptions that govern the traditional archive, this digital archive challenges the innate assumptions of a singular male-centric narrative history and facilitates a critical engagement with invisibility, liminality, silence, and absences.

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## Transnational and Diasporic Memory

### Leslie Barnes

*The White Building: Art, Architecture, and Refracted Memory*

Designed by Vladimir Bodiansky and built by a team of Cambodian architects led by Lu Ban Hap, Phnom Penh's iconic White Building (1963) may seem an unusual site of memory for contemporary France. Indeed, in responding to the persistent marginalization of French Indochina in Pierre Nora's volumes, in French collective memory, and in the *Postcolonial Realms of Memory* published last year, there is much to be said about more visible sites. One might answer Perry Anderson's call to remember Diên Biên Phủ or return to Banteay Srei, the Angkor temple that set André Malraux on his path to the Goncourt and later, De Gaulle's ministerial cabinet.

But the White Building offers a unique prism through which an ever-accelerating history is momentarily slowed, turned from its straight course, and from which it emerges as refracted memory. Like a beam of light bends and disperses as it passes through glass, one national narrative gives way to multiple, transnational stories. Among these we find the brief period of post-independence nation building, the Russian-born legionnaire and collaborator with Le Corbusier, the destruction of genocide, the ascent of global capitalism, and finally, the lives of the building's occupants, framed through cinema and art activism. This paper will begin to trace the arcs of these different stories, focusing on the White Building's early years at the intersection of the national and the transnational in Cambodia's post-independence period.

Leslie Barnes is Associate Professor of French Studies at ANU. She is author of *Vietnam and the Colonial Condition of French Literature* (Nebraska, 2014) and co-editor of *The Cinema of Rithy Panh: Everything Has a Soul* (Rutgers, 2021). Her current project studies literary and cinematic narratives that engage with questions of sex work, mobility, and human rights in Southeast Asia. She has published on these and other subjects in *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, *Modern Language Notes*, and *Humanity*.

## Mamta Sachan Kumar

*Why I U-Turn for Japan: Childhood Memories and the Productive Power of Nostalgia*

Since emigrating in childhood, every flight out of Japan has left me in tears. Like clockwork, belted in on the tarmac, I have found myself staring out the airplane window with my eyes welling up in anticipation of take-off, as if I was five once more and being uprooted all over again. Over thirty years of growing up in Singapore has only seemed to intensify a longing for my birth country, unravelling a deep connection to Japan or rather, my imaginary of it – one that I have sought out particularly through my research efforts. Several years ago, I chose to return to document my father's story by tracing the history of my community's settlement – Japan's Sindhi merchant diaspora. It was in this pursuit that I became aware of my chase for my childhood – I was running after memories of a time sweetened by the rose-tinted lens over my hung, adult shoulder. I wrote about social memory then, as a twice-removed diasporan: first through ancestral displacement from Sindh and thereafter by a decision made beyond my control as a child. Memory here was concurrently personal and communal, webbed for its involvement of multiple homes and realities, and unabashedly nostalgic in feeling. Nostalgia, for all its reprehension as romantic and therefore allegedly regressive, has served me and my project of self-discovery most powerfully.

As I apply the motivation of memory-chasing, with nostalgia as my tool to tunnel my way back to Japan, I focus this time on my mother's story and the stories of Sindhi housewives of her generation. As I do so, I aim to explore the nostalgia of childhood memories for its productive potential – a nostalgia for the future.

Mamta Sachan Kumar is a PhD candidate at the School of Culture, History & Language, The ANU. Her research focuses on the community of her childhood – the Sindhi merchant diaspora in Japan, a 150-year-old settlement that remains relatively unknown in scholarship. For her PhD project, Mamta seeks a creative, multi-sensory approach to share the stories of Japan's Sindhi housewives, whose claim of doing “nothing” has emerged as her central subject of inquiry. Her work is ethnographic and at the intersection of gender, diaspora and cultural-as well as memory-studies. It explores varied writing forms such as poetry and a narrative style that traverses the space-time continuum by using flashback vignettes for present-day analysis.

## Francesco Ricatti and Barbara Pezzotti

*Mapping Transnational Memories: Dislocation and Reorientation in Elizabeth A Povinelli's The Inheritance*

In this presentation we will consider a recent carto-graphic memoir that focuses on Italian transnational migration and its legacies: Elizabeth A. Povinelli's *The Inheritance*. We adopt the term carto-graphic memoir (Mitchell 2008; Norment 2012), to describe graphic novels that aim to literally and metaphorically map transnational lives, identities and memories, through complex artistic processes of autobiographical (re)orientation, drawing, storytelling, and intellectual reflection. Povinelli's carto-graphic memoir reveals histories and geographies of violence and trauma; but also of physical, existential, cultural, linguistic and intellectual resistance, exchange, and creativity. It locates Italian migrants and their descendants at the intersection of traumatic histories and geographies of nationalism, colonialism, racism, sexism, and class exploitation. In doing so, it provides an extraordinary opportunity to rethink the relationship between transnational histories and individual lives and memories.

Dr Francesco Ricatti is Associate Professor of Italian Studies at The Australian National University. He has published extensively of the history of Italian migration to Australia, including his most recent book, *Italians in Australia: History, Memory, Identity* (Palgrave 2018). His most recent research focuses on decolonial and transcultural approaches to migration and ethnic history – including a special forum in the journal *Altreitalie* on decolonising Italian migration to Australia (open access).

Dr Barbara Pezzotti is Cassamarca Lecturer in European Languages (Italian) at Monash University and Chercheur associé at the Centre de la Méditerranée moderne et contemporaine - Université Côte d'Azur. She is a leading expert in Italian and Mediterranean crime fiction and has written extensively on 20th and 21st century writing, cultural representations of space, and re-interpretation of history in literature and films. She is the author of “Investigating Italy's past through Crime Fiction, Films and TV Series: Murder in the Age of Chaos” (Palgrave MacMillan, 2016); “Politics and Society in Italian Crime Fiction. An Historical Overview” (McFarland, 2014) and “The Importance of Place in Contemporary Italian Crime Fiction. A Bloody Journey” (FDU Press/Rowman&Littlefield, 2102).

## Monique Rooney

*(Anti-)Memory of a Female Wanderer: Agnès Varda's Sans Toi ni Moi (1985)*

Adventures and solitude of a young vagabond (neither withdrawn nor talkative), told by those who had crossed her path, that winter in the South of France. But can one render silence, or capture freedom?

The film wanders between Mona and the others. We glimpse their lives, and then move on. I really liked all the characters in this story, here and there, like small “figures” in a winter landscape, where, coming toward us, walking, is a rebellious girl. (Agnès Varda, “Publicité,” quoted in Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently* 285-6).

In the publicity notes for the official release of her film *Sans Toit ni Loi* (Vagabond, 1985), Agnès Varda asks whether one can “render silence, or capture freedom,” tacitly referring to the silent freedom of Mona Bergeron (played by Sandrine Bonnaire), the vagabond upon whom the film trains its gaze as it narrates events in the final weeks of her young life. My paper begins with the provocation that *Sans Toit ni Loi* raises productive problems when it comes to thinking about processes of memory and memorialisation, particularly with regard to the canonising tendencies of both film-making and film studies. I then outline aspects of Varda’s role as a female film-maker who, according to film scholar Rebecca DeRoo, practised “strategic naivety” (2017), whereby she helped to circulate her public profile as an artisanal film-maker unschooled in cinema history. DeRoo argues that it is in part through her cultivation of this reputation that Varda was able to survive within a male-dominated film industry while negotiating the terms of her own aesthetic vision. Adding a further dimension to my reflections on what “strategic naivety” means for thinking about the role (anti-)memorial practices play in Varda’s work, I turn to the significance of “transdisciplinary” or “intermedial” moments that animate *Sans Toit ni Loi*. Focusing on the role and meaning of pornographic photographs that appear alongside oblique references to ancient mythology, I suggest that *Sans Toit ni Loi* counters memorial practices while silently remembering the freedom of its migratory girl.

Monique Rooney teaches literature, film, television and new media in the English program, School of Literature, Languages and Literatures (ANU). The author of *Living Screens: Melodrama and Plasticity in Contemporary Film and Television* (2015) and numerous articles on film, literature and new media, she is currently writing a book titled *Brow Network: Programs and Promises*.

## Panel: National Institutions, Monuments, and Memory Activism

### Kylie Message

Museums and Memory Activism: Contemporary Collecting in a Culture of Crisis

A great deal of collecting undertaken through the Covid 19 pandemic has targeted popular, feel-good records at the expense of less socially palatable evidence, including expressions of anti-vaccination sentiment. This trend has reiterated the perception that museums – which frequently become the storehouses of these collections – are inherently ‘progressive’, and perhaps even politically motivated, left-wing institutions. Speaking from the perspective of memory studies rather than museum scholarship, Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg have observed that while scholars who study left leaning (social justice) activism are unlikely to deny that the explicit use of techniques of memory creation can be undertaken by non-progressive actors, they are, however, likely not to address the issue in their analysis. This presentation will consider their contention that the ‘progressive bias’ of memory scholars and workers ‘is not so much a matter of explicit design, but committed by collective omission’ (Gutman & Wüstenberg 2021: 5), in relation to museum practice and scholarship.

I approach this task by focusing on the political and social context in which museums – as sites of personal and collective memory as well as institutional forms of commemoration – operate. Focusing on the commemorative responses to Covid 19 on the one hand, and the material culture of large-scale political protest such as the 6 January 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol Building on the other hand, I explore the ubiquity of changes in cultural standards following the normalisation of outrage, which has occurred, I argue, as a symptom of political crisis. The contrast reveals shortfalls in contemporary museology but also demonstrates that as we grapple individually, as communities, and on population levels with increasing multi-national and global climate emergencies as well as local political crises, the decisions we make in regard to representing contemporary events through museum collections and other commemorative practices have wide-ranging and urgent political implications as well as cultural meanings.

Kylie Message is Head of the Humanities Research Centre at ANU and Professor of Public Humanities. She is author of *Collecting Activism, Archiving Occupy Wall Street* (Routledge 2019), *The Disobedient Museum: Writing at the Edge* (Routledge 2018), *Museums and Racism* (Routledge 2018), *Museums and Social Activism: Engaged Protest* (Routledge 2014), *New Museums and the Making of Culture* (Berg 2006), and *Museum Theory: An Expanded Field* (edited, with Andrea Witcomb, Wiley Blackwell 2015).

## Sally Zwartz

### *Loud Fence: Activating the Memory Archive*

Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse ran from 2013 to 2017 and in that time heard personal accounts of institutional child sexual abuse from nearly 8000 people. At the end of the Commission, the recordings of the private sessions at which these accounts were shared were archived for 99 years, as required by special legislation. The private sessions were a way to gather information and also a witnessing project, which at a certain point the six Commissioners decided the wider community needed to be engaged in. As the Commissioners saw it, positive social change in relation to the issue of child sexual abuse depended on an expanded empathy with those who'd been victims of it. The individual acts of remembering that took place in private sessions needed to be transfigured into something broader and more collective: a new societal understanding of the experience and impacts of child sexual abuse that would drive reform. To bring the experiences recalled in private sessions into the public domain, the Commission employed a team of writers, whose job was to listen to and transcribe audio recordings of the sessions, then recompose the transcripts as written narratives. The writers produced 3949 of these narratives, which are now published online and together comprise a substantial archive of individual experience of child sexual abuse. This paper explores how that archive operates as a site of memory and an agent of memory activism, by examining in contrast a grassroots memory project, Loud Fence Inc, established during the life of the Royal Commission to 'make loud' a message of solidarity and support for victims and survivors of sexual assault. Loud Fence was initiated in Ballarat, a town in Victoria, and has since travelled beyond state and national borders both physically and online. This discussion concludes that the Royal Commission archive of narratives reflects certain institutional characteristics that mean it remains a legacy project, memorialising rather than activating memory to achieve social and political change.

Sally Zwartz is a PhD candidate in the School of Literature, Language and Linguistics at ANU. Her project reflects on personal testimony, memory and narrative and arises from work she did as a narrative writer at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. She is currently employed in a similar role at the Disability Royal Commission. She has worked extensively as an interviewer and oral historian and has an MA in Children's Literature (Macquarie University). Some previous projects can be found at [www.talkaboutplace.com](http://www.talkaboutplace.com). She is based in Bondi, NSW. Email: [sarahzwartz@anu.edu.au](mailto:sarahzwartz@anu.edu.au)

## Gregory Raymond

### *Memory and Ontology: the case of Thai Military Monuments*

Memory practices reflect our conception of our relationship to the past. How we imagine the past, in turn, says a great deal about our ontology, our fundamental views of reality. Codes of Western history-writing tend to imagine the past as dead, but this is not the only relationship that we can have to the past. Traditional Jews and Australian Aboriginals are amongst many groups for whom the past can be living, alive in the present. In this paper, I explore Thai military and war monuments. Many of these honour monarchs and other military personages who have played significant roles in Thai history. They also, however, play a significant role as embodiments of spiritual power, as tutelary deities existing in the present and the past. This conception and its associated practices can exist relatively comfortably alongside Thailand's royalist-nationalist cosmology and even Western-style nationalist history-writing. There is friction, however, with critical history-writing, and histories of Thai liberalism, which are less accommodating of an ontology in which the past is living. In this paper I will argue that these two divergent memory practices create mnemonic dissonance and ontological insecurity, capable of charging Thai political conflicts with additional emotion.

Gregory Raymond is a lecturer in the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, researching Southeast Asian politics, security and foreign policy. His geographic focus is Thailand, mainland Southeast Asia, and relations with China. He is interested in how collective memory and forms of mnemonic hegemony can shape international relationships. His 2021 publication, co-authored with J. Blaxland, *The US-Thai Alliance and Asian International Relations: History, Memory and Current Developments* (Routledge 2021), is based on extensive original research and explores the current state of US-Thai relations by highlighting the importance of historical memory.

## **Myra Abubakar**

### *The Role of Film and Drama in Constructing the Memory of National Hero in Indonesia*

Indonesian national memory envisions a female hero predominantly as a militarised freedom fighter, as demonstrated in popular culture in the late 1970s to 1980s. This presentation builds on the previous chapter's analysis. It examines two crucial works (*The Drama of Acehnese History* (1979) and the film *Tjoet Nja Dhien* (1988)) to demonstrate how Cut Nyak Din, one of the most celebrated female heroes in Indonesia, became a pivotal character at a critical juncture in Indonesian history, as well as to evaluate how these works operate as a means of establishing Cut Nyak Din (CND) as a hero of Aceh and Indonesia and identify their influence on laying a reference point for CND's commemoration in regional and national memory.

I analyse how these two works, a closet drama by an Acehnese nationalist and a famous film by an Indonesian filmmaker, serve as propaganda tools for competing political interests. The analysis of the two sites show how political negotiations, pressures and decisions shape the memory of a historical figure. The play and film are forms of dramatisation and exaggeration of history from the narrator's point of view.

Given that these two memory sites recount the same story about the same figure, they develop into separate popular narratives. The play, *The Drama of Acehnese History* (1979), written by the leader of the movement for Acehnese independence, puts forward the Acehnese perspective on CND and sharpens the vision of detaching Aceh from Indonesia. In contrast, the film *Tjoet Nja Dhien* (1988) carries the mission of promoting and recognising CND from a local figure to wider national recognition. It was deployed to criticise New Order gender norms and aimed at revolutionising Indonesian women's fighting spirit. Yet, its representation of CND also fit into broader ideas of hegemonic masculinity that were crucial to New Order gender ideologies.

Myra Abubakar is PhD candidate in the School of Culture, History and Language.

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