

Conference Abstracts

Keynote Speaker: Maria Roth-Lauret

Maria Roth-Lauret is Reader in American Studies (Literature) at the University of Sussex. She is the author of *Liberating Literature: Feminist Fiction in America*; *Modern Novelists: Alice Walker* (now in its second edition); and co-author of *Beginning Ethnic American Literatures*. She has recently been writing about Michelle Obama, and the work presented today is part of her forthcoming book *Wander Words: Language Migration in American Literature*, to be published by New York University Press.

Life in a box: the Truus van Bruinessen Archive, or: how a private life becomes public

Life writing by ordinary people that ends up in an archive poses an interesting set of questions about the private and the public, and the interplay between these two presumed separate spheres. Truus van Bruinessen was a Dutch woman who in the early 1950s emigrated to Canada with her young family. Her life-writing, archived in the National Library of Canada in Ottawa, is bilingual and unique in that it comprises a diary Truus wrote before undertaking her transatlantic passage; letters home from the first few years in Canada written to family and friends, plus a selection of the letters written in response. These are all in Dutch. Towards the end of her life Truus also wrote a memoir, entitled *Journey of Faith*, which was based on the early letters home and published privately in English, then archived in the box too. This archive enables several perspectives on the public/private: from correspondence to narrative, from the box of letters at home to the national archive, from the -now become private- native language, Dutch, to the public medium of English, and finally --through my intervention as a researcher -- from the interstitial space of the archive into print on the pages of an academic book. What does this immigrant archive tell us about the workings of memory, individual and cultural, across different languages, different continents, and the span of a lifetime? What are the ethics, and the aesthetics, of prying into the private lives of people who were not professional writers and are no longer around to give -- or to withhold -- their consent? Was this particular private life ever meant to become public, and if so or if not, what is our responsibility as scholars in representing it to the world?

Dr Eleanor Bavidge

Early Career Researcher

Queen Mary, University London, Kingston University and Middlesex University

Heterotopias of memory: roadside memorials and the transformation of space

Although they represent one of the most topical and active forms of memorializing, roadside memorials have been criticized as sentimental, crass and morbid and there has been very little academic interest in roadside memorials in England. This paper demonstrates how these highly personalized and transitory sites of memory can illuminate the broader characteristics of contemporary memory spaces.

Using Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia I challenge the assumptions that formulate memory as lost in a placeless world. These sites are not simply the arbitrary placement of objects. They produce intimate topographies of personal memory that until recently were contained within domestic spaces. The memorials share the iconography of private remembrance in a way that enacts a collapse between private and public space. As spaces that are transformed by death, they introduce a sacred landscape into the ordinary and the everyday and act as thresholds for the communication between the living and the dead.

The particular contribution that the paper makes is that it tests the power of the concept of heterotopia to explain how the form of memory spaces reflects their special function in the peculiarity and particularity of their physical realizations.

Peter Bennett

MA Student (starting PhD October 2010)

University of Brighton

Robert Frank's later work: stories of displacement/layers of time and place

In this paper I will consider how photographer and filmmaker Robert Frank uses photography to create a personal narrative about his life. His use of collage techniques, overlaying internal thoughts, in the form of words, onto the external world, as denoted by the photographic surface, reveals intensely private areas of his life to the public gaze.

I will examine how his work has been critically received and how it relates photography to ideas of memory, perception, narration and time. I will consider how in much of Frank's later work, physical journeys and the places encountered on these journeys, are depicted through memory. The grand journeys of his early years give way to explorations of memory and contemplations of

home. He is investigating his own relationships and examining the banality of daily routine. His journeys are increasingly those of the imagination travelling into the past.

I will argue that Frank's diaristic approach, uses a synthesis of the photographic modes of documentary and fabricated fiction, interrogating the camera's record of surface appearances and creating a displaced sense of reality that exists in a place somewhere between the layers of perceived experience.

Verusca Calabria

Postgraduate student, MA Life History Research

Sussex University

The One and Other project <http://www.oneandother.co.uk/>

The artist Antony Gormley invited 2400 people representing a cross section of the national population according to its demographic distribution to stand on the 4th empty plinth in Trafalgar square for one hour each for 24 hours per day over 100 days between July and October 2009 as part of the One and Other project. The performances were broadcast live on line and are now archived via the One and Other website. The One and Other project attracted media worldwide attention. It has produced many hours of recorded materials, oral, visual and written, which is in the process of being archived for future research and reference. The Wellcome trust commissioned Oral Historian Verusca Calabria to collect 2400 oral histories of individuals before they stood on the plinth. These capture plinthers' sense of themselves, wellbeing, aspirations, values, hopes and fears for the future and issues around their choice of self-representation.

In this paper, the wider implications of participation with the One to One project will be explored through the textual analysis of a purposefully selected number of pre and post plinth oral history interviews and video footage to supply evidence of how plinthers went about creating a new art form and how they articulated a social movement with implications for personal and community well being, personal ambition and projection of their own identities. It also aims to examine how the event of having performed an act of self representation operates in people's memories, how the event was experienced and remembered in the individual imagination and in the context of a life told. The paper will also investigate the relationship of the plinthers to the audience – friends and family, passers by in the square and the on line community and their interaction via social networking sites to gain a broader understanding of the nation's cultural needs and what motivates their active participation in an online environment and, in turn, to shed light on how this virtual participation may have affected what the 'plinthers' did, how they did it and what they might have left out.

Chu YinHua

PhD Candidate

Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media, School of Media, Arts and Design,
University of Westminster

Staging memories: *Mise en Scène* the 'Imagined Cities' in photographic practice

This practice-based research arises from my experiences of travelling in and between different cities, which reveals a state whereby the perception of the physical environment is often overlapped by memories. The physical space that reflects the actual light into the eyes, through and across the spaces one remembers, imagines or fantasises, is constructed as what I term an 'imagined city'. 'Staging memories' takes *mise en scène* in photography beyond the conventional understanding of simply staging techniques, but as a devised methodology to perceive and experience the 'imagined city'.

The photographic projects examine the issues that have been addressed in the written thesis, bridging the gap between the systematic investigation of the theories and the evaluation of subjective experiences. My personal memories motivate the desire of deploying *mise en scène* in photography to search for the familiarities in foreign cities, which will be practiced through different devised methodologies to guide my experience of the 'imagined city'.

The thesis argues that the 'process' of *mise en scène* plays the most crucial part, which provides an approach to re-examine the subject matter and reveal what has been perceived in the psychical space, rather than the photographic results.

Photographic works. <http://www.chuyinhua.com>

Non-Place (Pinhole Photography)



Theresa Edlmann
PhD Candidate
Rhodes University, South Africa

Personal and political: making sense of South African Defence Force soldiers' stories

During the apartheid era in South Africa, a key component of the Nationalist government's strategy in combating both African nationalism and the perceived communist threat was the compulsory conscription of young white men into the South African Defence Force (SADF). It is estimated that about 600 000 men served in the SADF during the 25 year period that conscription was in place.

Conscription was one relatively small component of the system of racial classification used by the apartheid state, a system in which all South Africans' lives were impacted by the political domain and its group identity related social discourses. For white men, the draconian nature of conscription and the intensity of the military training they went through meant that their own lives, as well as their families, workplaces and social contexts, were significantly shaped by this system.

This paper will reflect on doctoral research which is investigating the current impact of SADF conscripts' experiences in terms of racism, militarism and possible trauma. The presentation will explore some of the methodological complexities of working with personal narratives that have both current and historical political resonances.

Nikolaos Efstratiou
MA Student, MA Photographic Studies
University of Westminster

Warning: Do Not Take This Picture

My theoretical and practical research is about the attack on photography in public spaces that has been taking place in the U.K the last years. Although photography is not officially banned, there is an attempt to prevent and constrain people from taking pictures; both amateur and professional photographers have been harassed and arrested across the country while taking pictures in public spaces. It seems that anyone with a camera is being targeted as a potential terrorist or paedophile.

My analysis does not focus on any legal issues, but rather I will try to answer the following questions: Is photography a threat to the state? How are photographers represented through state propaganda and what are the cultural and psychological implications of that? In the era of CCTV cameras and *Google Street View* why are photographers targeted in the public space?

At the same time my practice focuses on the mundane and banality of places where photographers have been arrested, as a proof that photography is under attack. Some of the places include the Houses of Parliament, a Fish and Chips shop in Kent, a bicycle lane in East Croydon and a park in Oldham.



Anna K. England
PhD candidate
University of Wroclaw, Poland

The public and private life of homosexuals in Polish art after 1989



<http://lokal30.pl/wp-content/gallery/karol-radziszewski/radziszewski-fag-fighters-2007.jpg>

According to Norman Davies the greatest tradition of Poland is its multicultural, multinational and multi-religious society. Unfortunately, the present country has no connection with that, which was once called “a country without stakes”. More than hundred years of partition, where the country of Poland vanished, the Second World War and then more than forty years of isolation under communism, which ended in 1989 changed Poland radically. Contemporary Poland is the most mono-ethnic country in Europe, with only one dominant religion. The Polish society is still stereotypically sex-role orientated and xenophobic, so the public acceptance of people who do

not match this “norm” is limited. Usually if something is not publicly accepted it finds another life in art. In Poland art is a broad battlefield for the freedom of sexual orientation, of gender, religion, race and nationality. Art is the forum where the “others” can speak, but what does “others” actually mean in this context? Who are they in public and in private? What does private and public mean for them? These are the questions I will answer.

Kathryn Breda Feehan

PhD Candidate

Sociology Department, Trinity College Dublin

Career routes and life history research: exploring business graduate careers

The decline of the ‘bureaucratic career’ has been well documented. Careers once associated with the large, stable, bureaucratic, hierarchical firm of the 1930’s are now increasingly outmoded within in the context of a ‘new economy’ of the last twenty years. The focus is now on the rise of the ‘boundaryless career’ associated with non-linear, diagonal, or lateral shifts. Based on a series of semi-structured life-history interviews carried out between October 2009 and April 2010 with business graduates of the 1970’s, 1980’s, 1990’s, 2000’s, this paper compares and contrasts the career histories between and within different cohorts in order to gain insight into their career self-understandings, values and aspirations. It is designed as a contribution to literature on business graduate careers, the sociology of work and employment, and life-history research. By separating the individual and their career from the company for which they work, this paper will present an account of changing patterns of careers in the context of individual’s lives as a whole and what their understandings of such changes are. By examining individual career routes and how decisions are made, this paper finds that rather than the ‘bureaucratic career’ route being replaced by a ‘boundaryless career’ the two co-exist. This paper argues then that career decisions have to be contextualised within the individual’s life history.

Florence Fröhlig

PhD student in ethnology

Baltic and East European Graduate School

Södertörn Högskola – Sweden

Transcending European Heritage. The Soviet prison camp of Tambov: social production of memory and memorial acting

My research concerns World War II’s remembrance in Europe and especially remembrance of the non-victorious. My focus lies on the Alsatian-Mosellan’s war prisoners in the USSR at the former

prison camp of Tambov (these men were enlisted by force in the German army). Since these men were victims who could not be recognised as such as they had been on the side of the attacker, most of the survivors chose silence, which signs an impossible neglect. Nonetheless, some changes occurred the last decades and survivors begun to engage themselves in acts of remembrance (pilgrimages).

More specifically the purpose of this paper is to analyze the mechanisms that allowed the emergence of their current act of commemoration. The study material consists of interviews with POW and by conducting fieldwork observation of the memorial activities.

This paper will deal with the concept of blocked communicative memory and thus examine the possibilities to appropriate an irreparable event, to mourn something that has no place in collective memory.

The main concern of this study is to offer insight into how the different actors manage to transcend their traumatic past experience and how they can re-inscribe their suffering inherent to World War II in a contemporary European context.

Aline Gaus

PhD Student

Department for Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield

Lest We Forget, war memory and identity

As a plea not to forget past sacrifices stands the epitaph “Lest We Forget” engraved in many war memorials. These words act as a constant reminder for past events which are taken to have altered the destiny of a group of people and form part of their collective memory. Yet, what is it we remember or what ought we not *forget*? And what are the *consequences* implied in case we do? The simple words “lest we forget” create a vacuum of concrete meaning within a symbolically- and emotionally-laden framework of loss, death, war, the nation and, above all its past, present and future.

Identifying this ‘obsession’ with memory as a phenomenon relating to the characteristics of modern societies and postmodern influences, I will trace the historical development of commemorative rituals of war. These cultural practices do not only renew the social bonds between members of a narrative identity, they are above all inscribed in a complex power structure. It is the relation between the concepts of democracy, the nation, the people, and, foremost, death and survival, which renders the discourse on war commemoration into one of the most sensitive topics today.

On the background of these reflections, I would like to examine the particular momentum created by community-organised repatriation ceremonies in the Southern English town of Wootton Bassett – a ‘new tradition’ which literally appeared out of the blue in 2007 and represents a unique platform for national commemoration and ‘death politics’.

Aniruddha Ghosal
MA Student
Sussex University

Conflation of the public and the private in Nadine Gordimer’s *My Son’s Story*

“And makes one little room, an everywhere” - *The Good Morrow*, John Donne

Foucault argues that power is omnipresent, infiltrating as easily through public structures as through private structures, often influencing people in ways unknown to them. He further goes on to say that every location in society serves the purpose of politicization. Power play does not recognize the boundaries of public and private, thus no area is apolitical and such categories need to be rearticulated. In this paper I propose to look at the way public and private spaces are defined and interact with each and with respect to each other, within the racial and sexual background of Gordimer’s *My Son’s Story*.

Gordimer’s *My Son Story* becomes interesting as it clearly exploits the public/private divide, enmeshing individuals in a multiplicity of discourses and viewpoints. This paper would look at what Gordimer calls a “lying society”, a society where the home is beyond the control of the self and falls under the jurisdiction of the state. Further the paper will discuss the linkages between race and sexuality with space. And finally end with the question posed by the novel itself, what is the space occupied by the writer?

Eve Gianoncelli
PhD candidate
University Paris 8- Vincennes-Saint-Denis

From the personal to the universal: the question of experience in Audre Lorde’s and bell hook’s works

This presentation is about two major representatives of Black feminism, Audre Lorde and bell hooks and about the re-definition of the boundaries between public and private spheres they implicate, through the question of experience. The approach of this question of experience will

aim at discussing the intricate link between personal expression and universality through the exam of the role of experience for these black intellectual women, the ways in which they point it out and try to give sense to its consubstantial multiplicity linked to the overlapping of gender, race, class and sexuality. Lorde and hooks echo each other in their deep will and ability to explore the tension between theory and practice, to communicate and share their experience and intimacy, in order to lead to a process of “conscientisation”. But on the ways in which they mean it, they also differ. The fact of saying “I” and “we” is linked with two different modes of subjectivation and strategies of address which reinforce the complexity of their experience(s), and thus its status. Focusing on their autobiographical writings, speeches but also more particularly on the ways in which they deal with experience in their academic essays, I thus intend to show to what extent experience is a strategy of trouble based upon these women’s will to act individually and collectively as subjects. As a white woman wishing to tell the stories of women intellectuals, I concentrate on what appears to me as a strong and deep personal and political expression.

Victoria Harrison
PhD Candidate
University of Birmingham

World War, personal conflict: questions of identity in young girls’ autobiographical writings of World War II

This paper will discuss the theme of identity in the writings of young girls under the German Occupation of France in World War II. Young girls’ literary responses to the period, their diaries and memoirs, serve a dual purpose: to provide a historical account of the period and to convey their own personal story. However their accounts reveal that these two aspects were not mutually exclusive, as the circumstances of this specific historical period had a profound influence on their adolescence. The most distinguishing feature of the period was the German presence which became a feature of the French landscape after the defeat of France in June 1940. However young girls’ autobiographical writings reveal that their relationships with the Germans were much more complex than the terms occupied and occupiers would suggest. As the war progressed, young girls’ perceptions of the enemy evolved to the extent that they began to question whether they were in fact just ordinary people. They were also conscious of how their reactions to the Germans would be perceived by other members of French society. This paper will therefore consider the questions of personal and national identity that are raised in young girls’ discourses.

Jane Hattrick
PhD Candidate
School of Humanities, Faculty of Arts, University of Brighton

Through the archive: the public life and private world of the Queen's couturier

The British couturier, Norman Hartnell, was only twenty-two when his couture house opened in 1923. Once his first collection was shown in March 1924, particular aspects of his private and working life began to be published in newspapers and magazine articles. Very early pieces about Hartnell revealed his expertise in female impersonation alongside photographs of him wearing the fashionable dress he had himself designed. These were quickly replaced by more sophisticated photographs of him taken at home in his interiors; his constructed identity staged for public consumption as the Cambridge graduate, the 'dress artist', the collector of decorative art and antiques, wearing impeccably tailored suits adhering to sartorial norms appropriate to his gender and class. His female impersonation noticeably airbrushed from his life story.

My research in the archive & collection pertaining to Hartnell's private and working life has revealed life long, personal tensions between the outwardly acceptable public face of the celebrated fashion designer and dressmaker to the Queen, and the private world of a cross-dressing, gay man living through the best part of the twentieth century. Early draft versions of his autobiography published in 1955 reveal these tensions. Paragraphs hinting at Hartnell's personal struggles with his own identity were crossed out in the editing process. All best efforts were made by Hartnell to live his private life discretely. Nevertheless, in silent objects, personal letters, handwritten poetry and personal photographs, Hartnell's private life unfolds, supported by the oral testimony of his loyal staff. Through his self-fashioning, evident in the clothes that he wore, studio photographs taken throughout his life, images of his interiors and the objects he collected extant in the archive, and the transference of his taste and identity onto the garments he designed, Hartnell's private world emerges.

Sarah Haybittle
PhD Candidate
University of Brighton

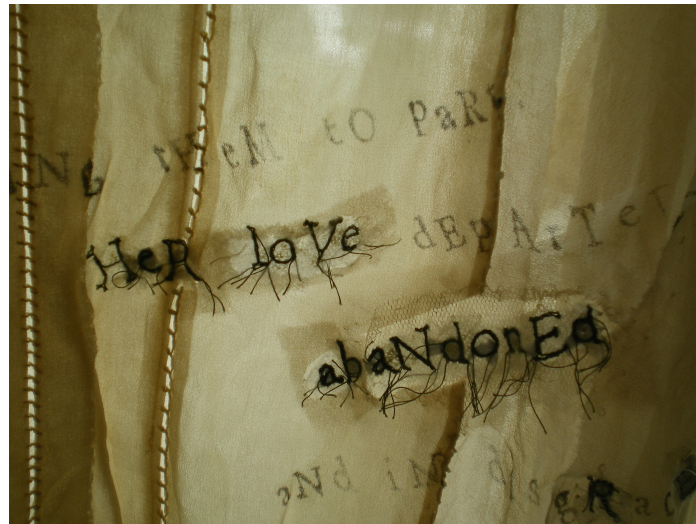
Private life – public face: visualising histories of silence

Fugitive Tales from the Edge of Memory is practice-based research, exploring narrative, memory, and the pursuit of eloquent story telling. It investigates the political and social contrasts and confinements experienced by women from 1900-1939.

The co-existence of theory and practice are integral to the research, exploring the creative potential of making the invisible, visual: addressing the ways in which the parallel perspectives of biography, creativity and social history can be developed and maximised for their potential to engage and communicate.

Biographic moments – the private voice – like suspended conversations, act as ambassador to articulate more ubiquitous, yet hidden histories, conveying contrast, restriction and disparity, harnessing memory, narrative, and a visual language to narrate the more tangible subjectivities of gender, class, politics or convention – the public face.

Fugitive tales are fragments, captured in composition by the symbolic and evocative. Narratives with embedded trace, absence, and condensations are threaded through artworks, employing poetics, materiality, ephemera and the marks of time to mediate between memory and a visual interpretation of social history. Artworks become armatures for narrative, a framework for meaning through which to unveil aspects of the undocumented, by acting as a utility between sight and insight.



Fergus Heron
Early Career Researcher
University of Brighton

Photographs: shopping centres

This paper presents fine art practice based research that considers how photography might depict everyday spaces for public display, private desire and consumption. In doing so, it proposes a reconsideration of public space as an interior ordered according to private commerce in which the photographic image itself is central. In the process of this work, photography constructs comparative de-populated views of the interior of shopping centres that reference

architecture from classical antiquity to the post-modern, making newly visible connections, discontinuities and tensions between tradition and modernity.



Images (from left to right) Royal Victoria Place 2009, Westfield Derby 2009, Lakeside 2004

Amanda Holloway
PhD Candidate
University of Ulster

Reframing the self between memory, experience and belonging in contemporary photographic art from Northern Ireland

I will examine the reframing of normative, socially constituted narratives of identity and social order by contemporary photographic artists in Northern Ireland, and the shifting relationship between these narratives and actual lived experience, at the intersection of performativity and memory discourse.

Taking as its context a setting wherein identity is comprised of mutually supportive relationships based on the very smallest semiotic nuances of cultural difference, this paper will question what can be learned (and indeed unlearned) about such oppositional models of self and other. By examining the appropriation of the photographic medium (itself a primary vehicle in the everyday visual representation of personal identity and memory) to the subjective and narrative ends of the artists, I will postulate whether it is possible to plot a trajectory in approach from abstraction and absented bodies in earlier representations of identity (during the socio-political impasse), to contemporary 'post-conflict' articulations of embodiment and the corporeal. I will investigate what has enabled this reconfiguration of the figurative, this paradigm shift to human body as dominant visual trope and investigate if it measurable against a distinct epochal shift or tenable transition in artistic subjectivities?

This will presuppose an analysis of estrangements and overlaps in depictions of both public and private experiences which (I am arguing) can be understood to hinge on Performativity. Taking the view that diverging narrative orders of performativity reconcile different artistic subjectivities, one

dealing with social collectivity the other with individual experience, we are led to consider the tradition of portraiture, and the status of the body as the self in each approach.

Luciana-Marioara Jinga

PhD candidate

Angers University, France-Al. I. Cuza University, Iasi, Romania

Researcher at The Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the memory on Romanian exile

A party for all: collective biography, identity and symbolic representation of women during the Romanian communist regime

During my research in the field of women history within the Romanian Communist Party (PCR) in the second half of the XXth century, I've noticed the lack of biography use in retracing the evolution of the communist's regime institutions, organizations and social movements. The opening of the communist archives in Romania is an excellent occasion for the historians to use and to present to the public the insides of the Romanian communist regime. Nevertheless, not all the material is exploited at his full potential. An example in this case is the poor use of autobiographies, critiques, self-accusations and briefing reports made by the secret police, all, important pieces in the personal files of each party member. My study is concentrated on the complexity of the women personal files and their use as a history source. I compared 90 personal files of women that were members of the Central Committee of PCR. This analysis permits to observe the mechanisms behind different types of political involvement, social origins, forms of socialization, professional perspectives, the motivation for a political career but also to see the approaches and the mechanisms behind the leading group. This precise type of source may be used with very good result in studding the Romanian communist regime but also in fields not yet or little exploited, such as women history. The study of Women communist mass organizations can particularly benefit from this type of sources. Another possible and yet absent type of approach is a regard from a feminist point of view of the equality policies introduced by the Romanian communist party and their impact on the society: access to political leadership, the gendered division of knowledge and labour. The acknowledgement of this specific type or sources opens the way to different and substantial paths for the history of communism in general and the Romanian communist regime in particular.

Jenny Keane
PhD Candidate
Department of Art and Design, University of Ulster, Belfast.

‘The Problem of Representability’: lesbian depiction in contemporary art



How can femininity that does not assimilate into a masculine-feminine binarism be depicted in art? The theorist Terry Castle believes that the lesbian in literature and cinema is generally presented as a spectre; she is subtly implied but never acknowledged. Castle writes, ‘the lesbian remains a kind of ‘ghost-effect’ in (...) modern life: elusive, vaporous, difficult to spot – even when she is there, in plain view, mortal and magnificent, at the centre of the screen. Some may deny she exists at all.’ (Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian*, 1993). Thus many films, the horror film in particular, epitomise patriarchal and heteronormative ‘ideals’, while inextricably adumbrating and portraying the lesbian character as elusive, horrific, and Other.

Through an analysis of the work of three artists, Lisa Byrne, Breda Lynch and my own art practice, I will attempt to examine the relationship between the issues of private sexuality and its public display in contemporary art. I will show through an analysis of lesbian art practice, that these artists use a subversive method of appropriating the horror genre to challenge the culturally constructed tropes of heteronormativity and explore the issues of female sexuality that have previously been represented as monstrous, dangerous, and/or hidden.

Jolene Mairs
PhD Student
University of Ulster, Coleraine

Prisons memory archive: audio visual recordings of experiences within prison in Northern Ireland

This presentation will describe the collaborative methodology employed in creating the Prisons Memory Archive, a collection of over 200 audiovisual recordings of former prisoners, prison

officers and many other professionals who were connected to the Maze/Long Kesh and Armagh Prisons during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The stories were recorded onsite at the now derelict prisons where the participants recalled their memories as they walked through the prisons, without the use of the formal interview.

I will describe how the telling of the individual narrative generates a metanarrative of the journey from armed conflict to political negotiation via continuous protests from the prisoners who describe their technique as 'educate to agitate to liberate.'

I will explore various exhibition modes for the recordings, from a linear intercut documentary to a non-linear, multi-narrative gallery exhibition.

The presentation will include clip(s) from the recordings.

Marilisa Malizia

PhD candidate

Department of Sociology and Political Sciences, University of Calabria

“Disarmed as regards outside.” From the non-position to the ethical turn: feminist ways of being political

The political violence of the Italian Seventies has generally accelerated or deeply contributed to the crisis of social movements. In the case of the Italian feminist movement, the gloomy period and what has been regarded as the feminists' guilty silence on “terrorism” marked the end of the season of “public happiness” (Rossi-Doria, 2005) and opened up a painful homecoming, a return into the private sphere.

By juxtaposing oral history interviews with women active in the Italian feminist movement with the analysis of material regarding these issues from feminist journals of the period under study, I'd like to reflect on the moment of passage from the public to the mourning and its elaboration. Particularly, I will analyse the implications of feminists' reactions towards political violence on both private lives in terms of personal reshaping of “thresholds of sustainability” (Braidotti, 2006), and on feminist conceptualizations and strategies of being and acting politically.

References:

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Rossi-Doria, A., (2005) “Ipotesi per una storia che verrà” in Bertilotti, T., Scattigno, A., (eds), *Il femminismo degli anni Settanta*, Roma, Viella

Catherine Page

MA Student, Life History Research: Oral History and Life History Documents

University of Sussex

From flea pit to art house: How and why the Duke of York's survived through the '60s, '70s and '80s



My MA dissertation will focus on the middle years in the life of an institution: how and why did the Duke of York's survive in Brighton during the 60's, 70s' and '80s when so many cinemas went to the wall at that time. Having been built as the focal point of entertainment in a thriving area in 1910 and remaining as such for the next 50 years, it overlooked the changing demography of the London Road in the '60s, it embodied the drab meanness of much of the '70s and then, thanks in large part to the BFI leaving Brighton, it became the art-house venue so beloved of students in the '80s. This is public history but I have also gathered the private histories of people who worked in it, who went there and for all of whom those walls contain very special memories. Until 1976 it was family run and owned and during this time it entertained people to tea and gangs to fights. But when the family sold up the owner thought the end had come for small cinemas. The next five years were critical and although some would say that its survival was mere serendipity, I will argue that there was an unorganised nucleus of people close to it who knew what a gem it was and who were determined to save it.

Dr Ged Robinson

Albert's Story

Whilst researching the prefabricated housing programme initiated by Churchill's coalition government to provide temporary housing after WW II, I discovered that a young man, Albert Deighton, and his family were invited to live in the very first prototype. They found that this steel 'prefab' proved uninhabitable due to severe condensation problems. However, these faults that were never made public as this particular design was much promoted by Churchill himself and a considerable amount of money had been invested in the project. At the time, Albert was accused of leaking the information on the condensation problems to the press. He was threatened with

imprisonment and homelessness for his family. Now aged 90, he no longer feels silenced by the Official Secrets Act that he was obliged to sign as a junior civil servant. This is his story.

Helen Roche
PhD candidate
University of Cambridge

Recollecting the Nazi past: correspondence and conversation with ex-pupils of the Third Reich's elite schools

As part of my PhD research on the influence of Classical history in Nazi elite educational ideology, I have initiated correspondence with (and, in one case, interviewed) ex-pupils from the two main types of Nazi elite-school; the Adolf-Hitler-Schools and National-Political Educational Institutes (Napolas) – all of whom are now in their eighties. This paper would discuss some of the challenges and points of interest which such an investigation into 'personal life histories' raises, using a variety of written and oral examples.

How do men of this generation – too young to be implicated in the Nazi regime's crimes, yet old enough to have lived in its embrace from infancy to late adolescence – come to terms with memories of their schooldays at these Nazi elite educational institutions, which aimed to prepare them for positions as future leaders of the 'Thousand-Year Reich'?

Since History (including ancient history) was one of the most ideologically-saturated subjects at the schools, these ex-pupils' recollections of history-teaching, and the varying ways in which they engage with this aspect of their schooldays, can provide an instructive case-study which affords illuminating insights into their general relationship with their Nazi past.

Sharon M Spooner
MPhil Student (progressing to PhD)
University of Liverpool

Inside stories; an exploration of the work experience of doctors through embedded research

A wealth of publicly available material presents a range of insights into the work experience of doctors, including quantitative research evidence, depictions in the mass media, and through personal contact. Such representations may differ significantly from experiences and subsequent constructions as expressed by individual practitioners.

Through narrative, life-course interviews with my medical school cohort, I draw on ideas from BNIM (the Biographic- Narrative-Interpretive Method (Wengraf 2001)). By following the leads given by interviewees in developing accounts of incidents and events from their experience, I aim to better understand the private reflections and sense-making stories of these often publicly muted voices.

My focus in this paper is to reflect on how the juxtaposition of my new researcher role interacting with former fellow students produces complex and unique effects, can influence participants' decisions to participate, the experiences which they disclose, the use of underlying assumptions and opportunities to challenge implausibility. With reference to Situational Analysis (Clarke 2005) I will present some initial thoughts on these consequences of my position as both 'insider' and 'researcher' within this social world and how I believe my research contributes to mapping the territory between the 'public' perception and 'private' accounts of doctors working in the NHS.

References:

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'Kept the house together': remembering marriage and family in Glasgow, c.1945-1980

The decades following WWII are identified with the apparent dissemination of the 'companionate marriage' ideal amongst the working classes and the seeming re-emergence of domesticity, particularly in the 1950s. With similarly important implications for family life, sociologists and historians identify a further discursive shift in the 1970s, highlighting the increased availability of contraception, the emergence of second-wave feminism and landmark equality legislation. My paper draws on oral testimony to evaluate the interaction between 'public' discourse and 'private' experience of marriage and family in Glasgow.

A gendered approach reveals the extent to which local masculinities and femininities in the ostensibly 'private' sphere of the household were shaped by multiple factors, including the demands of 'public' arenas such as the workplace. For example, although the masculine identity of the Glaswegian man altered in accordance with unprecedented social conditions, the sexual

division of labour at work was frequently echoed by a pronounced demarcation of gender relations at home. Conventional discourses therefore remained powerful, albeit increasingly subject to deconstruction and rejection. It is through the use of oral history, my paper demonstrates, that the historical reality of the 'private', everyday experience of married and family life in post-war Glasgow might begin to be captured.

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Atlases

In *The Postmodern Condition* Lyotard investigates the problem of the legitimization of scientific discourse in the face of the collapse of the Metanarratives. He points out that 'for the last forty years the "leading" sciences and technologies have to do with language....problems of communication....problems of translation....problems of information storage'. For Lyotard, history, both public and private, is destabilised and strategically renegotiated from the standpoint of the present, and is in flux.

The artists Richter and Raad in different ways are using the Postmodern paradigm implied by theorists like Lyotard to reassess histories retrospectively. Both the individual and collective experiences of historical record are called into question and re contextualised. I will discuss this radical artistic strategy which is possible only due to the dissolution of old narratives regarding the status of history, the personal account and the public enunciation.

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Narrative constructions of personal and collective meanings of breast cancer

This study looks at the way social forces shape the meanings that we give to traumatic experiences and how societal attitudes influence a personal trauma such as breast cancer.

I will be looking at the current perceptions of the specific trauma of breast cancer, highlighting the numerous narratives that co-exist. These include the focus on the individual's lifestyle choices and mental attitude by medical and self-help professionals, celebrity survivor stories and consciousness-raising pink ribbon campaigns.

Taking a feminist perspective, I will highlight how some of these discourses around breast cancer are not always helpful to women who are living with the disease.

This study aims to examine women's own stories of their breast cancer experience to see how they make sense of the disruption caused by the trauma, in the midst of these sometimes conflicting narratives. Of particular interest is the way that some women's lives (including my own) are transformed in a positive way by the trauma of breast cancer.

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Media and memorialisation in the work of Gordon Burn



Gordon Burn's novels, true-crime and non-fiction writing form an alternative cultural history of Britain in the last fifty years; an overriding concern of which is the memorialising of crime, both spatially through physical monuments and in terms of folk narratives reified by a pervasive media culture.

Using the novels *Alma Cogan* (1991) and *Fullalove* (1995) as well as charting his haunting preoccupation with the image of Myra Hindley, I will argue Burn figures the memorial as a fraught symbol – on one hand a unifying marker for a divided, blanched society; and on the other a dangerously monolithic way of mediating the increasingly fraught relationship between private identity and public image. This memorialising urge is reflected in a contemporary culture obsessed with 'reformatting, word-counting, re-nosing experience; putting a headline on it before it has a chance to be felt' (Burn, 1995).

This paper forms the first section of a planned research project on Burn and will employ theoretical perspectives from Walter Benjamin and Michel de Certeau, also touching on the relationship of Burn's work with other contemporary writers including David Peace.

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Bright screen would I were steadfast as thou art: 'public possibility' in writing for electronic media

John Keats trod the familiar borderline of the poet regarding public and private worlds, dealing in intimacies which had public intent. Following his death in 1821 there was then considerable debate as to whether his love letters should be published and, with this, a developing awareness of what was public and what private in a world of increasingly penetrative publication and distribution facilities.

Post-romantic notions of celebrity and identity continue to tread this border between public and private. This paper contends that everyday consciousness of self includes the need to operate at this borderland and that it is inherent in the act of writing for electronic media.

With methodologies of stylistic analysis and creative intervention, this research demonstrates the consciousness of a “public possibility” in communication by web and email. Making, in this, a connection with poetics, it considers: the engagement with fame; the battle to retain a belief that a public /private nexus should be within the control of the author; and further recognises a newer notion of privacy which, rather than seeking secrecy, embraces this “public possibility” and relies for anonymity upon the sheer volume of contemporaneously authored selves in the fictive sphere of ether-communications.