

The 7th Cultural Intersections International Colloquium International

*Organised by Kingston University (London, United Kingdom), in association with
Department of Languages and Linguistics, McMaster University (Ontario, CA)*

Cinema, Trauma and Displacement (Carrie Tarr, Kingston University)

This strand examines cinematic inscriptions of trauma in both fictional and documentary investigations of displacement. It evaluates the aesthetic strategies that can be deployed in film to portray the havoc wreaked by displacement, be it through addressing (memories of) the acts of terror that instigate or accompany a journey, and/or the traumas experienced by the migrant/exile when abroad, and/or the ongoing trauma of the loss of 'home'. It questions how cinema can represent the interiority of traumatized, displaced individuals, given the difficulty such individuals experience in integrating trauma into their sense of self. It examines what social functions these cinematic narratives might perform. And it explores the extent to which the trauma of displacement is inscribed within the work of migrant/displaced filmmakers.

Cities of Trauma (Stephen Barber, Kingston University)

How do cities experience and mediate trauma? We hear of stones that weep, walls that wail, buildings that cry out with memory. Through conflict, exile, dislocation and suffering, cities undergo profound transmutations which leave tangible marks on their edifices: scars of bullets, graffiti inscriptions on urban surfaces, over-layered texts and hoardings. In that sense, a correspondence may be drawn between the trauma of human bodies and those of the infrastructures of cities, and that correspondence has been explored in many works of art, film and literature. Recent memorials and other buildings may constitute 'architectures of trauma'. This session will explore fragments of the trauma of cities, and cities of trauma.

Class Trauma (François Nectoux, Kingston University)

Are we all class-less AND middle-class nowadays? Beyond the pretence of dominant discourses about the classless society, class is still a fundamental (de)structuring agent in our contemporary societies, be it in the socio-economic realm or at cultural level. As such it is a major contributor to social trauma: the impact of current and past social crises, the continued fascination with class-based cultural behaviours reminds us of this. Indeed, it can be a whole community that goes through the trauma of class disappearance, for instance – remember the Miners Strike in Britain, or the disappearance of peasant cultures in many countries around the world? Individuals equally experience trauma of unemployment, of class rejection, etc. This session will explore the themes of traumatic social change and its impact on social groups and individuals, as expressed or represented through a variety of media and voices, either as celebrations of times changing or as paeans to ruined cultures.

Narrating Trauma (Tamás Bényei, University of Debrecen)

"Our memory repeats to us what we haven't understood" – wrote Paul Valéry. This repetition of that which has not been understood often takes the form of narrative. In *Waterland*, Graham Swift suggests that there is an intrinsic connection between the act of storytelling and trauma: storytelling

“begins only at the point where things go wrong”. This session invites papers that explore aspects of this connection. Is there a sense in which storytelling as such is post-traumatic? How are narratives of trauma affected by the fact that, according to psychoanalysis, trauma is a structure of the subject and the temporality of the subject rather than a single event? How can narratives of trauma be approached through current poststructuralist terms of the discussion of narrative (e.g. the notion of the “event” in thinkers like Lyotard and Andrew Gibson)? How does trauma disturb or disrupt the representational and narrative aspects of stories? How does trauma relate to the inevitable intersubjectivity of storytelling (for instance in the Levinasian sense of “trauma”)? What is the role of narrative and storytelling in working through individual and collective experiences of trauma? How are trauma and traumatic storytelling related to transference and repetition?

Remediating Trauma (Chris Horrocks)

This strand examines the link between trauma and its visual representation – the problematic reordering of the traumatic real in the aesthetic field – to ask whether art is a residual trace of trauma, an amplification of it, or its elision and repression. It also focuses on the remediation of trauma, or the processes through which traumatic content of one medium often becomes reworked in another form (e.g. Hitchcock’s *Psycho*, replayed in slow-motion over 24 hours by Douglas Gordon; Warhol’s *Tunafish Disaster* of 1963; Marina Abramovic’s 2005 ‘re-performance’ of Gina Pane’s 1973 *Self-Portraits*). When one art form remediates another which already includes traumatic content (of whatever form) how might we understand the link between the traumatic real, its representation and re-representation? Is the reiteration of trauma understandable as an attenuation of the traumatic event at source, or its consolidation by aesthetic means? What role does mass mediation have in this re-duplication of trauma? The strand invites responses which look at painting, sculpture, photography, the moving and/or digital image, installation art, performance art.

Responses to Trauma in the Visual Arts (Fran Lloyd, Kingston University)

How have artists, curators and commentators responded to individual or collective trauma through an engagement with the visual arts? In an age of reconciliation museums, acutely aware of the politics of memory and asymmetries of power, how do we visualise trauma?

As various writers have observed, the language of those experiencing trauma is an intensely visual (and visceral) one encompassing flashbacks to screen images. Equally, the processes of recovery from trauma emphasise the often literal breaking of silence – of speaking about the unspeakable, the need for narratives, and the vital role of the listener.

This session will focus on the different strategies that artists, curators and commentators from different locations and positionings have employed to visualise trauma. In particular, papers are welcomed that propose ways of visualising trauma and of creating spaces which open up the possibilities for individuals and groups to engage with this difficult subject. Papers may focus on specific works across the visual arts, on responses to particular traumatic events, or on exhibitions, performance art or installation art responding to trauma.

The Legacy of Colonial Trauma (Lieve Spaas, Kingston University)

How do former colonies recover from the scars of history? Throughout history colonisers have inflicted upon countries and continents a trauma, the legacy of which we now attempt to assess and

understand. Colonial trauma is not a sudden event but a slow and long-term disruption that affects an entire society and is silently transmitted to subsequent generations. How tangible are the marks left upon societies in the process of colonisation and decolonisation? How does the colonial trauma reflect the specific nature of different colonising processes? Were nations such as India and China better equipped than Africa to overcome the colonial trauma? Can the trauma of Australia's Lost Generation be healed? And is there not also a trauma of the colonisers? These are some of the questions that could be explored in this session which may be of interest for scholars in different disciplines in the humanities and social sciences including history, cultural studies, film studies, and art.

The Unspeakable: the Language of Trauma (Magda Stroinska)

Language is a tool for communication. Trauma is an experience that cannot be easily communicated. It is the unspeakable that often leaves its victims speechless. And yet, we communicate trauma not only by what we say but also by what we leave out. Silence may speak volumes. Physical trauma may render the body shattered and 'brain dead' but is the brain of a person in coma really dead? What can brain imaging tell us about it? If words fail us, can body language communicate trauma? If truth is too terrible to be expressed, what can be learned from the lies? This session explores all of the languages a traumatized person may use to express the unspeakable.

Vengeance, sacrifice, catharsis: expériences masculines et féminines (Anne et Catherine Saouter UQUAM)

Devant l'expérience universelle de la souffrance et du traumatisme, les cultures ont élaboré diverses réponses destinées à en apprivoiser les impacts. Du droit légitimé à une violence vengeresse jusqu'à la sanctification du don de soi, en passant par les rituels et les œuvres conçus expressément à des fins de consolation, de réparation ou de protection, les sociétés ont également pensé leur réponse au trauma en impliquant différemment les individus appelés à jouer un rôle cathartique (selon l'appartenance sociale, culturelle et/ou sexuelle).

Cette session du colloque veut donc favoriser, en choisissant une perspective multidisciplinaire (anthropologie, Gender Studies, histoire, sémiotique, etc.), l'étude des expériences masculines et féminines en la matière, prenant pour objet leur expression et leur communication dans l'espace collectif. Il peut s'agir de récits, d'images, de témoignages, d'actions publiques, d'œuvres d'art, de cérémonies, etc., en réaction aux violences de la guerre, de la société, de la famille, du sport et de tant d'autres lieux de l'être-ensemble.

Young People Online: The Internet as a Medium for Trauma and Traumatic Experience (Julia Davidson, Kingston University)

Recent research demonstrates that in the past five years home and schools Internet access has rapidly grown. As a result, young people spend more and more time online. Livingstone and Bober (2008) suggest that one fifth (19%) of 9-19 year olds spend about 10 minutes per day online, half spend between about half an hour (25%) and one hour (23%) online, and a further fifth go online for between one (14%) and three hours (6%) each day (Livingstone & Bober, 2008:19). These figures can be viewed positively if the Internet is perceived as a vital tool for education, research and informal peer communication. Young people have embraced the new technology with enthusiasm by using interactive services like online games and social networking sites. However, the Internet

acts as a new medium through which some commonly recognised forms of sexual and emotional abuse take place. The Internet has the potential to be a place of wonder for young people but also a medium for trauma: a place where school bullying can extend unseen into a young person's home (Jewkes, 2003); where anonymous threats can be made (Livingstone & Bober, 2008); where it is possible to encounter adults wishing to 'groom' and sexually abuse (Davidson & Martellozzo, 2008) and where identity can be stolen (Jewkes, 2003). The use of the Internet as a means of communication has in extreme cases led to, the abuse and abduction of young people, suicide pacts and cyber-bullying prompted suicides.

This 'stream' seeks to explore the Internet as a medium of trauma for young people, focusing upon research exploring the perceptions, behaviour and experience of young people online. Papers are invited in the following areas:

1. Young people's online behaviour – How do young people use the Internet?
2. Online risks- young people's views and strategies - what do young people experience and what strategies have they developed in response?

(eg Cyberbullying and peer threat, Grooming, unsolicited offensive materials and emails, identity theft.)