

AOW 09 SUM

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Definitions – Some of the evolving boilerplate of the conference – the starting points:
glosses on “peace,” “reconciliation,” e.g.; an outline of the build-up to the
Rwandan genocide; ways of navigating the conference

Papers and presentations

[Thanks at the outset to our partners in the IGSC: Jean-Pierrre Karegeye and Chantal Kalisa.

Thanks to the CalArts contingent: President Steve Lavine, Vice President Lynn Rosenfeld, Provost Nancy Uscher, Associate Theater Dean Leslie Tamribuchi, Head of Acting Marissa Chibas, Company Manager Christy Willets, Sound Faculty Kevin Goold, Administrative Assistants Barbara Edwards and Cammy Berndt, and the student volunteer team: Leslie Fariman, Jie Flowers, Eric Gorleski, Patrick Janssen, Desiree Nu'uhiwa Koanui, Rachel Levy, Nathalie Lim, Matthew Mellinger, Sara Peterson, Katie Shook, Dan Wolfe, Miranda Wright, Bryan Yu.]

INVITATION/OVERVIEW

Arts in the One World (Four)

Motherhood and Revolution: How women, and mothers in particular, are innovating in conflict and post conflict circumstances, and expanding the models for ways in which one is an artist/activist in the world.

***January 14-18 2009, California Institute of the Arts
Valencia, California***

A thread through the conference: esthetic diversity – how new economic academic models in the arts require a breadth of expressive styles and techniques.

AOW is an annual gathering hosted by the School of Theater, conceived and executed in collaboration with the broad participation of the Institute as a whole. Students and faculty from CalArts and around the world, along with the general public, are invited to discuss and present on the various ways artistic, political, and historical purposes intersect (reconciliation, the recovery of historical memory, advocacy for justice, the formation and maintenance of libraries as places for knowledge creation). It is the local anchor of an ongoing artistic exchange CalArts conducts with the Interdisciplinary Genocide Studies

Center (IGSC) in Rwanda, where each summer a group of students, faculty, and professionals travel to Rwanda and Uganda, to study genocide and acts of mass violence, exploring the ways in which art may participate in the processes of renewal. We travel in both directions to assert that in neither case is it a matter of an “us” going “there.” Rather, we are here (one world). What draws one to a study of genocide, to brokenness? Frequently it is a sense of return or recognition – one comes to the subject, in need; not donating power, but matching brokenness with brokenness. Healing is an exchange.

The IGSC is our partner in hosting and building the conference and the summer program; we have collaborated with them on the founding of a library in Kigali (a CalArts sister library), where the Tutsi genocide is researched, testimony is gathered, negationism is resisted, and a social space for survivors is afforded.

The AOW conferences always begin with a focus on Rwanda, and they take their theme from the present dynamic in the country. Past conferences have therefore focused on the persistence of Genocide and strategies for hope in survival; Culture and Identity (moving from colonial impositions and internalizations to a new sense of the citizen); and Curricula and Agenda (inspired by efforts in Rwanda to elicit and archive historical memory, to reform the teaching of history, and to make education the cornerstone of social and economic development.)

The present conference initiates from the work being done in Rwanda by, with and for women. Rwanda now has the highest percentage of women in parliament; a country with a large number of widows and rape survivors is organizing to reclaim itself through the empowerment of a heavily assaulted population.

From a specific grounding in the Rwandan experience, the conference always moves out conically – lacing subject matter through related histories and disciplines. It is the premise of the *Interdisciplinary* Genocide Studies Center that genocide is a total event – in astronomy: a singularity – not anomalous, but each an absolute, and indescribable by any single frame. To arrive at something approaching a description of genocide, all media, all métiers, must be employed in a global surround. To this end, we dedicate time over our few days together to Palestine, Latin America, and Kurdistan. At the widening bell of the cone we consider the role of motherhood in the arts/arts activism. The conference topic is something I’ve wanted to take on for years now; I see peers and mentors in the theater having babies, running theaters, engaging in political issues... The wisdom (and sheer trials) of such a loaded practice shed light on arts/activism in general.

The conference is not limited to biological mothers; it is not heterosexist in orientation. It takes activist mothers as teachers, and the learning moves broadly from there.

AOW is the continuation of conversation begun at the University of Iowa in ’94, where a group of alternative theaters assembled to share work and ways of working, motored by a pledge to meet regularly, despite the impossibilities, freely (anarchically; no charge), in exercise of hospitality. This group called itself the *rat conference*, and for ten years rehearsed manifesto for a new way of organizing the arts, along the lines of will and

imagination, as opposed to institutional objectivity. It ceased active operation in 2004; AOW is another iteration, where the conversations is more intentional, the agenda is more socially purposed, and the rhythm more regular. We look to redeem brevity (in Valencia, in Rwanda/Uganda) through repetition, forming an ensemble of like-minded people interested in concrete acts (the creation, preservation and dissemination of new knowledge, expanded understandings of cross-disciplinary practice – especially between the arts and peace building, and – realized presence: showing up, being with, witnessing).

Our consistent subjects then: art as an engine for social change, with an emphasis on the grass roots and personal authority.

At CalArts we believe that art is the practice of holding space in common. In every creative act, the question is: how may this be held cooperatively? This is the model and realization of theater's political mission: our reality is social, our excellence achieves its quality in the give-away. The fact of the conference, the habit of it, is its signal achievement; and from being with, witness, living presence, we stir to nautilus discourse. We are a company of people with some common questions, and a diversity of answers – prime ground for conversation.

Peace,

Erik Ehn
Dean, School of Theater
California Institute of the Arts

[Moved in and out of motherhood theme – addressed directly and indirectly]

AOW 09 AGENDA

Jan 14, Wednesday Evening: Introductions and Orientation – Simplicity and Complexity [Coffeehouse Theater]

Each day will begin with a presentation that lays out some of the social and historical background undergirding the day's various topics, in an effort to make clear that legitimate moral stands and elections need to take place (simply: this happened and must be witnessed to), and also that simplicity is beset with numerous challenges (on the one hand – we must avoid over simplification, or - for example – an orthodoxy of permanent victimhood; on the other hand we must avoid overcomplicating the record to the point where moral position is mooted).

Each day will also make space towards the end for open-space meetings and free discussion.

Guiding issues: The persistence of negationism; the patriarchy of form (an assumption of Western models of theater and performance); the marriage of artistic excellence and ethical efficacy.

- 7-8 Opening Remarks: Jean-Pierre Karegeye, Erik Ehn
Taylor Kraus, Voices of Rwanda [Coffeehouse]
- 8-10 Documentary Film: *Mères courage* by Léo Kalinda, followed by
discussion moderated by Chantal Kalisa [Coffeehouse]

Jan 15, Thursday: The Role of Women in the Reconstruction of Rwanda

Facilitator: Jean-Pierre Karegeye

- 8:30-9 Convening and conversation (A brief opening performance/presentation;
coffee and food; a summary of the previous day, highlighting action items)
[Main Gallery]
- 9-10:30 Panel Presentation, chaired by Chantal Kalisa [Coffeehouse]
Mathilde Mukantabana: *Women and Social Work*
Kaliza Karuretwa: *Weaving a Future: Rwandan Women Help in
Nation Rebuilding* (to be confirmed)
Chantal Kalisa: *Becoming a Writer – Rwandan Women
Testimonials*
Taylor Kraus: *Recording testimony*
- 10:45-12:30 **Keynote Speech A – Jean de Dieu Mucyo: *Genocide Denial and
National and International Justice: the work of Rwanda's National
Commission against Genocide*** [Coffeehouse]
- 12:30-1:30 Lunch
- 1:30-3 Rwandan Ambassador to the United States, James Kimonyo –
[Coffeehouse]
- 3:15-4:30 Dr. Margee Ensign – *The Role of Women in Rwanda's Nation Building*
- 4:45-6 *Artists Respond to the Genocide* [Coffeehouse]

Sabrina Dove – *Using Art to Further Sustainable Conflict Resolution In the Aftermath of Genocide: The Rwanda Deck*
Michael Robinson – *Crossing the Canyon* (animation)
Brent Blair – *We Cry on the Inside: Theater and Trauma Counseling in Rwanda*

- 6-7 Dinner
- 7-8 Presentation: *Eti! East Africa Speaks*. Roberta Levitow, Arielle Julia Brown [Coffeehouse]
- 8-10:30 Film – *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (Director, Abigail Disney, present for q+a) [Coffeehouse]

Jan 16, Friday: Palestine

- 8:30-9 Convening and conversation [Main Gallery]
- 9:00-10:00 *Empathy, Denial and Self-defense: Genocide and Palestine/an overview of issues and initiatives* – Ed Mast. [Coffeehouse]
- 10:15-12:15 Panel: *Models of Engagement* – Moderator, Ed Mast. Iman Aoun, Beth Krensky – *We Make the Road by Walking* (gallery exhibition), Vivian Sansour, Jen Marlowe, Hanna Eady, [Coffeehouse]
- 12:15-1:30 Lunch
- 1:30-3 Roundtables, Session One: *Motherhood and Sustaining Theater/Activism* – Alana Macias, Annie Hamburger, Alison Narver, Kathy Randels, Evelyn Serrano, Laurie Carlos, Lisa Schlessinger, Laura Edmonson. [Faculty Center]
- 3:15-5:30 Roundtables, Session Two: *Motherhood as a Class, Motherhood as a Movement* – Roberto Varea, Grandmothers of Plaza De Mayo; Celia Rodriguez. [Faculty Center]

Concurrent Sessions

- 1:30-5:30 *Theater of the Oppressed: Interactive Workshop* – Iman Aoun. [Irene Annex]
- 1:30-3:30 *Women of Palestine Performing the Nakba* – Hala Nasser. [Coffeehouse]
- 3:45-5:30
- 1:30-3:30 *Mindfulness* – Theo Koffler [E314]
- 3:45-5:30 *In the Dark Times there will be Singing* – Song Workshop. Kathy Randels [Main Gallery]
- 5:30-5:45 *Hole* – “A sassy, sort of Butoh look at trafficking and war.” Dawn Saito, Maria Myleaf, Christine Sang. [Main Gallery]
- 6-7:30 Dinner

7-7:30 Review: An open sharing, highlighting issues, connections, questions from the day.

Performances

7:30-8:30 *The Human Writes Project*. Nizar Wattad. [BB2]

8:30-10 *Inner Mandala*. Maja Mitic. [BB2]

Film

7:30-10:30 *Massaker*, dir. Nina Menkes [Bijou]

Flower in the Gun Barrel, dir Gabe Cowan (in attendance) [Bijou]

Jan 17, Saturday: Kurdistan

8:30-9 Convening and conversation.

9-10:30 **Keynote Speech B – Choman Hardi: *Genocide, Rape and Silence in Kurdistan/Artistic Practice in Response to the Anfal*** [Coffeehouse]

10:45-11 *A Tortured Cliché, A Fragmented Identity* – Performance, Cklara Moradian. [Coffeehouse]

11-12:30 Overview – The contemporary Kurdish scene, locally and internationally. Nancy Buchanan, Soraya Fallah, Choman Hardi, Cklara Moradian. [Coffeehouse]

12:30-1:30 Lunch

1:30-2 *Fiddle Lecture* – Peter Schumann/Bread and Puppet [BW Studio]

2-3:30 Roundtables, Session One: Theater and Peacebuilding – Cultural Diplomacy vs. Cultural Exchange: Roberta Levitow, Dijana Milosevic, Pauline Ross, Claudia Bernardi. [Langley]

3:45-5:30 Roundtables, Session Two: Esthetic Diversity in Arts Activism – Roberta Levitow, Roberto Varea, Dijana Milosevic, Teya Sepinuck, Rebecca Rugg, Claudia Bernardi, Dorit Cypis, David Mack/Ema Bell – Chocolate City, Bill Westerman, Michael John Garces. [Langley]

Concurrent Sessions

Dramaturgy

2-3:30 Iran: Niloufar Talebi/the Translation Project – *ICARUS/RISE*: giving voice to the contemporary hybrid-Iranian. [Faculty Center]

Based on “Naghali”, an age-old dramatic story-telling Iranian tradition, *ICARUS/RISE* draws from new Iranian poetry.

2-4 Reading: *The Overwhelming*, by JT Rogers – dir. Ron Cephas Jones. [Irene]

4:15-5:30 *Speaking the Unspeakable: Writing on Genocide* – Deborah Asiimwe, David Myers, Robert Skloot. [Irene]

Libraries

2-3:30 *New Knowledge: Activism and Library Science* – Kathy Carbone, Toni Samek, Karen Jungblut, Bill Westerman. [E314]

Curricula

3:45-4:30 A presentation from the CalArts Aesthetics and Politics MA [E314]

Performance/Presentation

4:15-5:45 *Cuban Mother/Artists* – Visual arts, dance, music, theater. Facilitator: Lili Bernard. With Evelyn Serrano, Marissa Chibas, Sara Whittaker, Maria Elena Gil, Melena. [Coffeehouse]

Workshops

2-3:30 *In the Dark Times there will be Singing* – Song Workshop. Kathy Randels. [Main Gallery]

2-5:30 *Other Mothers* – A writing and performance workshop. Laurie Lathem. [F100]

5:30-7 Communal Dinner – Please join us for a collective potluck [Mom's]

Evening Performance

6:30-7 *Cantastoria* – Peter Schumann/Bread and Puppet [BW Studio]

7-8 *Part Two, Border TRIP(tych)* – Roberto Varea [E400]

Evening Performance/Presentation

8:15-10 *"To Put Things Right Again"* – *La Fuerza Femenina in Times of Change* – Cherrie Moraga/Celia Herrera Rodriguez/Alleluia Panis. [Coffeehouse]

Film

8:15-11 *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, reprise showing. [Bijou]

Jan 18, Sunday: One World Thinking

8:30-9 Convening and conversation [Main Gallery]

Presentations and Discussion: Models of Arts/Activism

9-10 *What Good is the UN in the 21st Century* – Inocencio Arias Llamas, Consul General of Spain. [Coffeehouse]

10:15-11:30 *La Frontera* – Glenna Avila, Evelyn Serrano, Peter Jensen. North-South collaborations. [Coffeehouse]

11:45-1 Initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa: Public Health. *Traditional male circumcision and gender roles in Western Kenya* – Paula Tavrow. *Child Trafficking* – Orena James.

1-2 Lunch

2-4 Sum and plans [Coffeehouse]

OVERVIEW

1/14/09

Greetings from Jean-Pierre Karegeye, Chantal Kalisa (IGSC) and Erik Ehn (School of Theater).

An overview of the history and aims of the conference:

In addition to being an offering that promotes gathering, it invites the conversion of the gathering into an ensemble. The purpose of the ensemble is to encourage habits of offering, and gathering, for the sake of forming ensembles. Performance teaches this behavior – One imitates to promote imitation; what one must imitate in the theater is the reality of the social self. Taylor Kraus: “What I expect of the Audience I should expect of myself.”

A note on the model for the conference– Magdalena for Women in the Arts, founded by Jill Greenhalgh (Wales) whom we are glad to welcome to the conference.

We saw two films. First, a selection of testimonies from Voices of Rwanda. What is the role of the artist in the face of this a truth, a trauma so personal it's sacred (a premise of believe; an axiom of self knowledge)? Any testimony, and moreso the conveying of testimony, involves esthetic selection... How best to stay out of the way of reality? providing an environment that is attractive, but does not promote entanglement with the tale or teller as an object. Our second film (*Mères courage*) focused on the life of the genocide/living with genocide. There is no post-genocide; genocide continues to happen. What it robs is not merely life (this would be murder escalated to mass murder); it kills history, and so time; forbids access of a people to human history past or as it is being made; victims are dehumanized – made to live on an animal's repetitive clock (time-telling, and telling, are components of transformation-in-aftermath).

Genocide has gendered components; an aspect is the violation of the mother line – the intention to make motherhood shameful, and literally toxic.

In this context – what is justice? What is reconciliation? Oral history (an expensive history) is the compensation in a period of transitional justice. Choman Hardi (from the audience) – Truth telling is not necessarily healing. Jean-Pierre introduced the notion of the fruitful wound – the wound does not go away; from the energy of its pain and the assault of its icon, the work of truth and coexistence emerges. Many resurrection tales feature this: for example, a knight who comes back from the dead with his head under his arm. If he could come back from the dead, couldn't he have reattached his head as well? But there is narrative fertility in the ongoing representation.

Rwanda as metaphor. Not a freak phenomenon; Rwanda's fragility makes transparent the deep nature of the world. We take pulse at tender points – the skin of the wrist or throat. We take the pulse of the world – find something at the heart of the world, a murmur at the

core, by touching Rwanda's fragility. Genocide is an engrained political habit (not a habit of human nature, but political nature manipulating human impulses).

In re: Rwanda's project to rewrite its history books: the vast cultural challenge of inaugurating history.

About the utility of the arts in the face of genocide:

[Survivors in the films we watched]

"It was like a movie." – Art can give the mind parentheses with which to capture the inexpressible.

"Come closer, so we can really see each other." – A social worker to a traumatized survivor. Art-practice promotes trust, proximity.

It is the role of the art to create space. This space is conceptual as well as physical. Art lives on listening, doubt, paradox, patience.

Did the Truth and Reconciliation achieve either, by defining its objectives in short term and concrete goals? Or did it just privatize apartheid?

1/15/09

We start our mornings with a review; a chance to get coffee; connect with people.

In preface to our first panel, JP revisits the notion of the wound, and stresses the importance of the *conversion* of the wound. The wound persists not in its original state, but is transformed now into -? A witness to woundedness? A creative place – the place of paradox, which seeks to knit to meaning but refuses resolution. Con-verso: one turns from the wound, without denying it, one bears it forward. JP stressed the notion of the conversion of the wound. To turn from the wound, but not to deny it. [Yoland Mukagisana, via Kalisa: "I am a survivor because I want to be alive."]

Panel A:

I am not afraid of dying I am afraid of not telling the truth.

Negotiating the ambiguity of living

Is transcription dispossession? Any recounting is an intervention of style.

Reading, witnessing are interventions.

Reference was made to the bond between arts and crafts and commerce. Note:

Industrial revolution and vaudeville; slave auctions (where slaves were made to sing and dance to demonstrate physical viability) and the rise of minstrelsy/musical theater [See Joe Roach – *Cities of the Dead*]

Ambassador Kimonyo:

A vertical order is hard to change; also less likely enduring. Tamberlaine (a fixed, autocratic hero) vs. Hamlet – distributed hero. Hamlet survives history.

Purpose of art not to redirect sight but to change it.

One genocide can't excuse another, but can certainly be used as fuel.

Is new (relative) wealth in Rwanda well come by (the congo connection)?
Rwanda has mines; there may be opportunists acting independently, but there is no policy of exploitation.

Is it distributed?

Education will be key to the distribution of wealth, as earning capacity evolves.

Rosie the riveter – will gains of women be maintained?

The social changes seem to be taking root on a basic and enduring level.

Jean de Dieu Mucyo:

The reality of negationism.

Related reflections [ee] –

The developed world is allowed an ambiguous present, certain future.

Our policies can be self contradictory – suspending habeas corpus in pursuit of freedom, e.g., secure in the sense that we (U.S.) are the enduring superpower.

Developing countries are ensured an ambiguous future, certain present.

The developed world insists on absolute socio-political hygiene from the developing world... while keeping vague/prohibiting certain access to the table once they have “emerged.” There is no sense that power will be radically redistributed once the developed world has emerged from its scrubbing.

Certainty and complexity: Hope is complex; the developed world’s insistence on simplicity (its reductive dramaturgy) is ultimately anti-hope.

From elsewhere in the day:

Artistic and therapeutic projects can risk the promotion of empathy merely with oneself (the feelings of sympathy are self-reflexive); mindful efforts must be made to preserve interactivity.

How far may one properly go in the imaginative use of testimony/sacred history?

Observe the soul-carpetbaggers: mercy entrepreneurs; the sale of good intentions.

Ngugi wa Thiongo’ – “Cultural exchange is the oxygen of civilization.”

In this vein – Mukantabana: Building trust involves all parties in a transaction taking on “the same liabilities.” She is speaking about the history and aims of social work, and promotes as its end, the “indigenization” of the processes.

The indelible experience of *Pray the Devil back to Hell* – a documentary focusing on very concrete, courageous acts taken by women in Liberia to effect change in their Government. Abigail Disney (producer) spoke to the experience of finding the material, and then of the material producing her, in a sense; the film is an artifact but also a mission. Her goal is to use it as a tool for sparking activism/women empowerment in general, and mindfulness of Liberia in particular.

1/16/09

Ed Mast presented a concise history of the Mideast conflict, from the point of view of an advocate for Palestinian rights. He admitted to the vast complexity of the issues, and to organizing his journey through the information as being reflective of his personal commitments. His own notes – boxed below.

EMPATHY, SELF-DEFENSE AND DENIAL: GENOCIDE AND PALESTINE

- Ed Mast

Introduction for Arts In One World:

Bringing the subject or even the word “Palestine” to a conference on genocide invites controversy. If we had a session asking whether or not genocide took place in Rwanda, we would be seen by the survivors as denying the truth, or at least creating a space for denial. There is no such thing as neutrality or impartiality on the subject of genocide, because ignoring genocide supports denial; yet on the issue of Palestine/Israel, an imagined “balance” is demanded. Palestinians see themselves as subject to past and ongoing genocide, Israelis see themselves as defending from past and possible future genocide, so this is seen as an unusual conflict; but in fact all cases of genocide have two sides, with the perpetrators insisting that they act in self-defense. We are accustomed to taking sides. For those of us living in the US, we are accustomed to getting our information about this conflict filtered through the imperatives of the US government, which is a strong ally of Israel. I’m not impartial either, and will tend to look past that filter toward different conclusions.

PALESTINE: HISTORY AND ISSUES

FIRST, THE CONCLUSION

Equal rights. If we want to end the violence, we need everyone who lives there, Israelis and Palestinians, to keep living there, but with equal rights. One state, two states, whichever, only when there are equal rights for all peoples will there be justice and peace.

WHO ARE YOU TO SAY THAT?

Nobody. I’m not Jewish or Palestinian or Arab or Muslim or Christian or married to one of the above. I’m just a US citizen who’s taken an interest. I’ve written about it, presented about it, I’ve been there many times, visiting Israeli friends in Tel Aviv, where there are armed guards at fast food restaurants and you have to be metal-wanded to enter a shopping mall; and friends in Ramallah who stand for hours at checkpoints to go to school or work, and are afraid their house might be demolished in the middle of the night or their children shot by high-powered sniper rifles.

WHY SHOULD YOU TAKE AN INTEREST?

Because the US government gives billions of dollars to the state of Israel every year, about a third of our whole foreign aid budget to one of the richer countries in the world, plus unparalleled military support and political and diplomatic support, so whatever's going on there, we're complicit. Plus I find that the issues that Israel is facing are in many ways microcosmic versions of issues we have to deal with in this country as well.

It's important to know that the US and Israel have a longstanding strategic friendship, and so the information we get in this country tends to favor the Israeli point of view. In fact some apologists for the state of Israel get so used to that special treatment that they get upset when any information is allowed that doesn't favor Israel. As a result of this, we need to fill that gap by looking at some of the history and issues that have shaped Palestinian consciousness, and asking why Palestinians have resisted, and try to describe the obstacles to equal rights. There's a large amount of disinformation we have to penetrate to understand that this is not a conflict based on hatred and craziness or some ancient feud or religious conflict.

WHO WAS THERE FIRST?

Nobody was there first. There are some Jews who claim descent from the ancient Khabiru or Hebrews, who have been in the region for at least 3000 years, probably longer, and had kingdoms there for some hundreds of years; and there are some Palestinians who claim descent from the ancient Kena'anu, or Canaanites, who appeared in the region at least 4000 years ago, probably longer, and had many kingdoms in the area and founded the cities of Jerusalem and Jericho. Both these claims are equally valid and invalid, and impossible to prove, beyond family lore and stories. Archeology gives little help about this, and remember, for example, that one may become Jewish by conversion as well as blood. So for our purposes, I take Palestinians and Jews as living in the area forever, for longer than we can count, both with continuous and ancient presence. Not always as the dominant people, and by no means always at war; no more or less in conflict than any peoples anywhere. The current conflict is not ancient, but started in the 1800s with the development of Zionism.

ZIONISM

By the nineteenth centuries, Jews in Europe had been subject to nineteen centuries of consistent regular persecution: pogroms, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, driven out of one country after another, climaxing not only with the Holocaust, the murder of 6 million Jews in WWII but also earlier in the mass killings of Jews in Russia. But before that, in the 1800s, Jews in Europe looked around and saw that the world was being divided up into nation states, mostly organized by European powers, and some Jews in Eastern Europe decided that the reason Jews were so consistently persecuted was because they were always a landless minority, with no power to back them up; so they were easy to scapegoat when things went badly in a host country. Therefore, these Eastern European Jews developed the idea that the only way for them to escape this consistent regular

persecution was to have a nation-state of their own: their own army, their own flag, their own power. This was the Zionist movement. So whatever we think of Zionism now, we have to remember that it began as a national liberation movement for European Jews; if we forget that, we won't understand the hold it still has on hearts and minds. And from their point of view a clever one: Jews clear out of Europe, set up a state someplace far away, and everybody wins. They looked at several possibilities but quickly settled on the Holy Land, what was then called Palestine, which as far as they knew was desert only crossed by camel-drivers on the way to somewhere else. So they developed their famous slogan, that Palestine was a land without a people for a people without a land. The problem was of course: there were people there. The reasons this region is fought over is because it's not mainly desert, it's fertile. So there were hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Muslims, Palestinian Christians, and? Palestinian Jews, a small minority by that time, but still real. Most of those people, including most of the Palestinian Jews, didn't like the sound of this Zionist plan because it looked like another European colonial movement; and as Zionists in Europe became more aware that their chosen land was already populated, they were faced with the founding dilemma of Zionism: how can a Jewish majority democracy be established where Jews are only a small minority? And so the language of Zionism early on became the language of displacement, of finding the ways to get rid of the indigenous majority population.

How did a progressive utopian socialist movement become an ethnic cleansing movement?

Well for one thing, from the start Zionism allied itself not with liberation but with those colonial European powers. There was already in the 1800s a Palestinian national liberation movement underway, working for independence from the Ottoman Turkish empire. But Zionists did not ally themselves with that national liberation movement. They didn't say Free Palestine and let us live there! Palestine had been occupied for hundreds of years by Turkey; that empire was crumbling and clearly Britain and France would become the new occupiers, so Zionists went to those powers and said Let us be the new occupiers, we will represent European interests in the region. The founding document of Zionism, Der Judenstaat by Theodore Herzl, said that a Jewish state would be "a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism". From the start, Zionism presented itself as a new European occupying power. From early on, Zionism was not saying Let's go live in Palestine, but was saying The only way we can escape our powerlessness in Europe is to go somewhere where we can have power over anyone else who lives there.

Zionism also was fundamentally a European movement with European habits of thought including the tendency to ignore and dehumanize non-Europeans, the ignoring of the needs or even existence of indigenous non-European populations. Calling Palestine a land without a people was only the most overt demonstration of that racism and colonialism. They used all the reasons and arguments that we know were applied to Native Americans on this continent: there weren't enough of them to matter, they weren't using the land properly, there were more of us, we needed it, they were savages, they were unworthy, we made their lives better, we brought them civilization, we had a

manifest destiny, it was God's will, it was history's will, we were stronger and we took it and therefore it was inevitable, and most importantly: the fact that they resist us proves that they're unworthy savages, driven by hatred or religion or just savagery. There was a thousand years of anti-Arab racism to draw on in Europe and Zionism continued to maintain that image of savage Arabs who were uncivilized because they resisted a European incursion.

The fact is that no Jewish majority state would have been possible without what was then called transfer, what we now would call ethnic cleansing. The indigenous majority could not be accepted as equals. And so we have the ongoing tragedy of Zionism trying to maintain its moral and progressive self-image while being forced to drive out, imprison and disappear the existing indigenous majority.

From this point of view, the question is not why did Palestinians resist, but why should they possibly have agreed to their own displacement? Zionists were openly declaring their plan to found a Jewish state that would by definition privilege Jews and discriminate against others; they were presenting themselves as the new European occupiers.

But of course Palestinians were never asked, because Zionists and European powers were united in ignoring the wishes of indigenous peoples. And so there was resistance, and the violence escalated, and from the start, as an Israeli friend puts it, neither side refrained from attacking civilians. The myth of Zionist purity of arms has no basis in fact, since Zionist bombs were thrown into Arab marketplaces along with other acts of Jewish terrorism.

For Palestinians, this was a European invasion, and remember that many individual Jews from Europe did not see it this way. "I walked my family across mountains to Spain and rode in the steerage of a merchant ship to Palestine, and you're calling me Genghis Khan?" But neither did those pioneers who settled the Great Plains and beyond in the US: they thought they were just setting up homesteads, when in fact they had inherited all the racist assumptions of manifest destiny and were part of an ethnic cleansing movement.

HOW DID PALESTINE BECOME ISRAEL?

After WWI and the end of the Turkish/Ottoman Empire, the British took control of the region between the two wars, and made the situation worse by playing off both sides, promising a Jewish state to Jews and an Arab state to Arabs, which contributed to the sense of entitlement; even if they didn't accept the right of Britain to determine their future, nonetheless "we were promised." Whichever side Britain was on, they at first facilitated the immigration of thousands of European Jews into Palestine, over the objections and resistance of Palestinians: why should they be forced by occupying powers to accept an immigrant population that those occupying powers were rejecting? The rise of Nazis forced more Jews to immigrate, and of course the holocaust of WWII; and after the war, Britain and the US closed their borders to Jewish refugees, so many were left with no place else to go. Violence increased, the British gave up their mandate

in the region, and in 1947 the new United Nations proposed that Palestine be divided into two countries, one Jewish and one for Palestinian Arabs. For Palestinians, this was not the offer of a country, but a Euro-American-dominated organization stealing a majority of their homeland to give to a minority population, which Jews still were. So Palestinians loudly objected, though most would have lived with it. The Zionists didn't really accept the partition either, since they felt that all of Palestine belonged to them, including parts of Jordan and Syria, and some still do believe that, apparently. But David Ben Gurion and other leaders decided that 55% of Palestine was much better than the 6% that they owned by then, and a good step start toward "redeeming" all of Palestine in the future, so Zionists made a great show of accepting the resolution. Violence broke out right away, 1947, with Zionists trying to consolidate and expand there 55% and Palestinians resisting, and this escalated into war. After several months of war, in May 1948, some Arab states joined in, partially to defend Palestinians but mainly with territorial objectives of their own.

NAKBA: WHAT HAPPENED IN 1948?

In that war, several things happened. The Zionists won, and the state of Israel was founded on the white areas here: Israel proper, Israel 48 as well call it. 78% of historic Palestine, more than the UN partition plan had suggested for them. Jordan took control of the west bank of the Jordan River, and Egypt took control of the Gaza Strip. Palestine disappeared from the map of the world.

In that war, some 500 Palestinian villages were destroyed and about 800,000 Palestinian were driven out; two thirds of the Palestinian population of the time, mostly by direct Zionist military action. Palestinians call this the Nakba, which means catastrophe. Now there's no use comparing catastrophes, so there's no comparing this with the Nazi holocaust; but we must understand that for Palestinians, this was a kind of holocaust, a total destruction of a culture. If we don't understand that, then we don't understand Palestinians, and it will be difficult to achieve any kind of peace as long as this is not acknowledged.

CONTROVERSY

There is of course controversy about this, but mostly it's false. Everyone agrees that the ethnic cleansing took place: that there were about a twelve hundred thousand Palestinians in 1947 and about four hundred thousand in 1949. Furthermore it's self-evident that there would have been no Jewish majority state without this ethnic cleansing, especially on the larger area that the Zionists had conquered. So who gained from this, who had motive? Palestinians had no motive to ethnically cleanse themselves, but for a long time the new state of Israel put out hasbara, which is Hebrew for propaganda, that Palestinians had done just that: run away for no reason, or because their own leaders told them to, and so forth, all in the teeth of any evidence. Even Israeli historians are now admitting the truth, that those hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven out by a campaign of massacres, rape, terror and physical expulsion, and even after the war was over, Zionist

forces continued destroying Palestinian villages and made it impossible for refugees to return, shooting at refugees trying to return to work their fields or feed their families.

The fact is that state of Israel was founded on ethnic cleansing. They're not alone in this: our country is another example. Many Israelis accept that fact, as many do here; but for the most part we've seen continued denial of that basic truth, for fear that accepting that truth might have consequences.

Even so, if that ethnic cleansing had ended then, we might fairly ask to put the past behind us; but it did not end in 1948.

1967

9 years later, another war, and Israel conquered the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, along with the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula. Several hundred thousand more Palestinians were driven out to become refugees. And in that war, several things happened that still impact us today.

Immediately after that war, Israel annexed, or formally absorbed into Israel, the city of Jerusalem, which had been a divided city. It's illegal to do this, but they did it anyway. Israel did not and has not annexed the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. They have however kept military and administrative control of those regions, and so we call them occupied. The situation in Gaza has changed somewhat, and we'll come back to that. But for over forty years, this limbo state of what is legally supposed to be a temporary occupation has continued. And so today, the population numbers are like this, and these numbers matter, so try to follow:

WHO LIVES THERE NOW?

Inside Israel, about 5 million Israeli Jews, citizens of Israel, voting members of a modern democracy. Also inside Israel, about 1.2 million Israeli Arabs, also citizens, voting in Israeli elections, but not equal citizens; subject to a wide variety of discriminations making them second or third or fourth class.

Outside Israel, several million Palestinian refugees, those driven out in 1948 and 1967 and their children and grandchildren, some assimilated into host countries, some living in refugee camps without basic rights.

OCCUPATION

Inside the West Bank, about 2 1/2 million Palestinians who are citizens of no state, but subjects of Israeli military occupation. Since 1967 they have had no basic civil or political rights. No freedom of speech, no freedom of assembly or movement, no right to vote in Israeli elections even though the Israeli government controls their lives, subject to arrest and detention without trial or cause, subject to torture in detention, subject to assassinations and extra judicial murders by Israelis, with an economy deliberately

suppressed and now huge unemployment and poverty, surrounded by checkpoints which are like having international borders between here and Northgate, and now by this Wall which is annexing water resources and farm land into Israel.

SETTLEMENTS

And right next to them, a population of about half a million Israeli settlers. Since 1967, the Israeli government has funded and facilitated the movement of Israeli Jewish citizens into the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These Israeli Jews are citizens of Israel, able to vote in Israeli elections, possessing all those civil rights we associate with a modern democracy, living right next to Palestinians who have none of those rights. Tax money, including taxes from those Palestinians, is spent disproportionately on the settlements, and 80% percent of the West Bank's water goes to Israel and Israeli settlements. The problem with these settlements is not that Jews live in the West Bank; the problem is that they live there under a completely separate set of laws with a separate set of rights and privileges, which is a precise definition of apartheid. People from South Africa have been there, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu have been there, and they have repeatedly said We know what apartheid looks like and this is apartheid.

And worse, Palestinian land is confiscated, Palestinian farmland is stolen or ruined, Palestinian homes are demolished, and Palestinians are driven out to make room for these settlements. One ethnic group is being driven out to make room for another ethnic group, which is a precise definition of ethnic cleansing. So these settlements are not just neighborhoods going up, they are not a minor issue, they are the most overt aspect of the problem. Through all peace negotiations, through all events up and down, the settlements have continued to be built, have not stopped since 1967.

APARTHEID AND ETHNIC CLEANSING

So what we have in the Occupied Territories are both the apartheid -- the imprisonment -- and the ethnic cleansing that are necessary to maintain the Jewish majority state: what is by now not just a homeland, but an ethnic supremacist state that is being maintained by the subjugation and disappearing of another people.

Israel could end this occupation tomorrow, either by withdrawing and freeing the Palestinians, or by annexing them into the State of Israel, as they did with Jerusalem. But the fact is, they still want that land and water and farmland, and if you've been following the numbers, you'll see why they won't annex. Jews are still a minority in the region, and if Israel annexed the West Bank and Gaza there would be no real Jewish majority. Instead, Israel has continued trying to gain the land without the people, by maintaining this military dictatorship and enabling ongoing ethnic cleansing. Since from the start any resistance to the plan of Zionist conquest has been seen as criminal, many Israelis and Israeli apologists justify this imprisonment and apartheid, just as they did in South Africa. It's very difficult for them to justify the ongoing settlements and ethnic cleansing; but as the facts become more obvious, some are taking that stance that even

ethnic cleansing is justifiable in self-defense: which is simply to say that they believe Israelis have the right of self-defense and Palestinians do not.

That basic outline of the situation still applies today. Much has happened and we can go over that in questions, but there are a few key events that have impacted how we see the situation.

IS THERE A PALESTINIAN GOVERNMENT NOW?

In 1993, the Oslo Accords created the so-called Palestinian Authority, which in fact had no authority but was only mandated to manage the occupation for Israel and to suppress resistance. Yasser Arafat was brought back to lead this non-authority, and he handled it with his own personal combination of corruption and incompetence; but the situation was impossible from the start. As Nelson Mandela said, you can only negotiate with free people; and Palestinians were not anything like free in 1993. We now have the disgusting spectacle of Palestinian factions actually fighting over this non-authority. Furthermore, Israel had only a few responsibilities under the Oslo Accords; one of them was to freeze settlement building, but in fact over the next 7 years, settlements doubled. Settler attacks on Palestinians rose. In 1994, an Israeli settler shot 29 Palestinians in the back while they were praying, and 40 days after that, in response to that massacre, came the first Palestinian to strap on a bomb belt and suicide attack Israeli civilians.

HAVE PALESTINIANS EVER BEEN OFFERED A STATE?

In 2000, at the Camp David II accords, Prime Minister Ehud Barak and President Bill Clinton said that Israel had offered 90% of the territories for a Palestinian state, and that Palestinians rejected it and turned to violence.

In fact what happened was that Israel offered Palestinians reservations - somewhat larger reservations than before, but still pockets of land, surrounded, controlled and subdivided by Israeli settlements and Israeli-only roads, and Israeli military. The violence began on September 29 2000 when Israeli soldiers fired live ammunition into an unarmed crowd of Palestinians and killed four, and two weeks later inside Israel, when another group of Israeli soldiers fired live ammunition on a crowd of Israeli Palestinians and killed 13. Violence escalated, with 80 Palestinian children killed before the first Israeli child was killed, and months of Palestinian deaths before the suicide bombing started again. All human rights groups including Israeli groups say that Israeli soldiers are attacking civilians. And Israeli settlements continue to be built.

In fact the State of Israel has never recognized a Palestinian state, nor even agreed that such a thing should come into being.

GAZA 2005

Much was made of Israel's redeployment of troops and removal of settlers from Gaza in 2005, but in fact Gaza is still controlled by Israel. Israel controls the borders (along with Egypt, now clearly an ally of Israel), controls the seacoast, the water underground, electrical grid, the airspace, imports and exports, even technically has veto power over

the so-called Palestinian Authority. Some 8000 settlers were moved out of Gaza, which is a fine precedent, but in that same time over 20000 settlers were moved into the West Bank; and the Israeli government made no secret that this redeployment from Gaza was done for the purpose of consolidating Israel's hold on the West Bank. Under the Geneva Conventions, Israel still has functional control of Gaza, and so Gaza is still Occupied Territory. Gaza has become the world's largest prison camp, and the million Palestinians inside are continuing to resist that military occupation.

HAMAS

Much as also been made of Palestinians electing Hamas into office, but this hasn't changed the situation much. Hamas started out as a religious party, nurtured by Israel because, again, Zionism always needs the image of the religious zealot Arab to maintain their policies, so Hamas was encouraged as a religious counterweight to Arafat and the PLO which were a secular democratic movement. Hamas campaigned against the corruption of Arafat's Palestinian Authority, and promised to continue resistance. I wouldn't have voted for them, any more than for any other religious party anywhere, and they have disgraced themselves by entering into violent conflict with other Palestinians over the impotent ruins of the Palestinian Authority, and I would demand that they remove racist language from their charter; but they were freely elected, they were well into an 18-month truce when they were elected, and though they started out as an extremist religious party, they've been moderating their views and calling for a two state solution, even saying they will recognize the state of Israel if Israel will recognize a Palestinian state, which has never happened.

DOES ISRAEL WANT PEACE?

Meanwhile every year there is a UN resolution calling for a two state solution, based on recognition of both sides with secure borders. The whole UN votes for it, except for Israel, the US, and a few US satellite countries.

WHAT NOW?

Since Israel was founded on ethnic cleansing, should there be some vast punishment, should they all leave? No, no more than we can all leave because our country was founded on ethnic cleansing. In Israel, they have to stop denying the ethnic cleansing in the past, and stop the ethnic cleansing in the present. They have to stop criminalizing Palestinians for resisting that ethnic cleansing. Both sides are infected by racism: anti Jewish racism among Palestinians and the far more prevalent and unchallenged anti-Arab racism among Israelis. But more important is the system of racism that privileges Jews and persecutes everyone else: just as in South Africa, that has to be changed.

Just as in South Africa, where the white ruling minority realized that apartheid was simply unsustainable, and decided to negotiate for a viable future while they were still in power. It seemed as impossible there as it does here, but I know that once Palestinians and Israelis have a shared interest in maintaining viable nations -- one nation or two

nations -- they will quickly become allies against the extremist minorities on both sides. When Palestinians have equal rights, they can begin to build peace. Just as in South Africa, the apartheid system has to be overturned first; and then the real work can begin, of learning to live together as equals, which is the real future in the region.

Rwandan parallels: The Palestinian/Jewish conflict is not ancient; problems arise with externally manipulated ideas of the nation-state.

Iman Aoun, a theater-worker from the West Bank, talked of the Boal-inspired basis of her practice: a people's theater, Forum Theater.

Iman, quoting Aristotle:

Tell me and I will forget, show me and I will remember, involve me and I will understand.

A succession of Palestinian and Palestinian artists:

Are we moving past the legacy of the nation state? "I am an Iraqi-Palestinian with an American passport."

Panel: Motherhood as a class

It was pointed out that "class" as an analytical device is Eurocentric; the framework of the conversation shifted:

1. We've lost our fires and the waters don't know where to go. [Celia Rodriguez] – Our sense of self, and our respect for Mother Earth, are disordered.
2. In rebuilding: identity is an archive, an archive is a public space – who you are is what you keep, what you keep safe, what you teach. [Roberto Varea]
3. In educating children – "The fire is lit and they pay attention." [Cherrie Moraga, from an anecdote about engaging her children with nature, showing them how to build a fire. Their attention early in the morning, before sunrise, is scattered. Then – the fire, and the circle around it, charge the mind.] Recovery is going home, even if that means making home for the first time.
4. In making home, check yourself – that you are not duplicating sentimental, received notions of what a home is. ["Single motherhood is Queer – CM"]

Notes 1/17/09

Today's highlights:

About the formation of a nation state – One nation under oil. Rwanda is a country whose borders were shrunk, but it remains a "state of mind." Should the Basques have a nation?

Under what terms? Yugoslavia was a diverse nation; it is through great violence and misery that it is converting to a series of weak, divided, ethnically defined states.

Throughout the day: gender is a feature of war and genocide. In approaching the empowerment of women as a nation (as a model for approaching collaboration with countries in trauma in Africa – what do women need? a) the solidarity of women b) for the sake of their own empowerment; c) the presupposition of expertise, power and history... Although the public space for history has been shattered, and the documents have been erased, this doesn't mean there is no history.

Motherhood may be a nation – a collective force; the lullaby is a national anthem, encoding core cultural values.

A new dramaturgical model, from pity and fear – the incapacity or overflow of emotion (pity – you will not be able to act on a feeling; terror: you will not be able to restrain a feeling), to compassion and hospitality – the sharing of needs and powers (Suffer and offer; compassion and hospitality).

Cultural diplomacy – do not work on behalf of the state, work on behalf of the art.

Retain the ability to move from the margin and back, cloaked in the neutrality of art. Neutrality doesn't mean you lack a point of view – artillery is neutral (Pauline – cross border work is politically charged; mediation is protest). Neutrality is the guarantee of your freedom; at some point you may want to freely choose to abandon your freedom.

Evening – Roberto, Violeta: A piece on genetically modified corn; an assault on nature embodied as an assault on the body – our complicity, our self-pollution, but also our capacity for healing, for purging the body politic.

Cherrie Moraga, Celia Rodriguez, Alleleuia Panis: Reading, improvised movement, improvised performance – embodied wisdom building out of themes realized in the earlier panel on Motherhood as a Class... and beyond A concise overview of Moraga's concerns as a playwright; the formation and deformation of the meme of the woman's body; a gloss on mother earth and our elemental relationships, in Spanish.

This in, from Laurie Latham, on her workshop:

Leading a writing workshop called *Other Mothers* in which all but one of the participants were Kurdish. There was a lot of hilarity in a language I could not understand - my favorite kind.

We began with interviews in pairs. Each pair interviewed each other about their mothers and rebellion. They did so without taking notes which requires a deeper kind of listening. As I listened to the speakers at the conference my own concept of rebellion grew to include singing, speaking a certain language or not speaking

one, nursing a baby, cooking, loving, praying, mothering itself - all of these things in a certain context can be acts of rebellion.

After the interviews the interviewers wrote down everything they remembered from the interviews, plus anything that came to their minds from their own lives.

They gave a new name to this character that they were creating from the interview material, the first step in removing their writing from the "facts" of the interview.

The writers then wrote a short piece - poem, monologue, scene - in which this new character tells a story about their mother. Then they read them aloud. A family crosses a raging river while soldiers shoot at them; a child's hands are bound to the cradle; a young girl becomes a mother herself.

Then I asked the writer to speak the pieces aloud again, this time without looking at the page. Most participants were resistant to try this which made the exercise all the more valuable. What is remembered about a piece one has just created? What bears remembering/forgetting?

The writers had about 15 minutes at the end to re-write their pieces if they wished. There was a lively discussion in which we asked, and mostly did not answer, the questions:

Whose stories are these?

What makes it your story? What makes it someone else's story?

What is the difference between collective telling and individual telling and remembering?

How does it feel to have someone else tell "your" story?

After the workshop we rejoined the larger group in which year after year I see familiar faces and am humbled and inspired all over again by the work and the ideas shared at AOW.

Notes 1/18/09

An eclectic and lively morning, featuring an interdisciplinary perspective on approaches of cultural studies (Paula Tavrow's abstract, below), and a lively exchange with the Consul General of Spain, who was also a former Spanish representative on the UN Security Council; he opened the door to a thorough reconsideration of the way the SC is set up (its voting/veto powers), and was also able to stand in the middle of a storm of response concerning the negligence of the UN and the "international community" in broad terms.

Traditional male circumcision and gender roles in Western Kenya - Paul Tavrow

While recent scientific studies from Africa indicate that male circumcision is highly protective of HIV, evidence suggests that traditional male circumcision practices may encourage early sexual debut, rigidify gender roles, and at times cause genital injury—thereby mitigating some of its beneficial impact. In alternate Augusts, the Luhya of Western Kenya conduct male circumcision ceremonies at puberty. In this presentation, we will consider traditional male circumcision as a period “betwixt and between” (as per Victor Turner’s construction), where Luhya male youths are not boys and not men. Traditional male circumcision and its aftermath puts youth into a “liminal” period of transformation, when gender roles are shaped. We will explore the entire circumcision process through this lens. Finally, we will examine a pilot project to counteract some of the messages communicated to the youths before and after circumcision

We then proceeded to look both back and forward as a conversational community.

Sum

Highlights: Disney, rebel conference, Aristotle, Margee, beer (visiting informally; the pleasure of being alive, balancing the mental fire), sustained conversation (the pleasure of seeing friends/partners-in-crime, again and again).

To consider: More time (a longer conference; events spread through the year)! More space! More student participation (require it?). Do we want concurrent sessions? More, smaller conversations, breakout sessions in response to larger gatherings (e.g. – What Can We Do sessions). We could have engaged more squarely the issue that genocide is something men do. Free-write board: a space for informal, evolving community record-keeping. Letter to the UN re: Palestine (there was, in fact, follow up on this). Green room.

Next year’s topic:

- Cambodian focus.
- Wealth/poverty.
- Education and class.
- Genocides in the U.S.

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VOCABULARY/EVOLVING PRINCIPLES

[Difference between repetition/redundancy – ritual/administration; sometimes overlap]

An artist is well positioned to span analysis/observation through empathy. For an artist, the “I” may be another.

Culture causes as well as heals genocide.

Choices are not always between good and evil.

Political art needn't be political in topic, but in behavior: every social order is a critique of power.

Peace is not joy. Coexistence is not necessarily reconciliation. Justice is not necessarily judgment (there is no punishment to fit the crime).

In terms of practical applications: be with (knowing that a call to trauma is as often a requirement to be healed as well as heal – you will be taking as much as you give and must find a way in your ethic to accommodate your own selfishness); admit others (lose control); be present (the world causes you when you are present to it).

When concrete language loses honesty, lean into paradox and metaphor. Reason poetically and feel for reason's sake.

In an increasingly horizontal world/heterotopia – what is supreme is not the right answer or orthodoxy (the fixed location or steady path), but faithfulness itself, a steady state of readiness according to an assured sense of what may be called peace – the assurance of being.

“Note: Foucault uses the term heterotopia to describe spaces that have more layers of meaning or relationships to other places than immediately meet the eye.” – Ed Jourdenais

Alexandre Dauge-Roch/Groupov: Forensic anthropology – the film is a shovel. We work to transform remains into relics.

Genocides are each unique – they may not be held relative to each other, in a hierarchy, or in qualitative judgment; underlying principles may be effectively discerned, but they stand at a high level of abstraction

How to work the conference

Rely on each other: Accept the stranger as yourself.

Serve each other: Treat yourself as a stranger, and transpose yourself from one to one of many. There will be times when we need to pull together, to change a space, to offer a ride. Potluck dinner/party.

A strength and challenge of the conference – made more like a garden than a mausoleum – in flux (note start time).

If distressed, see me, volunteers.

Will try to run on time.

Rebel conference: if you need to adjust the agenda, and we are not able to make apt changes for you in the official body of the conference, please take command of your experience! Find like-minded people, announce a purpose, and make the conference your own.

Practical workshops: writing, moving, performing on Friday/Saturday. [Together today, tomorrow, Sunday; some freelancing Friday and Saturday after the morning sessions]

Concurrent sessions can help you develop smaller thread groups who can meet together throughout the conference and help make thematic links for one another; propose these groups at collective transition points.

We would like to foster relationships with other networks and organizations; be alert to these options and let me know how I can help highlight connections.

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COMMENTS, PAPERS, PRESENTATIONS

Cynthia Cohen (via Roberta Levitow)

The solutions to the world's most pressing problems – poverty, the environment, violence -- will require cooperation across boundaries of race, economic class, nation, religion and culture. During the last decade, while our government has pursued policies that undermine the constructive potential of this country's leadership, U.S. artists and cultural leaders have been hard at work, building relationships, exploring collaborations, strengthening intercultural understanding, and supporting creative responses to conflict. They are interacting with artists in other countries around the world, as they help their societies recover from violence, develop economically, and nourish capacities for self-reflection, for holding governments accountable, and for communicating robustly and respectfully across boundaries of all kinds.

Cultural exchanges can be crafted not just “to strengthen America's image abroad” but to engage in the urgent work of cultivating an international civil society capable of acknowledging painful truths and imagining a new, more just, and more sustainable future. Artists and cultural workers can help us craft the vibrant, nuanced and flexible identities needed to cooperate on the unprecedented challenges represented by global climate change. As planetary survival calls for patterns of interaction and consumption to realign with values of sustainability, all of the world's cultures afford sources of knowledge and wisdom. For these reasons and more, the arts and cultural work should be central features of a new foreign policy.

“A Tortured Cliché, A Fragmented Identity”

By: Cklara Moradian (performed at AOW conference, 1/17/09, slightly revised)

Before I begin-

THIS is my word of warning to you (gesture to the audience):

If you must, please leave, for I am going to tell stories NOT for the weak at heart!

Leave if you must, please

The truth perceived with open eyes is not for the intolerant!

And no, this is not a poetic dramatization, it is no literary formation

My imagination,

the communications of the neurological axons in my foundation

is by NO means this demented or sensational in creation.

This is in fact no more, no less than the truth

(Wait, pause...look at audience)

No one? (look surprised)

You're all very brave...

Ok then...

(Begin strong)

I am a story!

(pause a sec, take a long breath, remember, paint a picture, don't read)

The year 1984 behind a desolate building, in an unknown Kurdish province

He is taken out of the box by box coffin of his solitary cell for the first time in months.

He is not the only one.

That day he is accompanied by five others.

All of whom he has an irrevocable bond with:

Best friend, his mentor, his uncle, his teacher, his childhood neighbor

(act it out)

Line up (Hands behind back)

Alphabetical order

Rank

Political affiliation

Everyone's eyes are covered with black fabric

But even in the pitch darkness they can all see each other's and their own fear

(Wait, look at the audience intensely)

In front of them are 6 soldiers

Lined up

Alphabetical order

Rank

Military standing

(pause, look at audience again, stomp your feet with your heels, 6 times, suddenly fall on one knee, head down, slowly look up)

They fell

(shocked and horrified look on your face),

they all fell, they ALL fell and were lost

(softly say) All but one -

In a land where you cannot trust men, you cannot trust that guns will deliver you to an unjust death! (Mockingly)

Five of these political prisoners of conscious were lost so that ONE would feel the execution stand!

Could taste the bitterness of death on his dried lips, hear the sound of his thumping heart

“thump”, “thump”, “thump” shout for another moment of life, only to arrive at the

realization of loss and despair, only to appreciate the depth, weight, and length of brutality, to understand torture, to succumb to tyranny.

The man who fell but was not lost is- my father- he was shot with an empty gun!

They were hoping it would break his silence and repent his beliefs of freedom.

I have since stood on the execution stand with him and WE shall not bow down to terror.

(Move forward, look at audience, wait)

(strong voice)

I am a story!

The year 1987, in a detention center in the Kurdish province, a solitary cell impregnated with the body of a pregnant 18 year old beauty.

The first sounds I heard were those of her shouts as they threw her against the cemented walls of her cell.

The second whispered sounds of her sweet soft lullabies when she was left alone.

The third were of strange men and women speaking in tongue, demanding, for hours, what she would not give away.

The first thing I felt was fear as she was beaten on a long thin wooden board.

The second was worry and I clenched my newly formed fist hoping she could feel she is not alone.

Then, our tears came streaming down, only that mine swan within the protection of the ocean of her womb.

The first thing I tasted was starvation, as she was not fed for days. There was only the vacuum of her apologetic umbilical cord.

The first nightmare I had was her sleep deprived nights, as they bombarded her ear drums with the beating sound of women and young girls being tortured and interrogated.

The second was that of monstrous loudspeakers roaring the Quran for hours on end with no remorse.

The first light I saw was the bright blinding darkness of being born into shackles.

The first breath I inhaled (inhale) was the pleasant scent of her shit on the floor.

But it was the smell of her strength.

The guards gave her weeks in a tiny cell with no toilet, and she gave back a breathing, fighting, living being by herself.

She is- my mother-a prisoner of conscious. I was a fetus who was nourished and formed by her tenacity and resilience and swam out of her womb into love.

I have since been conscious with her and together we work for emancipation, for WE will not be tied down to horror.

(Move forward, look at audience, wait)

(strong voice)

I am a story!

The year 1992 in the best kept room of grandfather's house, the guest room, during the celebrations of Nowroz when everyone was dancing to the Kurdish drums and strings and flouts and were lost in their reveries of possibilities,

Of victorious revolutions,

Of the end to humiliations,

The end of mass executions,

The end to annihilation,

(Emotional, tearful, childlike)

HIS filthy hands were penetrating my six-year old being with confusion!

No, he was no stranger...

Incest parted my thighs and ripped apart innocence and brilliance from my childhood

Incest rubbed himself on the shattering pieces of my sanity, just as years later I cut myself with the broken pieces of my disgust.

Incest disguised himself under familiarity and blood ties,
protected himself with blind trust and the traditions of taboo.

Incest forced silence on me for years, the same way he forced his body on my youth.

Self-censorship is a lethal weapon of the patriarchal society.

The same silence that molested me IS the reason why little nine year old Kurdish village girls are still circumcised so that their future husbands can be confident in their manhood and not fear infidelity.

That silence perpetuates the cycle that continues to infiltrate the thighs of other five, six, seven, twelve year old innocent Kurdish girls and WE want to say (scream)

“STOP”- (softly) “Noooo more!”

I am a story but I am NO one’s victim! I had to stitch up the scars you carved on me but I will not remain in submission to this trauma and tragedy.

No more... I choose to heal, I rise above!

(Move forward, look at audience, wait)

(strong voice)

I am a story!

The year 1996, a Kurdish family of four is on the run not towards the safety of home but from the threat of death from the house they called home.

Four suitcases, four coats on their fragile bodies, they take with them nostalgia and the promise of no return.

Why? Because they asked for equality!

I had a doll with hollow crystal blue eyes wearing a pink polyester dress. She recited the English alphabet; she must have been royalty. She did not fit into the suitcase. She was left behind.

I had a best friend with deep almond eyes; I didn't have time to say goodbye to her as I did with my grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and the playground where I was first forced to abandon my mother tongue.

In my nine year old mind, having to seek asylum from your own home seemed strange, but this is the story of crossing arbitrary borders drawn by the white men of history.

We ran. We ran. And we ran the distance.

I am still running for home.

(Move forward, look at audience, wait)

(strong voice)

I am a story!

The year 1997 in a United Nations refugee camp outside of Turkey, there are no watch dogs to watch the dogs.

Still born babies are fed to the hungry German shepherds, as morality is eaten up by inhumanity. "Humanitarian aids" ask for flesh in exchange for bread. A twelve-year old girl is sent by her own father to line up and offer herself to savage beasts so that her little brother does not die of hunger that night.

Is this asylum from brutality?

The cargo ship that brought them there remains afloat. Men, women and children sew their lips together in protest.

Hunger strikes and self imposed silence does not bring mercy.

Deportees cut their own fingertips off to avoid recognition by fingerprint.

Perhaps, on this earth, purgatory is better than the hell they come from.

The NATO guards do not know my name; they know me by my geographical region number.

I am just a case.

Snow to my ankles; I am given only one pair of boots.

I have been taught compassion by the bedtime stories of the heroic acts of my father and mother and their dreams for redemption.

No one warned me that empathy is a foreign and dangerous concept in an environment where life is hanging by a thin string.

Once upon a time, I gave my boots away to my first love. Her pair of boots was stolen by a coward. For nine and half hours the sorrow froze in my feet as the blood could not circulate. I became a child again and could no longer feel the world weigh down on my knees.

I have since given away my shoes and walked barefoot for compassion, and do not seek asylum in the protection of plastic boots. (take shoes off)

(Move forward, look at audience, wait)

(strong voice)

I am a story!

The year 2003 the safety of a Los Angeles air-conditioned room and feather blankets, the physical threads of genocide a distant surreal memory by now but the immediate threat of emotional demons have awakened.

“Why did I survive and others didn’t?”

“Why do I get to eat and others are starving to death?”

My own self imposed survivor’s guilt putting me in interrogation rooms similar to those founded by the Bush administration; they’re invisible to the naked eye.

And so time passed by but the wounds only grew deeper. I got older but the stories didn’t.

It was in the safety of central heaters and abundance of material possessions that the gravity of the aftermath of these stories weighed me down.

When I realized I did not care about football games and prom night and could not relate to capitalistic notions of success,

when I realized I had been fighting a war I did not start and was collateral damage of imperialism,

when I began comprehending that *I* had to clean up the bloodshed,
well... I became paralyzed.

The irony is that it was in safety when I first felt threatened.

So one day in a highly competitive class for over achievers, all seeking the American dream, I was asked by my instructor:

“Where are you from?”

I boldly answered, “Kurdistan!”

I was asked again “Where?”

As I explained my history he said “Oh, that’s not a country, you’re Iranian so you’re Persian, ok.” And he moved on.

I learned then that perpetration does not end, degrees change.

I AM a denied identity, but I am NOT what you want me to be,

what you have imposed on me,

all these binary labels you want to sow on me,

all these false categorizations, pre-conceived notions,

all your demonizing intellectualizations,

psycho-analytic perceptions,

all your stereotypes, minority exploitations, all these unfitting observations

No, I am NOT your image of a savage, uncivilized, nomadic population-

I am Kurdish passion!

Do not underestimate my history or the potential of my pent up energy,

the power of my knowledge and creativity

can be the next Renaissance, enlightenment, revolution

Do not continue living with the notion

that your systematic institutionalization

is somehow not subject to abdication!

Pay attention!

Let me propose the concept of free equal education

to empower my raped but surviving generation

Let me propose that the eradication

of divine intervention

IS the road to emancipation!

Let me propose that progression

is NOT an abstract concept of youthful imagination

Do not remain under the idiotic apprehension

that the Kurds will not overcome oppression

or will eventually accept brutality in some passive form of submission.

Dictators and tyrannical systems of enforcement- in fact the Roman Empire- also fell

through for its acts against human compassion.

Let me suggest that this globalized, monopolized, idea of capital domination

is the root of this syndrome of apathy and disconnection.

You call censorship, trust in media fabrications, animal extinctions, environmental resource eradication, uprooting of ethical foundations, this era of information, technology ruling, corporate domination, pornography, bailing out fat wall street mansions, the bankruptcy of intellectuals, bookstores, and independent stations, silent genocides through drug addictions, child labor and exploitation of women in third world society- A civilization?

Let me clarify that I am NOT a single entity that can be check marked into a box on a college application

To become a white collar slave to loans until the end of my philosophical habitation

I am a story, I am resistance, I am the new Kurdish generation for liberation.

I am a movement; a force.

Do not underestimate, under appreciate, or undermine me!

I am the beating drums of freedom.

Let's torture a cliché, shall we?

“What doesn't kill you makes you stronger!”

Or does it?

Perhaps it makes you taunted, wretched, twisted, forgotten- haunted

I don't know, insane? alien in your own skin, believe in sin

I am a story!

No, this was not a glorification of my person

This was only an observation

These were stories of collective women. Not just mine.

I might be tortured but in fact I am no cliché. Like the Kurds I am fragmented, but I am a complete identity deserving of a nation!

“INNER MANDALA”

The Healing Power of the Theatre
Lecture/Performance

“Who ever walk
Somewhere in the World
Who walks without reason
In the world,
Walks towards me”

R.M.Rilke

Actress: Maja Mitić

Director: Dijana Milošević

Set designer: Antonella Diana

Object "cross/coat hanger" : Neša Paripović

Text: texts from the Bible, Bertold Brecht, Moni De Buli, Helen Keller, Maja Mitić, Momčilo Nastasijević, Gavriilo Princip, M. Rilke, i Carlos Fuentes

Video exerts: performances "This Babylonian Confusion" 1992 and "Zenith" 1994

"Using the montage of texts from our performance since 1991 up to now days, I made an actor's material which speaks about healing power of the theater. During the conversation that I had with my director Dijana Milošević, she suggested me that, since I am an actress, I am fully entitled to a privilege of the performer, and that way I can "act" on the stage, unlike the others who are not entitled to that kind of privilege. She was right and I listened to her. INNER MANDALA was born as performance/lecture, which my focus was on the question from our last performance "Maps of Forbidden Remembrance inspired by the text of Carlos Fuentes:

How long a vigil does historical violence impose on us? How far can or should my personal responsibility extend for injustices I did not commit?

Using Art to Further Sustainable Conflict Resolution

In the Aftermath of Genocide:

The Rwanda Deck © 2008.

Presented by Sabrina Dove

The co-creator of the Rwanda Deck proposes a 10 minute presentation on the use of playing cards embellished with images of Rwanda to demonstrate how art can be used to facilitate thinking and feeling about mass violence, genocide and its aftermath from a macro perspective or distant intellectual level to a highly personalized and deep emotional level. Each image, individually carved from linoleum, illustrates a different theme and aims to kinesthetically simulate profound loss. Awareness and connection with loss (or anger or frustration) is the genesis for healing, recovery and sustainable remedies.

The presenter recognizes that the conference participants are a unique group, cognizant of and willing to address genocide. However, the presenter posits that deep, personal engagement with profound loss fosters new and creative ways of healing and recovery. This presentation will demonstrate this phenomenon.

<http://web.mac.com/sabrinadove1/iWeb/The Rwanda Deck/Introduction.html>

Media needed: A projector to project PowerPoint on to.

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La Luna se había olvidado de nosotros

The Moon had forgotten us

Doña Basilia, Huehuetenango

Recovering Historic Memory with Indigenous Women Survivors of Sexual Violence in Guatemala

Claudia Bernardi

Doña Basilia said that when the army came to kill her husband, she was preparing tortillas, her son was at home and the moon was full.

It was a full moon, said Doña Basilia, tinting the sky with the waxy shadows of the men in fatigue uniforms that she could not detect whether they were army soldiers or guerrilla combatants. She could not tell. That is how confusing those times were. She did not know at the time who had come to kill them.

There was a full moon: *“The moon had forgotten us”*

Doña Basilia is one of thirty women, survivors of sexual violence during the Guatemalan armed conflict that congregated in Huehuetenango in August of 2008. Huehuetenango, located in the northern western region of Guatemala, is one step away from Mexico. It is a commonly transited area for those who are exiting El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and who are determined to cross towards Mexico in their way to the US. The Cuchumatanes, the rocky high mountains, do not stop them. They delay them, they may confuse them in their journey, but they do not stop. They cannot stop at the Cuchumatanes. They can only go forward at all risks.

In August of 2008, ECAP (Equipo Comunitario de Asistencia Psicosocial/ Psychosocial Assistance Community Team) invited The School of Art and Open Studio of Perquin to work with 30 indigenous women survivors of sexual violence during the armed conflict. Claudia Verence Flores Escolero, Rosa del Carmen Argueta, Rigoberto Rodriguez Martinez and I arrived to Guatemala City and from there we were taken to Huehuetenango. We arrived on Sunday. We started the mural on Monday.

The women came from far regions of Huehuetenango and beyond bringing terrible stories of their pasts. They spoke Mam, Kaktchikel, Achy, and Canjobal. Their interpreters diligently translated conversations although most of the time was the body in its remarkable eloquence that transmitted us the pain, the guilt, the confusion that they all carried.

The women participants of this project are community leaders. Most of them had opened cases of investigation against the men who committed crimes against them. Some of those men are majors of their communities. This evidence places the women and their families in great danger. No “elected” major would like to confront charges as rapist.

The women are determined to speak the truth. They explain that they are not without fear but that it is important for their daughters to know what happened to them. One of the first women to appear early on the morning of Monday had seen the murals we created last year and early in 2008 with survivors of massacres. She told me:

“We want to learn how to speak about the terrible things that happened to us with the beauty that you have taught us. We want to paint what we remember”

The first day was of presentations. We introduced one another, we shared ideas and talked about why we all were there, why had we been congregated.

The women, dressed in beautiful garments identifying the region where they came from, with a history of activism were willing with no hesitation to narrate episodes of violence that have marked them and their communities during the armed conflict. I was unable to calculate the enormity of the pain and the magnitude of their courage.

There were two men in the group: Fabian, a 24 year-old youth community leader from Rabinal and Rigo, from our School of Art in El Salvador. I was concerned about having the men as part of the group because we were told that the women had always met in protected places with no male presence.

Rigoberto is always reserved and not prompt to conversation. But he was able to share his personal story with the women who listen attentively at the story of his two little brothers bombed in a refugee camp in Honduras and about his older brother killed in combat. His mother and grandmother had been so painfully wounded and so marked by fear that had not gone out of their house for years.

This opening of Rigo’s heart made possible a connection to the women, who saw in him, not a “male” but a son, a brother, a partner. One of the women, Josefa, raped when she was 15, had not left her house for years. She is now 42. The learning that the same fear that she had affected Rigo’s mother, made Josefa willing to share with us her own story of violence:

She was at the church when the army came to her community. All the women were placed together in the church while the men were killed outside. She was taken in a group

with five other young women. Because Josefa's skin is fair, she was left to be raped the last, as "desert".

She lost consciousness. She does not remember what happened. But her legs still hurt. She says that her body remembers lying on the floor, face up, her legs being pulled high, with brutal force.

She slept for days, appearing comatose. Her family thought she would die. She knew something terrible had happened when she recovered consciousness because no one wanted to look at her in the eye. Even her mother and sisters avoided her gaze.

Josefa came to our art project accompanied by Francisca an older sister who spoke bitterly about the failure of the peace process providing them nor solace nor compensation. "*The victims never had loud enough voices*", Francisca said, making it clear that she did not want to be in the group. She had been sent as caretaker of her younger sister, but she was tired to speak about what had happened because the stories never seem to make any point.

Why tell them any way?

Respectfully, we accepted Francisca's hesitation. All the other women, however, seem to be convinced that telling their stories was important and it was necessary. In fact they had a sense of urgency about communicating what had happened to them for they knew the risk that they were running and if they would be killed who would tell their daughters what really happened?

They wanted to paint a mural. Murals are books with no words. They have seen other murals that collect the history of the communities under fire. They wanted to paint a mural that belonged only to their personal stories.

On Monday afternoon, we started drawing. White papers on the tables, pencils, crayons, erasers and markers became lines, shapes, known and unknown people, animals, crops, sugar cane, corn plantations, houses on fire, army uniforms, children, some of whom were hurt, some were hanging from trees.

The women were silent while they drew.

Some were crying and most were consoling one another.

I was scared. I am always scared when the unknown baggage of memories is open and when they start pouring down like a cascade of sadness. I am always concerned and unable to interpret if it is a good idea, if it is a terrible idea or if I am crossing a frontier that needs not to be crossed? Is the good intention of bringing art as a vehicle of memory and hope more damaging than constructive?

Doña Basilia came to Huehuetenango with her son. He is 11, tall for his age, with kind eyes and he adores Doña Basilia. Doña Basilia adopted this child after the massacre of her family. She married a man of her community who has supported her through out the process of presenting a judicial case against the army.

Doña Basilia told her story while she drew:

The armed men in uniforms arrived to her house. Her husband had arrived from the *milpa* (corn plantation) an hour ago. Her sixteen-years old son was at home and Basilia was preparing tortillas by the comal. The armed men took her husband out and she knew that they were going to kill him for his screams only could be of the kind of pain inflicted to someone who will not survive that kind of violence. Her son was fearless and offered himself to the armed men at exchange of his father. In his inexperienced youth he imagined it possible that the army would agree to keep his father alive at the trade of his own life.

He was taken out and some of the men got into the house.

They gang raped Basilia. Those men left, another group got in.

They raped her again, and again.

The men ate the warm tortillas at the comal.

Because the moon was bright, she could see the faces of the men, the casted shadows of their large bodies entering the house like ghosts. Basilia knew that they had harmed her son terribly when she could no longer hear his screams.

They left Basilia for dead, thrown in a pile of firewood. Basilia thought that they would set fire to the house, to her things, to herself. Se wanted that. She wanted to die together with her son and husband.

Until today Baslia does not know what happened to her son's head. The rest of his body was found, but never his head.

This uncertainty brings Basilia a sorrow that she describes as incalculable, as a river of dark oil, a stone hanging from her neck into her insides that stops her from breathing.

We placed the drawings up on the wall examining them while the women explained what they meant.

We stood in a circle holding hands. What else could be said?

The following day the women spoke of headaches, stomachaches, they had terrible dreams and bad nights. The unpleasant night had not caused a lack of enthusiasm. As

Magdalena describe it: *“bad dreams bring messages for us to deposit on our days and our conversations”*

Tuesday morning gesso was applied to the stretched canvas covering a surface of 18 feet long x 6 feet high. It is always intimidating to start a painting so large, especially if the ones, who paint, have never painted before. These women were comfortable with the brushes, the paint and the proposal to cover the total surface of the mural with white, although even at that early stage they were planning fields of colors.

The edge of the mural, like the two previous painted by ECAP, survivors of state terror in collaboration with the School of Art in Perquin, depict aspects of the embroideries of the huipiles or cortes that the women wear. The women themselves weave each of those magnificent textiles. The decorative colorful patterns are based on concepts that expand from life and death, animals, plantations and water, people, community and children. The women selected those elements that they considered more appropriate for this mural, drew them, transported the drawings onto the mural itself and looking with attention to the original reference of those drawings that were their own garments, they started painted on Tuesday afternoon.

By Wednesday morning we were ready to start the painting inside the painted frame of textiles and colors.

What is this mural about? I asked

What would you want to leave as a message?

Is there anything in particular that you want to say in this book of history of images and colors?

They were silent for a long time.

Juana stood up. She had been thinking during the past days that the mural should be sad in one area and not sad in other parts for we were all together now. The sentiment we shared was not sad. It was a celebration.

Maria, Cristina y Santos. A mother and her two daughters. These three women were raped the same day when the girls were barely pubescent. Santos said that after that day her heart stopped being of life. It works now, but it is not life what she has.

Unanimously, the women agreed to paint a heart in the middle of the mural. Josefa drew it perfectly centered. Basilia placed her house beneath the heart and a passage departing from her house in flames surrounding the heart to its rights and culminating in an area that would become a clandestine commentary. Basilia painted three men in military fatigues, fat and menacing, she painted the tortilla they ate from her Comal and a bright, round and luminous yellow moon as the one that she remembers the day her life was amputated forever.

The women congregated around the emerging images, They did not speak much but they seem to me in control of who was going to paint next and what was the image going to be.

I stood apart, in awe, witnessing this creative process, the memories landing gently on the surface of the canvas, terrible and brutal histories in the hands of these courageous women conjuring their worse days, their most frightening nightmares.

Claudia Verence, Rosa del Carmen and Rigo, together with Paulita, Lidia, Ana Carmen and Olga Alicia and Fabian from ECAP were diligent assistants. They prepared colors, gave suggestions if they were asked, cleaned brushes and kept the changing water clean. Else than that, the participant women of this project seemed to be at ease with color combinations, mixtures and transparencies. No one was asking for direction and we did not interfere with any suggestion. The one thing I did point out was that if they would want to make any change or if any given part needed to be repainted, they would need to paint wait on the area to be fixed in order for the new paint to show.

Camouflaged military airplanes, helicopters, and people hanging from a tree with no fruits or flowers. That central part of the mural was becoming the “sad area” with a dark background and a spiral that absorbs life, an endless tunnel of sorrow. There are weapons and destroyed houses.

Magdalena was painting a marimba with delicate details. She painted and painted over with white and kept on working exclusively in that restricted area. I knew that the marimba was possibly not referring to music and community gathering but I could not bring myself to ask Magdalena about its meaning. Only after several times that she panted and re painted the area, she asked me:

“How do I make a person under the marimba?”

Is it a small person, I asked or a big one? Is that marimba large or small?

Magdalena replied:

“The marimba is large, and I am under the marimba, and I am small. The soldiers just raped me. They asked for my husband. I told them that he was working in the field. They said that this was good, and they asked me to give them “cariño”. I thought they were asking for food and I was about to prepare some food for them when they took me by force, they pushed me to the ground and the only thing I was hoping is that my children were not there to watch. But they were there. I could hear them scream and ask for me to be relieved. They made the children stop crying by telling that if they continue to cry they would kill me. They took me by force, the raped me in front of my children. Many men. I cannot know how many, but they were many. When they were done, the chief of them may be he was a captain, told me in an insulting voice that I was “dried” and useless, that my husband would be better off with a younger wife. They left me under the marimba for long

time. After the soldiers left, my children were so frighten that they did not want to talk to me, to eat, to move. They stayed on the floor as long as I was under the marimba.

I want to paint myself under the marimba. How would I do that?"

By Wednesday afternoon, the women decided that they would create a circle by painting themselves holding hands, giving each other power, making a "belt" of strength in which the bad memories would not harm them any further. The sad memories would be contained within the restricted area. Outside the circle conformed by the connected women, they wanted to paint what they want for their children their communities.

One by one, the participating women chose a place in the proposed circle. They drew themselves with detailed and the painting of those figures was nothing short from a miracle: they painted themselves with attention to detail transporting their garments their head pieces, the most delicate embroideries of huipiles. They laughed a lot, they helped one another asking for suggestions and looking at each other as if they were looking at mirrors. The psychosocial workers of ECAP told us the importance of this process and how unusual it is to have a large group of women that are able to relate to their own images with self-respect and self-appreciation rather than with guilt or shame.

The ECAP psychosocial workers explained to us that the rendering of a positive self-image constitutes a necessary step in a long process towards personal and communal recovery. They had never seen such a fast process in any of the works they conducted thus far. Olga Alicia, Paula, and Lidia are familiar with the work we do, and the role that art has in our communities of the North of Morazan. Now the "Perquin Model " was expanding to be installed in this very specific group that had met before as victims. It seem that the art process was allowing the women to see themselves like something else besides, or even beyond "victims".

What would follow?

Who knows! That is a response that only the participants of these community-based projects can provide. We, as artists can only facilitate, but the answer of the "next step" can only be given by the participants themselves.

At the end of Wednesday afternoon, we had a moment of reflection. I asked each and all the participating women to identify what was their favorite area in the mural.

We were all facing the mural which at this moment, it also had landscapes extending from the extreme left to the right, with corn plantations, pine trees, gardens and butterflies, a shining sun located center right, children, a river that comes from far away mountains and passes by a home, where there is a black stone and a frog under it. They, actually, painted the frog first and the stone above the frog! A remarkable understanding of realism!

Even though the mural was not yet finished, by Wednesday afternoon it was very much advanced, and advanced enough as to make all of us smile in admiration of the marvel that we were creating. The women stood up solemnly and when they were asked what part they liked the best all of the, (all of them!) selected with total candor and conviction the woman in the mural that represented each of the

It was so beautiful and so important! The women laughed, they adored the way they had painted themselves and they were already asking for more space to paint more of themselves!

By Thursday morning, and despite the fact that we were all tired, we started painting at 8:00 am sharp,

This was the day of final decisions, final inclusions, if any, the day of changes if needed. I got distracted talking to Lidia and when I turned around I almost fainted!!! The women were covering many areas of the mural with white paint.

STOP!!!! What are you doing??? Why are you covering everything with white?

They laughed so hard! Like children who knew that were misbehaving, and they explained that they liked to paint so much that they did not want to finish the mural! They wanted to start it all over.

It took me quite an effort to convince them NOT to paint over the finished areas with white! The mural was wonderful and needed to be finished and protected. And we promised that the next project we would conduct with them, now knowing how much they love to paint portraits and self-portraits that we would have small canvases for them to use as the mural would be ending.

Thursday afternoon was used for final touches, details, last flowers, and edges.

I saw Andrea conversing with Basilia. They were concentrated in deliverance. Andrea took a thin brush. She seemed to be getting direction from Basilia who was pointing to the military men she has painted with machetes in their hand. Andrea painted a thin line of red around each of the machetes, which I thought it was a remarkable good idea of composition to make the grey of the machete more noticeable.

When I asked them why they were doing that, they told me that the machetes are always dripping blood.

By Thursday evening the mural was finished. We were speechless. Happy as one can only be happy when something monumental happens.

Something monumental had happened and we were looking at it. In tears! The women hugged each other, they hugged us.

We all thanked everyone for the powerful and beautiful work we managed to create together.

We all have been profoundly transformed by the beauty and tragedy of the images rendered in this mural.

The mural has been traveling to the communities the women are from.

In February 2009, The Artists/Teachers of the School of Art and Open Studio of Perquin have been invited to create another mural project with 100 women, survivors of sexual violence, in Cobán, Alta Verapaz.

Claudia Bernardi
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**One World Conference 2009. "Motherhood and Revolution" theme.
California Institute for the Arts. Valencia, California. January 17,
2009.**

Toni Samek's words are a snapshot of her work on the 2007 book project *Librarianship and Human Rights: A Twenty-first century guide* (and its 2008 Spanish translation, *Biblioteconomía y derechos humanos: Una guía para el siglo XXI*). Her contribution is intended as an accessible and practical starting point to lay the foundation in support of ethical thinking on the moral responsibilities of library and information workers. She makes connections between twenty-first century library and information work worldwide and aspects of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948).

Toni's work has a three-step agenda:

- First, to encourage library and information workers to take a stand in the ongoing debate about what constitutes library work.
- Second, to use library and information rhetoric related to human rights (e.g. freedom of expression, freedom of thought, freedom of inquiry, privacy, confidentiality) as an entrée to taking a professional interest in broad issues such as sustainable development, pandemics, poverty, war and peace, torture, destruction of cultural resources and government intimidation.
- Third, to conceive the library as a point of resistance.

Aims of Toni's work are to:

- raise awareness about existing and proposed elements of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) that relate particularly to core library values, information ethics and global information justice;
- encourage library and information workers and other stakeholders in information and knowledge societies to participate locally, nationally and internationally in dialogue, collaboration, organization, empathy, decision-making, practice, philosophy and policy development to promote the amelioration of social problems;
- counter library neutrality with respect to cultural, political, and economic matters; and,
- contribute to the development of a full institutional memory of librarianship - one that provides identity to a diversity of library and information voices.

Most importantly, Toni portrays library and information workers as participants and interventionists in social conflicts. Her work has urgent purpose, and is committed to an optimistic vision that fits in line with other early twenty-first century efforts to explore civic engagement in cultural networks.

*

[From Ken Urban, playwright. He couldn't make the conference, but wanted to contribute to the panel on Writing/Genocide]

What theatre does best is give us memories. The experiences of others become ours – sometimes temporarily, sometimes for much longer. And I think that is why theatre so often tackles the subject of horror. Not fake horror, but actual horror. While a play cannot re-create with any degree of accuracy the scope of a genocide, what theatre can do – that I'm not sure film can – is give us the actual feeling of being there, if only for a brief moment. In theatre, there is the actual state of being-there: we are there, actors are there, all in the same space. And I think that matters, even if academics keep trying to tell us it doesn't anymore.

I have been working on a play for the past six years about the Rwandan genocide called *Sense of an Ending*. The play concerns an African-American journalist who travels to Kigali five years after the genocide to interview two Catholic nuns. The nuns are about to stand trial in Belgium for crimes against humanity for their role in the genocide. It is based in fact but is a work of fiction. The play has been tossed and thrown away more times than I care to remember, but it is finally getting closer to being “done” (whatever that means).

When I was working on the play, I used to force myself to watch an interview with a young girl who survived one of the massacres at the church. I literally had to lock myself

in my study because I didn't want to watch this video clip again. This young girl had seen things I could barely imagine.

Her hands had been chopped off at the wrist

Deep scars on her face

And her eyes

She

...

But I would watch this clip over and over again until I would get myself in a state, and then I would write. The writing got better and better, but I was obviously doing some serious damage to my mental state. I started losing weight and had these strange shudders.

One night, I had a vivid nightmare that I was a Tutsi and from the bathroom, a group of Hutu Power militia had broken in and they were ready to hack me to death. Just before the machete came down... My partner said I woke up screaming at the top of my lungs. A scream so loud I must have woken the neighbors. And that next day the play revealed itself to me in a new way. My journalist character wanted so desperately to understand the nuns, the genocide, the country of Rwanda, but he was trying to understand it from the outside. What he wanted was to understand it from inside. What happens to Charles the journalist is that a survivor gives Charles his memories. And he does this through an evening of play-acting, where Charles the journalist becomes Dusabi the survivor. He lives out Dusabi's events on those horrific days in a series of scenes modeled on the Stations of the Cross, which depict the final hours of Jesus Christ.

(Fucking Catholic School. I keep running and yet it always finds me.)

What Charles undergoes is what we undergo when we are at the theatre. Those intense moments of identification. When we have the memories of another. When we become another. When events are too impossible to imagine alone, theatre can help us be inside that state.

My sincere apologies for not being able to articulate these ideas in the flesh. I wanted to be a part of this conference badly but life has gotten in the way. Hopefully these rough ideas add in some small way to the conversation that has been going on for the past two days.

Best, Ken

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Sunday Morning

Dear Erik

Firstly, many thanks for the conference. I absorbed and learnt a great deal – it was a very full and stimulating and demanding. You have great skill and charm and it was a pleasure to watch you at work.

I was sad to have to leave before the concluding sessions and the session on La Frontera as this would have aligned most closely to work I would have like to have shared with you all. I have given Dijana a copy of a short (15 min) dvd and a copy of my notes for some kind of presentation. When, if, you have time I hope you can have a look at it. Your programme was so full so I didn't feel it was appropriate to push for a space inside it. The work is really the only way, I think, for people to know who you are and I would have welcomed the opportunity to introduce myself to this fascinating gathering of individuals through my work. I tend to be a bit shy really (don't laugh) but I do have confidence when my work is in front of me. Having said that it was a great relax for me to just sit back and listen – and think. My university supported me to come on the basis of presenting although I am sure there will be no repercussion (how will anyone know?) I just need to alert you to that.

I think what you are doing with this conference is really profound. Beyond the content and the issues I feel you are really taking the right time – giving time – for an unfolding of relationship and development of ideas among the central core of individuals that you are collaborating with. This was palpable and admirable and it was a privilege to be at the periphery of this.

In my life – I have had a long focus on issues of violence against women – how to speak about this through the only language I feel articulate in – ie performance – It has taken me years of failures but finally I feel I am beginning to achieve something beyond the superficial. And less is more is finally something I am beginning to understand.

At the conference I missed a consistency at the level of engagement with the craft/ the act of making effective political performance work. What does this mean?. Seeing Peter Schumman's work was wonderful – he is an exemplary and unique artist. And I was impressed with Violeta Luna's contribution – I believed her – this is the bottom line for me. I also appreciated Beth Krenskys exhibition and had a few quiet conversations with her. But what am I trying to say here – what has left itself in me that I am questioning - just a little. I think it is to with a need for balance between ideas/talk and work that has this level of quality – that can be considered art/ that can make a mark. This word is very precious to me and it is over used. There is so little work that makes a mark and there are so many individuals calling themselves artists without committing to the days/ hours/years/ of practice. We can talk the talk about our work but this is too easy. And it is not believable. And when work of such a high level is placed alongside work that is still forming itself, is still very young – without making a distinction – or a recognition of this - then a dangerous self satisfaction can creep in. In the presentation of artistic thinking at the conference– I was a bit disappointed. Beyond the notable exceptions. Although there was great heart and sincerity in many of the presentations about work – I did not sense a

strong enough critique, self critique, a rigor, attention to the importance of craft - and the demolition of self satisfaction. I am grappling with the words here and failing!!!

There were many fine thinkers at your conference and I so enjoyed a number of the papers and presentations – I learnt so much and my thinking was really stimulated.

So again thanks – and I don't know if I managed to say anything here. Perhaps it is a longer conversation. I trust our paths will cross again soon

With love and deep respect

Jill

*

Jubilith Moore

Dear Erik,

Conference thoughts

1) The fact that it is free is remarkable and deeply appreciated. Don't know how you do it but it is absolutely fabulous. Thank you thank you thank you.

2) Many of the conversations seemed to stress the importance of space, in a format that really didn't provide any. Reflection and self editing is, I feel, an important part of any intense / conference like experience and I so wish I had just an extra 20 minutes at lunch to continue the conversation, or to sit and write, or to sit in the sun and just breath.

3) The performances were great - but suffered from my exhaustion as an audience member. I guess I just don't have endurance for these sorts of things.

4) Your volunteers were wonderful

5) Your summaries at the top of the day, at key moments in a conversation, and in between sessions - invaluable

I'm sure there is more, but I leave it at this. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to have been in the same room with so many amazing people. Slowly my horizons expand, and not a moment too soon. Much thanks.

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Dear Erik:

Greetings!

Before I leave California, I just want to thank you for the incredible opportunity you have provided me. I am renewed, humbled and nourished by the amazing people I was able to spend the last few days with. I am deeply honored that I was able to be part of this gathering. I am sure you are profoundly aware of this already, but I still must state how impressed I have been with the CalArts students. They are a talented, incredibly bright and kind community of students.

All The Best,
Beth

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Dear Erik.

Kristin and I want to thank you for hosting, yet another, amazing conference.

We so deeply appreciate this opportunity to build community around issues of such vital import.

Though the issues are intense, and the subject matter and speakers, on a certain level are exhausting, somehow, a most curious sense of refreshment arrived, once again, following a good night's rest.

We are committed to diligent effort, to encourage our very busy students, to join us, next year.

As soon as you have the dates in mind, please let us know.

Also, the individual to whom I referred in wrap-up, is Muhammad Yunus, author of several books and Nobel Peace Prize recipient. The book that I am currently reading is "Banker to the Poor." It involves his response to extreme poverty, tracing the history of his founding of the Grameen Bank, a bank devoted to providing the poorest of Bangladesh with credit. He believes that this credit should be established as a basic human right. He is a most amazing speaker.

Until we all meet, again.

Cheers.

Carolyn and Kristin

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Conference Notes, January 21, 2009

Hello Erik,

Barb and I would like to convey our thanks to Pat and yourself firstly for the invitation to the conference and secondly for the courtesy shown us during the conference.

Did we enjoy the conference? – Yes. Did we learn from the conference? – Yes.

We are not certain our thoughts and reflections of the conference are worth anything and maybe we are just restating the obvious. We can't say if there is commonality between our motive and our intent, which is to present points of view from onlookers with no artistic credentials. Anyway, don't let it be said that we are bashful in coming forth and putting in our 2-cents.

The purpose in attending was twofold, first to have theatre defined and second to discover points of focus within the theatre. The conference defined Theatre as art, *which imitates life*, but according to Oscar Wilde's maxim, *life often imitates art*. From this definition, two caveats came to mind, *life can be deficient*, and *playing to the gallery*.

By Thursday mid afternoon, the following questions were forming. There was also a distinct concern, the effectiveness in terms of believability of some of the presentations. What prevents the artist from using art to present life as just a series of imperfect experiences or molding reality to fit a predetermined result? Can the artist create life from a disappointing experience? Can the spectator make a distinction between the artist as a performer and the artist as a critical thinker?

Is the answer "*Never trust the artist. Trust the tale. The proper function of the critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it.*" - D.H. Lawrence

At times, appreciation of a presentation was difficult because of a lack of knowledge, insight, or both. The daily synopsis of the previous day's topics and the terse précis at the end of each presentation seem to function more as learning objectives. We know *crystal balls* are in short supply but parts of the summing up may have been better served if delivered at the start.

Our understanding of what *Aesthetic Diversity* meant in context of the conference still maintains our discussion. We believe its intention was to present a multiplicity of new ways of seeing and of perceiving the world and to become another instrument for Transformational activism to cause an attitudinal change in people. However, it seemed in various ways more the theme of the conference maybe this was because it sustained the discussion.

There were many laudable examples of different artistic forms and styles. At times, our brain runs at a low clock speed so we missed opportunities for making a direct connection between art and activism or at least the partnership possibilities. Again, with his usual hindsight, it also struck Ed that United Nations peacekeeping is also activism; it does bring about change in the combatants. A peacekeeping operation repeatedly includes

civilian police officers and other personnel that continue the change process after the military has established the peace. Unfortunately, not every operation is a success and failure is not always related to the size of the force in place.

The conference imparted an attitude of not seeing the artist as an insignificant part of a system over which the artist has little influence. This thinking bolsters the artist's ability to see things on a grander scale and produces work beyond that performed at their own echelon. When speaking of artistic empowerment is it the purview of the arts also to confront the universal predicament of "*I am my position.*" that many in society have adopted.

The conference was not extensive in its coverage of activism. We did come away with an understanding in broad terms of how art could network with the type of activism discussed. We took this to be changing the community in the economics sense by focusing on resource utilization, the idea of using partnerships, shared creativity, or common values to change the people involved into a caring state, and maybe a little encouraging of choice to live in a culturally diverse community. Many of the representations did expose the idea that people are not isolated from one another and that the interconnection of humankind is necessary for humans to thrive.

However, a tougher nut to crack is that of how to interact with the politics. We don't know if the conference was able to make an impression in this quagmire. We don't know if it was selected bias expressed when there was a loss of sight in remembering that in fact we are all familiar with the world. In other words, we "reside amidst" the world. From our perspective, there is more accomplishment if interested parties were to stay focused on the following:

"For it is contemplation which preserves in the midst of human society the truth which is at one and the same time useless and the yardstick of every possible use; so it is also contemplation which keeps the true end in sight, gives meaning to every practical act of life." - Josef Pieper

The need for meaningful change to situation depends on a conversion between outside and inside and that one leads to the other is understood. So far, the rate of change suggests a protracted timeline, which like the discovery that a pair of like things and a couple of days were both instances of the number two. Delay can be provoking. Quantum mechanics made it into the conference by way of paraphrasing the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. The act of measuring the performance influences the performance being measured and could become a peril for the performance.

The hypothesis is that measuring provides a means for improvement. What are the metrics to be quantified and can they be made bias free?

While Genocide is a repugnant action, it is not an unique event. Throughout history there have been many cases of group-targeted violence occurring. Carl von Clausewitz in his *magnum opus* On War provides the following definition. "*War therefore is an act of*

violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will.” Clausewitz refers to “War as an Instrument of Policy” and in this context then War is only a part of political intercourse and not an independent thing in itself. Genocide is an act of violence, that is to say, it is the physical force, and therefore the *means* to attain some ultimate *objective*. Violence in the conventional situation is the complete submission of the enemy to our will. In theory to accomplish this objective fully, the enemy must be disarmed, and disarmament becomes therefore the direct object of the conflict. However, when genocide is included in the manifestation there is a rewriting of the equation to mean, absence of enemy equal’s objective achieved whatever that objective may have been. Listening to the description of the Rwandan genocide reminded Ed of the first Principle of War - Selection and Maintenance of the Aim or Objective. This is quite simply, decide what must be achieved, make and execute the plan accordingly and don't be diverted by irrelevant opportunity. The enthusiasm to accomplish this in Rwanda amplified the genocide.

Our conclusion:

It seems that we as a society use the phrase coined by Robert Burns “Man’s inhumanity to man” only in the sense of regret. There is no question that the emphasis needs to shift from regret to change. Regrettably, when referring to restoring Humanity to Man it is more than not in the context of bettering the lives of the less fortunate around the world in some material sense. The accounting should also be the recognition of human qualities restored in the community. The one with the greatest value is of course courage.

"Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees all others." – Winston Churchill

There is a dilemma, society needs to remember but also needs to forget. Until the propagating of the injustice memory cycle is broken, it will be difficult for change to take hold. Again, it is regrettable that many individuals and organizations involved with current affairs in their pontificating are putting opinion before the facts and this is a two-way operation. The problem is we live in an unjust world, a world of different values and priorities.

Our Regards and thanks once again for the invitation.

Barb and Ed

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LINKS

www.palestineinformation.org

<http://www.chomanhardi.com/research.html>

Via Robert Skloot –

Page: The Investigation

Link: <http://www.chicagoshakes.com/main.taf?p=2,35>