

# Memory & Trauma Working Group Working Group Witnessing

## Virtual Work-in-Progress Sessions, Fall 2022

Join us at <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/87697106647...>

Scholars share current work-in-progress in the fields of Memory Studies and Trauma Studies (Memory Studies Association), with discussion and helpful insights to follow. All are welcome.

### Presenters and times:

**November 16 at 10 am (time zone: EST, New York City), 9:00 am (PST):** Arleen Ionescu and Annie Rappeport

Upcoming:

**December 7 at 10 am (time zone: EST, New York City), 9:00 am (PST):** Stephanie Arel and Allan Martell

### November 16, 2022:

Arleen Ionescu: Layers of Memory in Kuznetsov's and Trubakov's Babi Yar Narratives

This article examines two memoirs of authors who indirectly witnessed the horrendous crimes committed by Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* squads in Babi Yar where more than 33,000 of the Jewish inhabitants of Kiev were brutally murdered on 29 –30 September 1941: Anatoli Kuznetsov's *Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel* and Ziama Trubakov's *The Riddle of Babi Yar: The True Story Told by a Survivor of the Mass Murders in Kiev, 1941-1943*. Starting from Kuznetsov's final remarks on the power of memory that will never fade even if only few witnesses or survivors remained to tell the story, I will first refer to three types of witnessing that occur in both memoirs, "ear-witnessing" (Susan Vice's term), eye-witnessing and "flesh-witnessing" (Yuval Noah Harari's term), and to the different degrees of authority of witnesses' accounts. Secondly, I will regard the two memoirs as two different layers of memory that complete the full picture of the horrendous "Holocaust by bullets", as Babi Yar has often been called, offering us information about the victims, the perpetrators, and the very few who kept their humanity.

**Arleen Ionescu** is Professor of English at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Her major research interests are in the fields of modernism, Critical Theory, memory, Holocaust, and trauma studies. She is joint Editor-in-Chief of *Word and Text – A Journal of Literary Studies and Linguistics*.

Her books include *Romanian Joyce: From Hostility to Hospitality* (Peter Lang, 2014) and *The Memorial Ethics of Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum* (Palgrave, 2017). She co-edited (with Maria Margaroni) *Arts of Healing: Cultural Narratives of Trauma* (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2020). At present she is working on a project on the Shanghai Ghetto.

Annie Rappeport: The Hope of Memory to Influence Prevention of Atrocities in Cambodia  
Genocides and violent atrocities demonstrate the worst of humanity manifest. Plaguing our past and haunting our future, atrocities have occurred all over the world and across human history and serve as a reminder of our human capacity for cruelty. Millions have perished and entire nations and generations struggle with the continued trauma and fear directly caused by mass atrocities and killings. What societies choose to remember is one of the most crucial choices made in the aftermath of mass atrocities. The decision will inform national and individual identities at a fundamental level for generations to come. Decisions about what is to be remembered are constantly being negotiated and multiple discourses compete for preservation and validation. In Cambodia, civil society has partnered with transitional justice efforts in moral and symbolic reparations that aim to prevent future atrocities and genocide through preserving memory and providing outlets to heal through community testimonial therapy, performing arts, intergenerational dialogue and archives. I will share some of my research which features 25 in-depth interviews with key informants combined with a complementary document analysis. The key informants represent leaders in Cambodian scholarship, the tribunal process, education, NGO and civil society memory and peace work.

**Annie Rappeport**, Ph.D. (University of Maryland College Park) obtained her Ph.D. in International Education and Policy with a concentration in International Environmental and Peace Studies from the University of Maryland College Park in 2022. Annie is a qualitative and mixed methods researcher with a love for participatory research and oral history. Her research focuses on the role of memory after collective trauma due to violent conflict and natural disasters. Recent work has included looking at the role of listening to change understanding of historical narratives in the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, the role of memory in building resilience in Japan after natural disasters and the role of memory in post-genocide Cambodia. Prior to returning for her Ph.D., Annie worked in international education with the Institute for Shipboard Learning for over 5 years.