



Poetry and the Trace: An International Conference
Monash University, July 13-16, 2008
Venue: State Library of Victoria

Confirmed Keynote speakers: Susan Stewart, Joan Retallack, Rachel Blau Duplessis, Lionel Fogarty.

Convenors: Ann Vickery, Rose Lucas, John Hawke

Poetic language speaks of the elusivity, the impossible seductions of the trace – trace of memory, desire, the dreams of an impossible language which encompasses, of a presence which underpins

The language of poetry, with its rhythms of pulse and silence, the reflective pause of metaphor and the capacity for representation, is inextricably related to the language of memory and desire – both subjective and social. This conference broadly investigates the relationship between poetry, trace and memory and whether collective and private pasts and subjectivities can find articulation through the flexible forms of poetic language. Is poetry a mode which at least partially restores the fragments of the past or transforms them to new political and ethical ends? How does poetry negotiate bad histories and bad timing? Whose memory is being voiced or heard? What is the relationship between memory and feeling? How might new technologies impact on structures of memory? Is poetry possible today and if so, what is its future? Can poetry evidence a archaeology of desire while engaging in a politics of ethical relationship?

Papers are invited which consider the theme of the trace in relation to poetry of any kind from classical antiquity to the contemporary. The following list suggests some possible areas for development, but proposals in any area relating to the conference theme of poetry and the concept of trace will be welcome:

Trace; aura; fragment
Mourning and melancholia
Is Postmodern Poetry Beyond Mourning?
Canon, Reputation, and Institutionalisation
Is poetry possible in the new millennium?
The Unrecoverable: Gaps, Absence, Silence
The making of history
Memory, repetition, and seriality
Electronic Dreams: Digital memories
Whose memory?: Historicising poetic movements and coteries
Memory, nation, identity
Memory of sensation/the sensation of memory: Rethinking the Relationship
between Word and Affect
Memory and the Body
Memory and Desire
Belatedness
Bad history; bad timing
Poetic compost: recycling the past for present and future uses
Collective memory; cultural memory
Disputed memory; false memories; error and memory
Fugitive memory and the fugacious

Conference papers are 20 minutes in length. To submit a proposal for the conference, please forward a 200-300 word abstract and brief biographical note as an email attachment to either:

Ann Vickery: Ann.Vickery@arts.monash.edu.au

John Hawke: John.Hawke@arts.monash.edu.au

Rose Lucas: Rose.Lucas@arts.monash.edu.au

Deadline for submission of proposals: 1 February 2008

Notification of acceptance: 1 March 2008

This conference is being held jointly by Monash University's School of English, Communications and Performance Studies, and the Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research.