

Network for Contemporary Feminisms

Sexual Violence Against Women: Voice and Representation

Friday 17th June 2016, 09:30-17:00

St Pancras Room, King's Place, London, N1 9AG

09:30	Registration
10:00	Introduction: Dr Georgina Colby, University of Westminster
10:15	Keynote Address: Professor Jacqueline Rose, FBA (Birkbeck) 'Feminism and the Abomination of Violence'
11:30	Coffee Break
12:00	Lunchtime Keynote Paper: Keir Starmer MP, Holborn and St Pancras
12:45	Questions and Answers with Keir Starmer
13:15	Lunch
14:00	Panel One: 'Sexual Violence, Belief, and Credibility' Panel speakers: Debora Singer, MBE, Policy and Research Manager, Asylum Aid Dr Carlene Firmin, MBE, Senior Research Fellow, University of Bedfordshire, The International Centre: Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Violence, and Trafficking Akima Thomas, Director of the Women and Girls Network
15:15	Coffee Break
15:45	Panel Two: 'Voice and Representation: Empowering Voice and Enacting Change Through the Arts and Humanities' Panel Speakers: UNA, author of <i>Becoming / Unbecoming</i> (Myriad Editions, 2015) Dr Jennifer Cooke, University of Loughborough, founder of the Gendered Lives Research Group Dr Fiona Vera-Gray, Research Fellow, Durham Law School
17:00	Final Remarks and Close

Biographies

Keynote Speakers

Professor Jacqueline Rose (FBE) is Professor of Humanities at Birkbeck, University of London. Jacqueline Rose is internationally known for her writing on feminism, psychoanalysis, literature and the politics and ideology of Israel-Palestine. Her books include the landmark feminist work *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath*, *States of Fantasy* (1996), *The Question of Zion* (2005), *The Last Resistance*, *Proust Among the Nations – from Dreyfus to the Middle East* and the novel *Albertine*. *Conversations with Jacqueline Rose* came out in 2010, and *The Jacqueline Rose Reader* in 2011. *States of Fantasy* and *The Last Resistance* have formed the basis of musical compositions by the acclaimed young American composer, Mohammed Fairouz. A regular writer for *The London Review of Books*, she wrote and presented the 2002 Channel 4 TV Documentary, *Dangerous Liaison – Israel and the United States*. She is a co-founder of *Independent Jewish Voices* in the UK and a Fellow of the British Academy. Before taking up her current post at Birkbeck, Jacqueline taught at Queen Mary University of London as Professor of English, and in Autumn 2014, as Diane Middlebrook/Carl Djerassi Professor of Gender Studies in Cambridge. *Women in Dark Times* was published by Bloomsbury in 2014.

Keir Starmer, MP, was elected to represent Holborn and St Pancras as a Member of Parliament in May 2015 with a majority of 17,048 votes. An experienced lawyer, Keir co-founded the Doughty Street Chambers in 1990 with radical lawyers Helena Kennedy QC, Geoffrey Robertson QC and Edward Fitzgerald QC. Keir's focus for a 10 year period was human rights and the death penalty. He has published extensively on human rights and the death penalty. His books include *The Three Pillars of Liberty: Political Rights and Freedom in the UK*; *European Human Rights Law* and *Human Rights Manual for Africa*. In 2002 Keir became Queen's Counsel, after which he branched out to become the human rights advisor to the Policing Board in Northern Ireland from 2002-2007. The most public-facing role Keir has taken on is Director of Public Prosecutions and head of the Crown Prosecution Service from 2008 to 2013. It was in this role that Keir developed publicly facing guidelines on issues such as violence against women and girls, social media and child sexual abuse. After stepping down as DPP, Keir worked with Doreen Lawrence on a central plank of Labour's Criminal Justice strategy for 2015, a victims' law that was included in the Labour Party's 2015 election manifesto – and which built on his experience in tackling violence against women and girls and child sexual abuse

Panel One: 'Sexual Violence, Belief and Credibility'

Dr Carlene Firmin MBE is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Bedfordshire, where she leads their work on peer-on-peer abuse and exploitation and heads the work of the MsUnderstood partnership. Carlene also acts a consultant to local authorities and voluntary sector organisations developing contextual responses to adolescent safeguarding, and has engaged with professionals in 54 local authorities on this matter since 2013. Prior to this Carlene was the Principal Policy Advisor to the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups, Assistant Director of Policy and Research at children's charity Barnardo's, and for five years researched the impact of criminal gangs on women and girls, at the charity Race on the Agenda.

Debora Singer, MBE, is Policy and Research Manager at Asylum Aid, a charity that works to secure protection for people seeking refuge in the UK from persecution and human rights abuses abroad. Asylum Aid offers legal advice services and campaigns for an asylum system based on inviolable human rights principles. Debora started work with Asylum Aid as Manager of the Women's Project in 2004, and has managed all policy and research work for the organisation since 2009. She still leads the acclaimed The Women's Project, which includes The Protection Gap Campaign and the Women's Asylum Charter. She previously worked at Victim Support, and in 2012 was awarded an MBE for her work on the rights of women.

Akima Thomas is Clinical Director and founder of The Women and Girls Network, an organisation established in 1987 that offers free counseling, advice and advocacy for women and girls in London who have experienced gendered violence, including sexual and domestic violence. The overall aim of WGN is to promote, preserve and restore the mental health and well-being of women and girls, to empower them to make a total and sustainable recovery from their experiences of violence. Akima has a background in nursing and social care and developed the widely recognised holistic therapeutic model used by WGN in all of the organisation's therapeutic services. Akima received the Women's Resource Centre first ever Women's Leadership Award in 2013 and is also very involved in the Million Women Rise movement, which campaigns to end male violence against women and girls.

Panel Two: Voice and Representation: Empowering Voice and Enacting Change Through the Arts and Humanities

Dr Jennifer Cooke is a Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Life-Writing at Wolfson College, University of Oxford and a Senior Lecturer in English at Loughborough University. She's editor of the book of essays *Scenes of Intimacy: Reading, Writing and Theorizing Contemporary Literature* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), and a special issue of *Textual Practice* on challenging intimacies and psychoanalysis (September 2013). Her research interests lies in theories of intimacy; the affective turn and theories of the emotions; queer and feminist theories; and experimental literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. She is currently completing her second monograph, *The New Audacity: Contemporary Life-Writing and the Politics of Intimacy*.

Dr Fiona Vera-Gray is a research fellow in the Department of Law working on violence against women and girls. Her current project combines empirical research into women's experiences of pornography with phenomenological theory on embodiment. Fiona has a practice-based background, working in the specialist sexual violence sector for over a decade as both a frontline support provider and an expert in sexual violence prevention with young people. New Zealand born, Fiona completed her BA(Hons) in Philosophy at Murdoch University in Western Australia, before moving to England to pursue both her MA and PhD at the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit at London Metropolitan University. She won the Anita Roddick Prize in 2009 for her Masters research and her paper 'On Situated Agency' won the Corinna Seith Prize in 2015. In 2015 she created a free teaching resource for key stages 3 & 4 based on research she was involved in funded by the Office of the Children's Commissioner into young people's understandings of sexual consent, and is currently working with a female theatre company, Dollseye Theatre, to adapt central themes in her forthcoming book for the stage. Fiona is a

regular media commentator on topics including rape, child sexual abuse, sexual violence prevention and pornography. She has appeared on numerous news outlets including debating the importance of teaching sexual consent to young people on Women's Hour; Speaking on BBC Breakfast, ITV This Morning and others about the Home Office 'This is Abuse' campaign; and arguing on Al Jazeera for what were then proposed amendments to the Extreme Pornography legislation. In addition she has advised government on policy issues including sexual violence prevention; online abuse and pornography; public transport safety; and body image.

Una is an artist and writer. Her first novel length comic, *Becoming/Unbecoming* was published by Myriad Editions in September 2015. There are three translations and a forthcoming Canadian/US edition with Arsenal Pulp in September 2016 that includes new pages. She is currently working on a 40 page comic *On Sanity: One Day In Two Lives*, funded by Arts Council England. Una is a pseudonym.

Conference Organisers

Dr Georgina Colby is lecturer in English at the University of Westminster. She has published widely on feminism and experimental women's writing in journals such as *Textual Practice*, *Women: A Cultural Review*, *Comparative Critical Studies* and *n.paradoxa: international feminist art journal*. Her second book, *Kathy Acker: Writing the Impossible* is forthcoming with Edinburgh University Press in September 2016. Her research interests lie in problems of representation and making visible the invisible and unspeakable through literature and art. At present she is editing a themed issue of *New Formations* on death in contemporary culture. She is currently setting up the Network for Contemporary Feminisms at the University of Westminster and is lead investigator of the Research Network 'Sexual Violence Against Women: Empowering Voice and Enacting Change through the Arts and Humanities.'

Hannah Camplin is a qualified and practising solicitor and lecturer at the University of Westminster Law School. She specialises in family and criminal law, and in particular in the areas of domestic and sexual violence, and has practised in these areas both in the private and voluntary sectors for many years. Prior to working at the University of Westminster Hannah was Senior Legal Officer at Rights of Women. She was also policy lead for criminal law whilst working at Rights of Women, and was involved in the development of the updated Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. Hannah is also a trustee of the Women and Girls Network. Hannah has contributed to many legal information and policy publications, most notably *Measuring Up?* (2010) and *Your rights, your body, your life* (2012). With Georgina Colby, Hannah is co-investigator of the Research Network 'Sexual Violence Against Women: Empowering Voice and Enacting Change through the Arts and Humanities.'



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