



# New Frontiers in Memory Studies

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**Susanne Knittel (Utrecht)**

**“Encountering Perpetrators:  
Testimony, Representation, Memory”**

**Tuesday 14 June | 2-4 pm | SH 2.106**

The past two decades have witnessed a palpable “turn” to the perpetrator in art, theater, documentary filmmaking, literature, and other cultural arenas. This has gone hand in hand with a growing interest, within cultural memory studies, in questions of guilt, complicity, and responsibility in large scale violence. The figure of the perpetrator poses fundamental challenges to memory studies, which as a field has largely come into being around the figures of the victim and the witness. In this talk I will explore the implications of the perpetrator “turn” for cultural memory studies, focusing specifically on the ethical, aesthetic, and political questions that arise when we consider how we remember perpetrators of mass atrocities and how those perpetrators themselves remember their actions after the fact. I am particularly interested in perpetrator testimony, both oral and written, documentary and fictional, and how it is framed, staged, and (re)mediated in cultural forms. Drawing on a wide range of examples from literature, film, and documentary theater, this talk aims to provide an overview of the most salient representational strategies for the cultural encounter with the figure of the perpetrator.

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