

Authenticity and Testimonies

Due Friday, February 20, 2015 by 8:59 a.m. (5 Points)

For this assignment you should write a 3-4 page reflection paper on authenticity and testimony in the context of recent revelations about Shin Dong-hyuk's experiences in North Korea, and the controversy about Rigoberta Menchú's experiences in Guatemala. .

Of course, you should make clear in your paper that you have watched *Camp 14: Total Control Zone* and read the relevant articles. Be sure to also relate these controversies to our proposed use of narratives in the *Human Rights Voices* and Global Human Rights Direct project.

After watching the film, you should first read:

- **Prominent N. Korean defector Shin Dong-hyuk admits parts of story are inaccurate** [Anna Fifield](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/prominent-n-korean-defector-shin-dong-hyuk-admits-parts-of-story-are-inaccurate/2015/01/17/fc69278c-9dd5-11e4-bcfb-059ec7a93ddc_story.html), Washington Post, January 17, 2015. Available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/prominent-n-korean-defector-shin-dong-hyuk-admits-parts-of-story-are-inaccurate/2015/01/17/fc69278c-9dd5-11e4-bcfb-059ec7a93ddc_story.html
- You might want to watch some of North Korea's film *Lies and Truth* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P82aad8QQW4>, which might further confuse matters.

Then, as you digest that information on Shin Dong-hyuk you should read at least three or four takes on the *I, Rigoberta Menchú* controversy.

1. Here is an old (and brief) article from 1999 when the controversy was just starting to be digested: https://alumni.stanford.edu/get/page/magazine/article/?article_id=40702
2. Here is a brief 2010 article that gives an overview of the controversy. <http://siu.no/eng/Global-knowledge/Issues/2010/When-Truth-is-at-stake-The-Rigoberta-Menchu-controversy>
3. Here is an article by two communications scholars who analyze the numerous discourses swirling around this controversy. I will post it on D2L. Avant-Mier, Roberto. And Marouf A. Hasian Jr. "**COMMUNICATING "TRUTH": TESTIMONIO, VERNACULAR VOICES, AND THE RIGOBERTA MENCHÚ CONTROVERSY**" *The Communication Review*, 11: 323–345, 2008
4. John Beverly is one of the most respected and nuanced commentators on this controversy, a chapter from his book *Testimonio: On the Politics of Truth* is on D2L.
5. And, Sidonie Smith (who spoke in this class last year) and Julia Watson are considered two leading experts on authenticity and narrative, and a recent essay by theirs is also on D2L, "Witness or False Witness? Metrics of Authenticity, Collective I-Formations, and the Ethic of Verification in First-Person Testimony." *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly* 35.4 (Fall 2012): 590–627. (Published spring 2013).