



Telling Histories

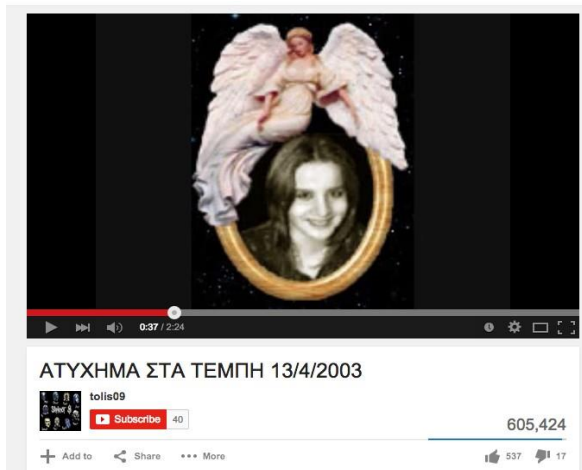
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From Mediated Witnessing to Performative Mourning: YouTube Videos as Memorials

Penelope Papailias

In this talk, I address contemporary aspects of public mourning online in relation to catastrophic national events. These practices intersect with dominant public visual discourse – indeed they *emerge out of* mediated witnessing, but in many ways subvert mainstream image culture, radically blurring the private/public distinction and upending conventions (i.e. regarding appropriation, dissemination, framing, aesthetics, etc.).

In particular, I will speak about YouTube memorial video tributes produced by unrelated



mourners, a very common and mostly misunderstood (i.e. denigrated) genre of memorial discourse and visual expression, viewing these productions as artifacts of collective performative mourning. In studying the resultant memorial assemblages, I have found that this mourning is not melancholic: it does not constrain the energies and affects grief releases to a contemplation of the past.

The talk will be based on my work on YouTube memorials related to contemporary Greek media events.

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She is the author of *Genres of Recollection: Archival Politics and Modern Greece* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), an ethnography of popular historical production in contemporary Greek society. Her current research explores the cultural politics of technological mediation in relation to subjects such as the media event and witnessing, visibility and violence, networked citizen groups, digital urbanism and online affect.