

## Film and Human Security

(Peter Harris, University of Toronto)

The last few years have seen a flurry of films dealing with egregious issues of Human Security. Among them are: **Rabbit-Proof Fence**, the harrowing escape of three young Aboriginal girls and their astonishing 1500-mile walk home; **Ararat**, by the Armenian Canadian filmmaker Atom Egoyan, about the 1915 Armenian Genocide in Turkey; **Hotel Rwanda**, the story of the manager of a luxury hotel in Kigali during the Rwandan genocide; and **Shake Hands with the Devil**, a documentary film tracking the return of Romeo Dallaire to Rwanda 10 years after the catastrophic failure of the UN peace-keeping mission.

All these films deal with events that are “old news” as far as the mass media are concerned - over 10 years ago (**Hotel Rwanda**), or over 70 years ago (**Rabbit-Proof Fence**), or 90 years ago (**Ararat**). Why have these filmmakers made films about such “old news”, and why are they attracting so much *current* critical attention? This contribution deals with the ways in which films can structure the past so as to serve as admonitions to the present.