

## **Migrancy at Work: Aesthetics, Ethics and Politics**

**International Conference at HII, University College Dublin**

Friday 14 December – Saturday 15 December 2007

Since the early 1980s, the expression ‘écritures migrantes’ has been used in Quebec to designate a literary current that has powerfully inflected national cultural identity in a strongly intercultural direction. This current is undeniably part of a much more widespread literary movement whose multiple forms and stakes have yet to be mapped. In fact, the term ‘écritures migrantes’ is often contested in Quebec by the very authors to whom it supposedly refers on the grounds that it confines and isolates them within an exclusive ethnic problematic and so contradicts the processes of mobility and metamorphosis embraced by their work. If social and geographical space is being reconfigured today, this radically challenging and accelerating movement is based largely on a pervasive awareness of the reality of multiple rather than exclusive cultural affiliations and of the emergence of as yet unrealized models of identity. The question of a national literature, complete with a more or less well-defined central core and margins, is being swept away by the migratory movements of an increasingly globalized human condition. Migrancy now concerns not only ‘immigrants’ but ‘indigenous’ populations as well, for the displacement, deterritorialization and dehistoricization attendant on migrancy now characterise humanity itself as it searches for new definitions of self and other and negotiates what Édouard Glissant calls the difficult passage from Sameness to Diversity. This conference aims to explore the work of migrancy across literature and the arts in the broadest sense, examining how it tests and stretches identities, how it strains towards the other, and how it effects transculturation. While emphasising the links between migrancy and aesthetics, the conference will also investigate the ethical and political dimension of the work of art as a locus of intersubjective and intercultural relation. As Pierre Ouellet reminds us, migrancy is first and foremost a question of the flow of words and images that we all carry within us, a flow that, once given external or material form, does not so much fix us in place as sweep us up and carry us off in its current.

This conference arises out of a research project on ‘World Writing in French’ that belongs, in turn, to a parent programme of research on ‘Memory, Identity and Meaning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’, which is sited in UCD’s Humanities Institute (further details available at [www.ucd.ie/hii/research.htm](http://www.ucd.ie/hii/research.htm)). Organizing committee: Michael Brophy, Mary Gallagher, Emer O’Beirne, Douglas Smith. Enquiries: [mary.gallagher@ucd.ie](mailto:mary.gallagher@ucd.ie)



The Humanities Institute of Ireland is funded under the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLII), administered by the HEA.