



The Trouble with Memory: Cultures of Remembrance in Iceland and Ireland

Friday 23 May 2014, 10am-5pm
UCD Humanities Institute seminar room

What are the cultures of remembrance in Ireland and Iceland? Why bring these islands on the periphery into dialogue? This one-day meeting on Intercultural Memory aims to establish some contours of our related cultural histories and geographies by focussing initially on the representation of silence, time, forgetting and remembering in Iceland and Ireland. The themed sessions will offer a series of short position papers on cultures of remembrance in literature, art, music, history and society in national and trans-national contexts. We will explore how particular genres, forms and modes of representation at different historical moments are deeply implicated in questions of origins, ends, causation, and legacy.

Audience participation will be encouraged in this more exploratory format



10-11.15am Medieval and Folk Memory

Speakers: Éilís Ní Dhúibhne • Vilborg Davidsdóttir • Fionnuala Dillane

'Folk Memory, Oral Traditions and Literary Genres'

- Éilís will discuss folk narrative strands in contemporary Irish writing with reference to works by Roddy Doyle, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and in her own work, 'Midwife to the Fairies' and *The Inland Ice*
- Vilborg will discuss the story of Audur the Deepminded, explaining how she makes use of sources such as Icelandic Sagas and Irish Annals as well as legends from 19th century Shetland, Iceland and Ireland about witchcraft, fairies and changelings.
- Fionnuala will raise questions about the use and/or non-use of folk motifs in contemporary literature and crime fiction

Éilís Ní Dhúibhne has taught Creative Writing in UCD, Trinity College, the Faber Academy, the Irish Writers' Centre, and other institutions. She is the author of many novels, collections of short stories, plays and works of non-fiction. A graduate of UCD, she has a BA in Pure English, an M. Phil. in Medieval Studies, and a Ph.D. in Irish Folklore • *Vilborg Davidsdóttir* is the author of seven historical novels set in the Middle Ages. Her last two novels tell the story of the only woman known to lead her own settling expedition to Iceland in the 9th century, Audur the Deepminded, wife of Olaf the

White, first Viking king of Dublin. The books draw on Vilborg's research into the events and living conditions of people during the 9th century as well as the history of the Norse in Ireland and Scotland. She is an ethnologist and wrote her MA thesis in 2011 on the oral tradition of the Shetland Isles • **Fionnuala Dillane** lectures in 19th and 20th-century literature the School of English, Drama and Film, UCD. She is on the steering committee of the Irish Memory Studies network and is a member of the COST network *In Search of Transcultural Memory in Europe*. Her most recent publication *Before George Eliot: Marian Evans and the periodical press* (Cambridge UP, 2013) is joint winner of the 2014 Colby prize.

11.15-11.45 Tea/Coffee

11.45-1pm Memory and Time

Speakers: Tony Langlois • Ásta Benediktsdóttir • Siobhán McDonald

'Music and Time; Queer Time; Deep Time'

- Tony will introduce some observations regarding the relationship between contemporary Icelandic music and discourses of national identity. He will look at the ways in which a particular conception of Iceland is 'constructed' through musical practices, at the forces involved in the process and at the cultural heritage they draw upon.
- Ásta will discuss the Icelandic writer Sjón's most recent historical novel, *Mánasteinn. Drengurinn sem aldrei var til* (*Moonstone: The Boy who Never Was*, 2013) in terms of queer historiography, or how the queer past is (re)constructed
- Siobhán will talk about her body of work that responds to Iceland, its state of flux and change, constantly erasing and recreating its own history as informed by current work that seeks to map imperceptible movements of the Earth, subtly manifesting links to both physical locations and to particular moments in time.

Tony Langlois is an Ethnomusicologist, lecturing at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. He has been primarily concerned with the musical culture of North Africa but has also published on dance music, multiculturalism and Eurovision. Recent works include an edited volume on Non-Western Popular Musics and a CD of field recordings made by Irish-based researchers. Tony is active in Limerick Soundscapes, an online audio archive project, and IndieCork - a new Media Arts festival in Cork. He co-edits the online journal *Ethnomusicology Ireland* and is deputy chair of the Irish Science Sound and Technology Association • **Ásta Benediktsdóttir** received a BA in Icelandic Studies and an MA in Icelandic Literature from the University of Iceland. She is currently working on her PhD thesis under joint supervision at the University of Iceland and University College Dublin. Her doctoral dissertation deals with queer sexuality in the works of the Icelandic writer Elías Mar (1924–2007), and is funded by the Icelandic Research Fund for Graduate Students • **Siobhán McDonald** works with paint, sound, photography and drawing. Recent work addresses processes of entropy and geological time, developing her preoccupation with transformation in manifestations of the

explosive, like volcanoes, and of the gradual, like the passage of icebergs. Some of this work followed from her journey to Iceland in 2010 where she studied the Eyjafjallajökull volcano six weeks after it had exploded. She has exhibited widely in Ireland and abroad; she was UCD Science Artist-in-Residence for 2013 and is Associate Artist-in-Residence for 2014.

Lunch 1pm-2pm

2-3.15pm **Recession Memory**

Speakers: Gunnþórunn Guðmundsdóttir • Sharae Deckard

‘Aesthetics of Boom and Bust Cycles’

- Gunnþórunn will discuss the aftermath of the 2008 banking crash in Iceland, how it is manifested in a disputed memorial in the centre of Reykjavík and represented in contemporary literature.
- Sharae will talk about the analogies between Ireland's and Iceland's experiences of financialization and subsequent recession, comparing the boom-bust cycles of particular commodity 'monocultures' in these two insular economies and how the socio-ecological relations, bodily dispositions, and subjective affects which they produce are registered in literary aesthetics drawing on works by Andri Snær Magnason and in Celtic Tiger and post-Tiger contemporary Irish fictions.

Gunnþórunn Guðmundsdóttir is senior lecturer in Comparative Literature at the University of Iceland and head of the Centre for Studies in Memory and Literature. She works on memory studies; life writing; photography; and writers' autobiographies. Her publications include *Borderlines: Autobiography and Fiction in Postmodern Life Writing* (Rodopi: Amsterdam and New York, 2003) • **Sharae Deckard** teaches and researches in the School of English, Drama and Film, UCD. Her current research interests include postcolonial studies, world-systems approaches to world literature, literature and world-ecology, and neoliberalism. She is author of *Paradise Discourse, Imperialism, and Globalization: Exploited Eden* (Routledge, 2010) and has recently edited an issue of *Green Letters* on "Global and Postcolonial Ecologies," and co-edited an issue of the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* with James Graham and Michael Niblett on "Postcolonial Studies and World Literature".

3.15-3.30: Tea/Coffee

3.30-4.45pm **Memory and War**

Speakers: Emilie Pine • Daisy Neijmann • John Brannigan

‘Commemoration and Forgetting’

- Emilie will ask questions about the politics of how the past is constructed by the present, specifically on patterns of remembering the First World War in the Irish Free State in the years before the 'Emergency'
- John will discuss the turn towards the northern archipelago in 1930s writings, focusing on W.H. Auden and Louis MacNeice's *Letters from Iceland* (1937), on this island, MacNeice proposes, against the looming threat of European war, 'we can practice forgetfulness'
- Daisy will talk on the ways in which the Allied occupation of Iceland during the Second World War has been remembered in memorials and recent exhibitions

Emilie Pine lectures in modern drama at UCD and is the Director of the Irish Memory Studies Network. Her monograph *The Politics of Irish Memory: Performing Remembrance in Contemporary Irish Culture* is published by Palgrave, and she is Assistant Editor of the *Irish University Review* • **John Brannigan** is senior lecturer in UCD School of English, Drama and Film. His books include *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (1998), *Pat Barker* (2005), and *Race in Modern Irish Literature and Culture* (2009). His latest book, *Archipelagic Modernism: Literature in the Irish and British Isles, 1890-1970* will be published later this year. He is the current editor of the *Irish University Review* • **Daisy Neijmann** received her doctorate in anglophone literature at the VU University in Amsterdam and taught Icelandic-Canadian studies at the University of Manitoba in Canada. She was Reader in Icelandic at University College London until 2011 and currently teaches Icelandic Literature at the University of Iceland. She has published widely on Icelandic migratory literature, modern Icelandic fiction and memory and trauma in Icelandic occupation literature

Admission is free but registration in advance is essential

Registration and further enquires, contact fionnuala.dillane@ucd.ie

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