

Interdisciplinary Approaches to 'Setting the Scene': Representations of Rurality in Crime Fiction and Media Culture

GOD'S REVENGE AGAINST MURDER.

"WHOSO SHEDDETH MAN'S BLOOD, BY MAN SHALL HIS BLOOD BE SIED"

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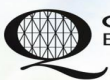
PRICE ONE PENNY.



Corder burying the Body of Marie Marten.

15th/16th June, 2015

Queen's University Belfast



Queen's University
Belfast

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Call for Papers

The two day Symposium in June is supported by the Institute for Collaborative Research in the Humanities at Queen's University and its 2014/15 theme of 'Creativity in Imagined and Material Worlds'. It will bring together studies in crime fiction and media culture looking at a variety of outlets such as fiction, film, television, comics, games and many others with the concept of 'rurality'. Here interdisciplinary papers are welcomed, but not contained to, Anthropology, Modern Languages, English, Film and Media Studies, History, Cultural Studies, Historical/Cultural/Rural Geography, Sociology, Spatial Planning. By bringing together an interdisciplinary group we might ask, therefore, how cultural constructions of the rural often 'set the scene' for crime fiction. For example It is obvious in the "noir" genre that an important (counter-) cultural current of strong, yet ambivalent representations of the rural runs throughout its landmark depictions of dark cities and hostile landscapes. Idealised as the contrapuntic setting of an Idyllic, prelapsian, vision of community in culturally pessimistic tales of the criminal big city, or, on the contrary, mythified as a site of primal terror and unspeakable backwardness in "*backwoods noir*" fiction, the "rural" is an important horizon of the crime genre and all of its subgenres. It often sets the scene in modern, Scandinavian crime fiction; it informs the Geography of golden age mysteries, frequently set on big, remote, estates, on secluded islands and other cut-off locations. Even the mystery books of Enid Blyton, have children experiencing adventures 'in' the rural in a world away from adults; or gothic-inspired books and television series such as 'Jamaica Inn', where a brooding, rural backdrop provides an avenue into a darker, Cornish world. TV series recycle in imaginative ways such tropes, as evidenced in the recent Channel Four series 'Glue' where the not so idyllic aspects of rural teenage hood as rural 'others' are depicted. The rural idyll/anti idyll can be explored, for example, as within the backward, depraved world depicted in the U.S. film 'Deliverance', or 'Cider House Rules'

The Symposium will provide a forum for concerted thinking around the 'setting the scene' theme and the relationships that might be explored. Thus the theme will not only offer an avenue for new readings into the canon of crime fiction and its satellites, from Conan Doyle to Faulkner, to Williams, to Upfield and D.O.A.; it can aid in thinking through conceptualizations and interdisciplinary collaborations. The work of Raymond Williams (1973) might be usefully interrogated and the ways in which the country/city as counterpoint inform the development of narrative and plot; the spatial scales of the emotional, local, international within an increasing post-modern world and their manifestation in media culture might be discussed. Here, Bourdieu's concepts such as those of Field and Habitus might also be fruitfully explored for the dominant norms and expressions presented in UK crime drama such as *Midsummer Murders* or *Johnathan Creek*, both set in and drawing on stereo-typical visions of rural locales.

This conference will foreground the rural within crime and media culture. We could consider for example filmic representations of concepts of attachment and belonging to place. Here we might think about the Irish Film 'The Field', and how it depicts generational attachment to farming and the land through the crime embedded in the narrative. Or we might consider how crime fiction leads to the commodification and place-marketing of rural places via cultural planning and through, 'trails' taking the visitor through, the "crimes" of Robin Hood and his retreat into the Forest, stories of Highwaymen such as Dick Turpin, the Wild West, or more recently Scandinavian Crime fiction.

Thus the 'Setting the Scene' theme should be interpreted extensively within and beyond the themes mentioned. The Symposium provides an opportunity to tap into existing and new research ideas and develop exciting interdisciplinary research collaborations for the future.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Professor Paul Cloke, University of Exeter (Confirmed)

Professor Benoît Tadié, University of Rennes (Confirmed)

Call For Papers – Deadline : Please submit Abstracts (250 words Maximum) by the 15th of January by email to either:

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