

# **Cultural Memory of Past Dictatorships: Narratives of Implication in a Global Perspective**

## Keynote Speakers:

**Professor Jie-Hyun Lim** (Critical Global Studies Institute, Sogang University)

**Professor Juliane Prade-Weiss** (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

**Professor Michael Lazzara** (University of California, Davis)

**Professor David Martin-Jones** (University of Glasgow)

Democratic societies around the world are haunted by the memory of their dictatorial past. While the legacy of past dictatorships has long been a point of concern of academic disciplines such as History, Sociology, and Heritage Studies, in the last decades, it has become a key issue for scholars of literature, cinema, and visual arts, too. This is a much welcome trend of the scholarship of Memory Studies, not only because writers, filmmakers, and visual artists can heavily affect how the democratic present imagines and understands the dictatorial past, but also because they allow us to think about it in particularly complex and productive ways.

Recent development of memory theory confirms the importance of cultural production. Going beyond a schematic victim-perpetrator dichotomy that tended to characterise national and public discourses across the world, today's scholarship of Memory Studies points towards the importance of mapping the grey zone that exists between victims and perpetrators, recognising the varied ways in which ordinary people can be entangled with past, present, and structural injustices and how they can be implicated in their perpetuation. Cultural products seem particularly apt to think about the past along these lines since novels, films, graphic-novels, tv-series, and works of art enable us to see the diverse subject-positions that individuals can have vis-à-vis past injustices, including those that fall beyond the purview of the law. By doing so, cultural products can offer extremely powerful platforms to reflect on the dictatorial past in all its complexities.

This Symposium brings together scholars working on the representation of past dictatorships through the study of cultural products. Adopting Michael Rothberg's concept of implication as a common thread, the Symposium aims to investigate the ways in which cultural products engage with the ethical dilemmas of complicity, guilt, and responsibility that dictatorships create. In representing past dictatorships, how do cultural products construct and problematise the notions of victim, perpetrator, beneficiary, bystander, collaborator, and implicated subject? How can cultural products help us think about the ways ordinary citizens are involved in dictatorial regimes? What are the benefits and limitations of using aesthetically refined works to pose ethical questions about the past? By approaching these issues in a global, comparative, and transnational perspective, the Symposium also aims to explore the tensions between local and global circulation of narratives of implication assessing which visual and narrative tropes and templates are used to appeal to both global and local audiences.

We welcome papers that touch upon the legacy of any past dictatorships in Africa, Americas, Asia, and Europe (widely conceived, including both Eastern and Western countries as well as the Balkans) through the study of any forms of cultural products. If

interested, please send a 300-word abstract and short bio blurb to both organisers by **17 December 2021**:

Organisers: **Dr Guido Bartolini** ([gbartolini@ucc.ie](mailto:gbartolini@ucc.ie))  
**Dr Diana Popa** ([popa@tlu.ee](mailto:popa@tlu.ee))

The Symposium seeks to explore the following, non-exhaustive, list of topics:

- The involvement of ordinary people in the crimes of dictatorships.
- Position-taking through cultural depictions (e.g. victims, perpetrators, beneficiaries, bystanders, collaborators, and implicated subjects).
- Narratives of guilt and responsibility for past dictatorships.
- Failures to construct a sense of implication through redemptive narratives and self-absolving tropes.
- Diachronic implication in and trans-generational responsibility for the dictatorial past.
- The relationship between the Ethics and the Aesthetics in the representation of past dictatorships.
- The limits and dangers of narratives of implication.
- Tensions between the local and global in narratives of implication (either at production and reception level of the artwork or at the textual level)
- The relationship between transnational memory practices and national, local or regional debates provoked by narratives of implication.

**Symposium Date: 20 May 2022**

**Mode of Delivery: Online**

**Host Institution: University College Cork, Ireland**

**Deadline for Submitting abstracts: 17 December 2021**

You will be notified whether your proposal has been accepted in February 2022.

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