2012

Jimmy Buffett's Islands - Research Seminar Series

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Publication Details
Jimmy Buffett's Islands - Research Seminar Series

Abstract
Throughout the centuries, various societies have conjured mythical islands in response to their own cultural needs. Hy Brasil, for instance, offered European societies a measure of comfort against the vast emptiness of the Atlantic Ocean and the uncertainty of what lay beyond it.

For the past fifty years or so, Jimmy Buffett has been writing and singing about islands both real and imaginary. His audience, though boasting a worldwide membership, is mostly American. His island fantasies are easily attained – in the first instance by the yachting classes of East Coast America but also, just as easily, by anyone willing to pull on a grass skirt, order a margarita and get swept up in the music he plays.

The paper will examine the features of Buffett’s island construct and consider the cultural work it performs. It will show that the affable Jimmy character which Buffett performs on stage and the autobiographical Jimmy of A Pirate Looks at Fifty, mask the more entrepreneurial aspects of his identity. As a performer, writer and business man, Buffett uses his imagined islands to express and capitalise on the malaises of middle America. While the islands conjured up by this barefoot troubadour enchant and intoxicate, they also offer an implicit commentary on contemporary urban culture.

Keywords
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JIMMY BUFFETT'S ISLANDS

DR IRENE LUCHITTI, HONORARY FELLOW, FACULTY OF ARTS

When: Wednesday 9 May, 12.30pm - 2.00pm
Where: Room 19.1003

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Bio: Irene is a specialist in early twentieth century Irish literature and culture and takes a special interest in life-writing and translation studies as well as in the study of small island cultures.

She completed her PhD in the English Language Program at the University of Wollongong where she is now an Honorary Fellow. She has published numerous articles and a book on the autobiography of Tomas O’Crohan of the Blasket Islands and is currently writing a book on a second Blasket author, Peig Sayers for Peter Lang’s Reimagining Ireland Series.

She has published her work on the life-writing of US performer and author,
Marta Becket and is currently working on the various writings and performances of singer-songwriter-novelist-life-writer, Jimmy Buffett.

Light refreshments will be served.

For more information please contact Leonie Clement