
The(e)ories: Critical Theory & Sexuality Studies presents

FANTASIES OF THE GOOD LIFE:

READING LAUREN BERLANT'S *CRUEL OPTIMISM*

A two-day intensive, interdisciplinary seminar

Sponsored by the UCD Humanities Institute



Friday 7-Saturday 8 June 2013

Humanities Institute, University College Dublin, Ireland

VENUE DETAILS

Friday 7 June 2013: Seminar Room, Clinton Institute for American Studies, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland (<http://www.ucdclinton.ie/>). A campus map is available to download here: <http://www.ucd.ie/maps>

Saturday 8 June 2013: Room H204, Humanities Institute, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland (<http://www.ucd.ie/humanities>). A campus map is available to download here: <http://www.ucd.ie/maps>

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

“‘Cruel optimism’ names a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility. What is cruel about these attachments, and not merely inconvenient or tragic, is that the subjects who have *x* in their lives might not well endure the loss of their object or scene of desire, even though its presence threatens their well-being, because whatever the *content* of the attachment, the continuity of the form of it provides something of the continuity of the subject’s sense of what it means to keep on living on and to look forward to being in the world. This phrase points to a condition different than that of melancholia, which is enacted in the subject’s desire to temporize an experience of the loss of an object/scene with which she has identified her ego continuity. Cruel optimism is the condition of maintaining an attachment to a problematic object *in advance* of its loss’ (Lauren Berlant, ‘Cruel Optimism’, *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 17.5 (2006): 21).

This two-day intensive, interdisciplinary seminar will be devoted to reading and discussing Professor Lauren Berlant’s recently-published book *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press 2011), from a range of theoretical and interdisciplinary perspectives including feminism, queer theory, visual culture, sociology, political theory, literary studies, psychoanalysis, disability studies, race and ethnicity studies, philosophy, management studies, American studies and critical legal studies among others. The seminar will feature a lecture by Lauren Berlant on her current research, followed by a series of thematic discussions, each preceded by panels of informal responses (5-10 mins) to the issues raised in *Cruel Optimism*. While the seminar will pay attention to a wide range of topics treated across Berlant’s work and in her current book (including the good life, fantasy, desire, temporality, sovereignty, trauma, crisis, citizenship, intimacy, antinormativity, pedagogy, obesity, public sex, among others) we will be primarily focusing on *three* broad themes in our discussions: 1) Affect, 2) Biopolitics, and 3) Precarity. ***The emphasis in this two-day seminar will be on discussion.***

REQUIRED READING

All delegates must purchase and read a copy of *Cruel Optimism* by Lauren Berlant (Durham: Duke University Press 2011) in advance of the seminar.

DESCRIPTION OF *CRUEL OPTIMISM* (DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS 2011)

A relation of cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing. Offering bold new ways of conceiving the present, Lauren Berlant describes the cruel optimism that has prevailed since the 1980s, as the social-democratic promise of the postwar period in the United States and Europe has retracted. People have remained attached to unachievable fantasies of the good life — with its promises of upward mobility, job security, political and social equality, and durable intimacy — despite evidence that liberal-capitalist societies can no longer be counted on to provide opportunities for individuals to make their lives ‘add up to something’.

Arguing that the historical present is perceived affectively before it is understood in any other way, Berlant traces affective and aesthetic responses to the dramas of adjustment that unfold amid talk of precarity, contingency, and crisis. She suggests that our stretched-out present is characterized by new modes of temporality, and she explains why trauma theory — with its focus on reactions to the exceptional event that shatters the ordinary — is not useful for understanding the ways that people adjust over time, once crisis itself has become ordinary. *Cruel Optimism* is a remarkable affective history of the present.

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LAUREN BERLANT

Lauren Berlant is George M. Pullman Professor of English at the University of Chicago, USA. Her national sentimentality trilogy — *The Anatomy of National Fantasy* (Chicago University Press 1991), *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City* (Duke University Press 1997) and *The Female Complaint* (Duke University Press 2008) — has now morphed into a quartet, with *Cruel Optimism* (Duke University Press 2011) addressing precarious publics and the aesthetics of affective adjustment in the contemporary US and Europe. A co-editor of the journal *Critical Inquiry*, she is also editor of *Intimacy* (2000); *Our Monica, Ourselves: The Clinton Affair and the National Interest* (2001, with Lisa Duggan); *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion* (2004); and *On the Case* (a special issue of *Critical Inquiry*, 2007). Her most recent book is *Desire/Love* (Punctum 2012). She blogs at www.supervalentthought.com and is also a founding member of the art/activist group Feel Tank Chicago.

Further details about Lauren Berlant: <http://english.uchicago.edu/faculty/berlant>

REGISTRATION FEE

Delegates must be available to attend both days of the seminar. There is a registration fee of €30 (academics/waged) and €10 (students/unwaged) payable on the first day of the seminar.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Day One: Friday 7 June 2013

Venue: Seminar Room, Clinton Institute of American Studies, University College Dublin

12.15 pm-1.00 pm Registration

1.15 pm-1.30 pm Welcome & Opening Remarks: **Noreen Giffney, Anne Mulhall & Michael O'Rourke** (The(e)ories: Critical Theory & Sexuality Studies)

1.30 pm-2.30 pm **Lauren Berlant** (University of Chicago, USA) '**No World Poetics: On Biopolitics and the Attachment to Life**'. Introduced and chaired by **Michael O'Rourke**

Lecture Description: Hannah Arendt argues that worldlessness is a catastrophe. This talk offers another view. Reading with Claudia Rankine (*Don't Let Me Be Lonely*), the novel and film of *A Single Man* (Christopher Isherwood, 1964; Tom Ford, 2009), and Harryette Mullen (*Sleeping with the Dictionary* (2002)), it describes an aesthetics and a subjectivity shaped on one side by suicide and on the other by a life drive that is also, paradoxically, negative, in that it turns toward life by turning away from the world of injury, negation, and tedious contingency that endure as an defining presence for biopolitical subjects. It suggests attending to and developing a dissociative poetics. The talk will be less abstract than this abstract.

2.30-3.00 pm Tea & Coffee Break

3.00-4.00 pm Discussion with **Lauren Berlant**. Chaired by **Michael O'Rourke**

4.00 pm Close of Day One

Day Two: Saturday 8 June 2013

Venue: Room H204, Humanities Institute of Ireland, University College Dublin

9.45 am-10.00 am Welcome & Opening Remarks: **Noreen Giffney, Anne Mulhall & Michael O'Rourke**

10.00 am-10.30 am Introductions

10.30 am-12.15 pm AFFECT

10.30 am-11.10 am Short, informal responses to the Introduction and chapters 1 & 2 of *Cruel Optimism* by **Denis Flannery, Katherine Johnson, Moynagh Sullivan & Marie Walshe**. Chaired by **Noreen Giffney**

11.10 am-12.15 pm Discussion of the Introduction and chapters 1 & 2 facilitated by **Noreen Giffney**

12.15 pm-1.15pm Lunch**1.15 pm-3.00 pm BIOPOLITICS**

1.15 pm-1.55 pm Short, informal responses to chapters 3 & 4 of *Cruel Optimism* by **Kate Antosik Parsons, Marianna Fotaki, Tina Kinsella & Anne Mulhall**. Chaired by **Margaret O'Neill**

1.55 pm-3.00 pm Discussion of chapters 3 & 4 facilitated by **Margaret O'Neill**

3.00 pm-3.30 pm Tea & Coffee Break**3.30 pm-5.15 pm PRECARITY**

3.30 pm-4.10 pm Short, informal responses to chapters 5, 6 & 7 of *Cruel Optimism* by **Lisa Baraitser, Mairéad Enright, Kate Kenny & Treasa de Loughrey**. Chaired by **Graham Price**

4.10 pm-5.15 pm Discussion of chapters 5, 6 & 7 facilitated by **Graham Price**

5.15 pm Thanks & Close of Seminar: Noreen Giffney, Anne Mulhall & Michael O'Rourke**RESPONDENTS AND DISCUSSANTS**

Kate Antosik Parsons recently completed her PhD entitled 'Remembering and Forgetting: Memory and Gender in Irish Time-Based Art' (University College Dublin, 2012). In 2009 she was the primary researcher for the Guerrilla Girls work commissioned by the Millennium Courts Art Centre (Portadown, Northern Ireland). Kate is an editor of the peer-reviewed journal, *Artefact: The Journal of the Irish Association of Art Historians* (2010-Present). Her publications include 'Bodily Remembrances: The Performance of Memory in Recent Works by Amanda Coogan', *Artefact: The Journal of the Irish Association of Art Historians* 3 (2009); 'Masculinity in Crisis: The Construction of Irish Masculinities in Willie Doherty's *Non Specific Threat*', *Irish Masculinities: Critical Reflections on Literature and Culture*, eds. Caroline Magennis and Raymond Mullen (Irish Academic Press 2011); 'Noah's Ark by Elizabeth Rivers', *Eire-Ireland* 47: 3-4 (2012). Kate is also a contributor to *Volume III: Sculptors and Sculpture, 1600-2000, Art and Architecture of Ireland*, Royal Irish Academy and Yale University Press (2014). She is an Occasional Lecturer in Irish Studies at University College Dublin and a Research Associate of the UCD Humanities Institute. Her research interests include performance art, Beckett, embodiment and corporeal memory.

Lisa Baraitser is a feminist writer, a psychotherapist, and a Reader in Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck, University of London. Her work centres on the fraught relations as well as creative tensions between feminism, ethics, maternity and psychoanalysis, the subject of her monograph, *Maternal Encounters; The Ethics of Interruption* (Routledge 2009). She is

currently working in the area of critical temporalities, investigating a variety of ‘practices of staying’ – durational relational practices that have become more and more difficult to sustain in neoliberal economic conditions of globalised capitalism.

Treasa de Loughrey is a second-year doctoral scholar in the School of English at University College Dublin, under the supervision of Dr John Brannigan and Dr Sharae Deckard. Her research critiques recent theories of cosmopolitanism through a ‘world-systemic’ reading of Salman Rushdie, David Mitchell and Rana Dasgupta. Treasa’s research is supported by the Irish Research Council and the UCD Humanities Institute.

Mairéad Enright is a Lecturer in Law at the University of Kent. Her research is primarily in the areas of feminist legal studies, private law, law and religion and citizenship theory. She is a founder of www.humanrights.ie and blogs frequently on issues of gender, religion and citizenship in Ireland.

Marianna Fotaki is Professor at Manchester Business School, University of Manchester. She holds degrees in medicine, health economics, and a PhD in Public Policy from the London School of Economics and has worked as EU resident adviser to the governments in transition and for *Médecins Sans Frontières* and *Médecins Du Monde*. Her research on the marketisation of public services, health inequalities, gender and otherness in organisations and business in society has appeared in *British Journal of Management*, *Human Relations*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Social Policy*, *Organization*, *Policy & Politics*, *Public Administration*, *Social Science & Medicine* and *Sociology of Health & Illness*. A monograph, *The Fantasy and Reality of Choice in Public Services*, is due to be published by Edward Elgar.

Noreen Giffney works as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and established the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Clinic in Dublin. She also coordinates research in the Humanities Institute at University College Dublin. She is the co-editor of *Twenty-First Century Lesbian Studies* (2007), *Queering the Non/Human* (2008), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Queer Theory* (2009), *The Lesbian Premodern* (2011), *Theory on the Edge: Irish Studies and the Politics of Sexual Difference* (2013) and *Clinical Encounters: Psychoanalytic Practice and Queer Theory* (under review). She has articles forthcoming in the journals, *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy* and *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, which form part of a larger research project on the discourses of desire in the writings of the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion.

Katherine Johnson is Principal Lecturer in Psychology in the School of Applied Social Science at the University of Brighton and a core member of the LGBT Queer Lives Research Hub. Her research is in the areas of gender, sexuality and mental health and she has written on transgender embodiment, LGBT mental health, shame and suicide. She is co-author of *Community Psychology and the Socio-Economics of Mental Distress* (Palgrave 2012) and the forthcoming *Sexuality and the Psychosocial Subject* (Polity 2014), and is currently thinking about ambivalence and affective activism.

Kate Kenny is a Reader in Organization Theory at Queen’s University Belfast. She researches identification in organisations and is interested in theories of affect, power and psychoanalysis. She is currently carrying out a two-year empirical research project on

whistleblowing in banks, supported by NUI Galway's Millennium Fund. She holds a research fellowship at Cambridge University's Judge Business School, and her work has been published in *Organization Studies*, *Human Relations*, *Organization and Gender Work and Organization* among other journals. She is an editorial board member of *Organization*, the *Journal of Organizational Ethnography* and *ephemera: theory and politics of organization*. She recently published *Understanding Identity and Organizations* (SAGE 2011, with A. Whittle and H. Willmott), and is currently working on *Affect at Work: The Psychosocial and Organization Studies* (Palgrave, forthcoming, with M. Fotaki).

Tina Kinsella is an Irish Research Council Scholar, a researcher at the Graduate School of Creative Arts and Media (GradCAM), Dublin, and an arts practitioner. She undertook her doctoral studies at the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), Dublin, where she lectures in the Faculty of Visual Culture. Her doctoral research on the Matrixial Theory and art practice of psychoanalyst, theorist and artist, Bracha L. Ettinger, focused on intersections between psychoanalytic theory and phenomenology, aesthetics and ontology in relation to subjectivity and the ethical relation. Kinsella has presented conference papers and published on various aspects of Matrixial theory, gender, feminist and queer theory, philosophy and film, the artworks of Frida Kahlo and emergent contemporary art practice. Her most recent collaborative work, *Umbilical*, was funded by the Arts Council of Ireland and received its premiere at Rua Red South Dublin Arts centre in November 2011. See <http://ncad.academia.edu/TinaKinsella/About> for further information.

Anne Mulhall is a Lecturer in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin, Ireland, where she teaches and researches in gender, queer and psychoanalytic theory, gender and sexuality studies and twentieth-century and contemporary Irish literature and culture. Anne coordinates the MA in Gender, Sexuality and Culture and is Director of the Centre for Gender, Culture and Identities and of the GREP-structured PhD programme in Gender, Culture and Identities. A co-edited issue of the *Irish University Review*, 'Queer Studies and Ireland', appeared in May 2013. She is currently working on two monographs: *Anne Enright: Excavating the Present* (Bucknell UP, 2014) and *Intimate States: The Biopolitics of Ireland*.

Margaret O'Neill was an IRCHSS scholar in the English Department, NUI Maynooth, from 2006 to 2010. Her research interests lie in psychoanalytic and gender theory, and twentieth-century and contemporary Irish women's writing. She currently teaches seminars on Irish Studies in the English Department, NUI Maynooth. Margaret is writing a monograph entitled 'The Politics of Desire in Elizabeth Bowen and Kate O'Brien'.

Michael O'Rourke lectures in the School of Psychotherapy at Independent Colleges, Dublin and writes mostly about the intersections between queer theory and continental philosophy. Among other things, he is currently writing a book called *Queering Speculative Realism*. Some of his many publications can be found at: <http://independentcolleges.academia.edu/MichaelORourke>

Graham Price lectures in the School of English, Drama and Film and Irish Studies at University College Dublin, Ireland. He also tutors part-time at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra. He has taught courses on Irish literature, critical theory, twentieth-century

drama and children's literature. He completed his doctoral dissertation in 2008 which examined the influence of Oscar Wilde on twentieth century Irish writers. He has published articles on Oscar Wilde, Brian Friel, John McGahern and the intersections between Irish Studies and queer theory. He is currently working on a monograph examining Oscar Wilde's influence on contemporary Irish drama.

Moynagh Sullivan is a Lecturer in English Literature at NUI, Maynooth with research interests in psychoanalysis, gender, modernism and postmodernism, and popular culture and women's writing. She was the Fulbright Scholar in Irish Literary and Cultural Studies at UC Berkeley, CA (2009), and a recipient of an IRCHSS Post-Doctoral Fellowship (2002-2004). She is currently working on a monograph on psychoanalysis, gender, and Irish culture and she has published extensively in Irish and gender studies. She has co-edited *Facing the Other: Interdisciplinary Essays in Race, Gender and Social Justice in Ireland* (with Borbala Farago, Cambridge Scholar's Press 2008), *Irish Postmodernisms and Popular Culture* (with Wanda Balzano and Anne Mulhall, Palgrave Macmillan 2007), and 'Irish Feminisms', a special issue of *Irish Review* (with Wanda Balzano, 2007).

Marie Walshe is a psychoanalyst in private practice, treating individuals, couples and children. She has a MA in Clinical Psychoanalysis and a Certificate in Family Therapy. She is a Registered Practitioner Member of the Association for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy in Ireland (APPI) and the College of Psychoanalysts of Ireland (CPI). Marie currently lectures in Independent College on the Masters and Higher Diploma programmes in psychotherapy. She has also lectured on the Masters in Dispute Resolution at Independent College. A regular contributor to academic and peer journals, Marie has been published in the academic journal *The Letter* and in *The Review*, a peer journal of APPI. Marie was an inaugural member of APPI's Child and Adolescent Analysis Group. This group brought together psychotherapists working in the education system, the health service, the justice system and private practice.

DELEGATES

Ásta Benediktsdóttir received a BA in Icelandic Studies and an MA in Icelandic Literature from the University of Iceland. She has published articles in Icelandic journals on her MA project on narrative methods in the works of Jakobína Sigurðardóttir, and given talks about various subjects at literature conferences and seminars in Iceland. Ásta is currently based in Dublin and Reykjavik while working on her PhD project on queer Icelandic literature, which is funded by The Icelandic Research Fund for Graduate Students.

Claire Brophy is a second-year PhD student in the School of English, Media and Theatre Studies at NUI Maynooth, under the supervision of Dr Moynagh Sullivan. Her research interests include contemporary Irish fiction, gender and sexuality theory, post-modernism, popular culture and psychoanalytic theory. Her work focuses on the writing of Anne Enright, asking how the focus on women and 'the Mother' in Enright's work represents a new kind of Irish writing. It also considers the classifications of contemporary Irish writing from 'literary' to 'pop-fiction' and 'chick-lit', examining the academic discourses in which women's writing is read and classified, as well as the broader cultural platforms on which these works are

read and discussed, asking what the significance such classifications have for reading female identities at a psychic, social and political level.

Audrey Bryan holds a PhD in Comparative-International Education and Sociology from Columbia University, New York. She teaches sociology on the humanities and education programmes at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra. She is also an adjunct lecturer at SciencesPo University and University College Dublin. Audrey has published nationally and internationally on issues pertaining to the dynamics of racism and anti-racism, sexuality, and international development.

Sarah Cefai works as a sessional tutor at the University of Western Sydney and the University of Sydney, and as an Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme tutor at Macquarie University. Following her earlier training in the UK, she was awarded her PhD by the University of Sydney in 2012. She has just begun working on a book based on her doctoral research. Titled 'Critical Feelings: A Genealogy of Feminist Knowledge', the book examines the centrality of feeling to feminist politics and the ways in which feminist knowledge has participated in the representation of feeling. She looks at how we experience feeling as subjects of knowledge and how feminist theory enables us to understand this as a basis for a politics. More broadly her scholarship concerns issues of feeling, knowledge and power in relation to the behaviour of institutions. Most recently she has been working in the Indigenous policymaking context in the Northern Territory and developing her scholarship on feeling/identity/intimacy more specifically through questions of epistemology in post- and settler colonial contexts.

Maria-Adriana Deiana has a doctorate from the School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy at Queen's University, Belfast, on gender and citizenship in the transition from ethno-national conflict to peace with a focus on the Former Yugoslavia. Her area of expertise lies in the field of international politics and gender studies. She has written on government responses to survivors of sexual and physical violence in Bosnia and Northern Ireland, as well as on feminism and citizenship in Bosnia-Herzegovina. She is currently working on two main projects that, respectively, explore feminism and citizenship enactments in Belfast, and queer approaches to '(post)conflict' spaces in the context of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Besides gender, citizenship and international relations, her interests include queer Theory, postcolonial and post-socialism studies. She also has an interest in feminist and street art.

Marie Flynn is a Lecturer in the sociology of education in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra. Marie works in the Departments of Education and Human Development. Courses and research interests include: gender and education; families, schools and society; intelligence, equality and schooling; development of reflective practice. Marie's most recent research work is part of a collaborative project on privacy and schooling and on the potential incursions into children's private lives in schools. She is involved extensively in the supervision of students during school placements.

Izzy Fox is a GREP PhD candidate in the UCD Humanities Institute. Her project is a trans-disciplinary study of the contemporary feminist movement in Ireland and its engagement with social media. The research examines the Irish Feminist Network (IFN) as a case study,

by using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods. Cyber, feminist and social-movement theory will provide the major theoretical framework for her thesis, while also drawing on queer and psychoanalytic theories. Her findings should ultimately produce a critical insight into contemporary feminist discourse in Ireland.

Ciara Griffin is a PhD student at NUI, Galway. Her undergraduate degree was a BA in English and Philosophy. Her postgraduate study at the University of Amsterdam included work at the ISHSS/AIM on gender and sexuality as well as in South Asian Anthropology, while she was working under the aegis of the research masters in literary theory. Her PhD research is situated at the intersection of philosophical and cultural analyses of the body as represented in contemporary South Asian writing by women. She explores themes of materiality by approaching reading and writing as embodied practices and in thinking around the materiality of the literary text as a cultural object.

Declan Kavanagh recently completed an Irish Research Council-funded doctoral project in the department of English at NUI, Maynooth entitled: 'Patriots and Fribbles: Effeminacy and Politics in the Literature of the Seven Years' War and its aftermath, 1756-1774' (2012). He has published essays and reviews in the following journals: *Irish University Review*, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*/ *Iris an dá chultúr* and the *British Association for Romantic Studies Bulletin and Review*.

Madeleine Lyes is a contract Lecturer and Tutor in American Studies and English at University College Dublin. Her research focuses on questions of civic engagement in urban spaces, the history of urbanism in the United States and Ireland, and the concept of urbanity. This focus is drawn from her doctoral work (UCD Clinton Institute for American Studies) on the *New Yorker* magazine and its cultural footprint within New York City, 1948-76. She is the Director of an urban forum in Dublin called *City Intersections*, which engages public discourse on challenges facing Dublin city today. The project's public and scholarly remit also supports a research project on contemporary urban discourse in Dublin, fostering collaborations between numerous academic and cultural projects within the city.

Hannah Markley attended the University of Sussex for my MA and is currently a doctoral student at Emory University in the Departments of English and Comparative Literature. Her research investigates modes of relation, focusing on the structures of friendship and love, as well as their ethical and political implications. She pays particular attention to the work of Jacques Derrida in an effort to consider forms of relation like friendship and love as literary functions that seem to resist ontological coordinates.

Anthony McIntyre is a first-year PhD student currently working on a thesis entitled "'Leaning towards The Horizontal": Niche Celebrity, Individuality and Collectivism in The Early 21st Century" in Film Studies at University College Dublin, under the supervision of Professor Diane Negra. Using niche celebrity, that is, the cultural prominence of figures relatively unknown to the wider public but holding considerable cachet within specific taste cultures, as a prism, this project analyses changing configurations of the media landscape and the impact they are having on notions of individuality and collectivism at a time of economic and ideological duress. He has previously delivered a paper at a conference on the work of theorist Pierre Bourdieu entitled 'Reproducing the Habitus of Atomisation: iPhone

Adverts, New Girl and Occupy's Popular Protest'. Anthony's research interests include the political impact of celebrity; representations of 'indie' culture on screen; theorisations of cuteness; and crossover stardom from musicians to screen and vice versa. He previously studied English Literature in the University of Glasgow and completed an MA in Film Studies at University College Dublin.

Amy Mitchell is a first-year research student at NUI, Maynooth, undertaking a project which will track, explore, and contextualise the representations of masculinity, and gender more generally, in the poetry, diaries, articles and other personal documents of Irish-language poet Seán Ó Ríordáin. This project is being jointly supervised by Dr Tadhg Ó Dúshláine in the Department of Modern Irish and Dr Moynagh Sullivan in the Department of English, and has received funding from the University's John and Pat Hume Scholarship scheme. Amy is particularly interested in contemporary gender, queer and postcolonial theories and how these may be utilised to enlighten the study of contemporary Irish-language writing and to fortify the links between Irish-language studies and Irish Studies more generally.

Jon Mitchell is a Lecturer in American Studies at the University of East Anglia. His research interests include US Masculinity and National Identity; Vietnam War and its literature; US literature and culture of the '50s and '60s; Anti-Racism/Whiteness Studies; Cultural Studies; queer theory; narrative theory (narratology and post-narratology); 'Christian identity' and fundamentalism; and methodology in American Studies. He is the author of *Revisions of the American Adam: Innocence, Identity and Masculinity in the Twentieth Century*, published by Continuum in 2011. He has also published: 'Jim Stark's "Barbaric Yawp", Rebel Without a Cause and the Cold War Crisis in Masculinity' in J.D. Slocum (ed.) *Rebel Without a Cause: Approaches to a Maverick Masterwork* (2005); 'Secular Millennialism and the Salvation of Anglo-America: Policing "the last barrier of civilization"', *Irish Journal of American Studies* 11-12 (2002-2003): 133-50; and with Michael O'Rourke, 'Quempire: A Loiterly Journey into the Heart of Darkness' in M. Aydemir (ed.) *Indiscretions: at the Intersection of Postcolonial and Queer Theory* (2011).

Sinéad Molony is a PhD Candidate in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin. Her interdisciplinary dissertation examines the production of Dublin City as a gendered space and draws on women's self-representations to examine the interrelation between bodies and the city with a particular focus on genealogies of exclusion and dislocation as well as women's performances of dissent and subversion.

Diane Negra is Professor of Film Studies and Screen Culture at University College Dublin. She is the author, editor or co-editor of eight books including *Gendering the Recession* (forthcoming Duke University Press, 2013).

Brenda O'Connell is a first-year PhD student in the Department of English, Theatre and Media Studies at NUI, Maynooth. Her research focuses on the relationship between visual art, performance and the text in the work of Samuel Beckett, Amanda Coogan (performance artist) and Willie Doherty's video installations. Research questions are: How does Beckett's work appear to us now, when put into dialogue with more recent critical and philosophical approaches to literature, such as theories of affect, trauma theory, biopolitics? How do we read the body in performance art, a complex and under-researched area in the field of Irish

Studies? What is the relationship between artist/spectator, as theorised by Jacques Ranciere? How do we 'read' the landscape in Doherty's video and photography work? What is our response to the images he presents? What do theories of Affect, Bracha Ettinger's theory of the matrixial realm, and the philosophy of Ranciere uncover in a close reading of these 'texts'?

Tina O'Toole is a Lecturer in English at the University of Limerick. Her publications include *Documenting Irish Feminisms: The Second Wave* (2005, co-authored by Linda Connolly); *The Dictionary of Munster Women Writers* (2005, see also www.munsterwomen.ie); *Irish Literature: Feminist Perspectives* (2008, co-edited with Patricia Coughlan); and a special issue of *Éire-Ireland: Journal of Irish Studies* (Spring/Summer 2012; co-edited with Piaras Mac Éinrí) on 'New Approaches to Irish Migration'. She has been Government of Ireland Post-Doctoral Fellow at University College Cork, Research Fellow in Irish Studies at Queen's University Belfast, and Visiting Scholar in Women's Studies at the University of Ottawa. Her current book, 'The Irish New Woman', is forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan later this year.

Marcus Richey is originally from Kansas, USA, has lived and lectured for 20 years in Sweden and relocated to Dublin in March, 2013. He is a PhD candidate at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, and his dissertation title is 'Man Down: Odysseys of Patriarchal Dissolution in Postmodern American Fiction and Film'. His authors are Paul Auster, Don DeLillo, and the Coen Brothers. The research involves texts where the central male character embarks upon a journey of self-destruction. The protagonists are driven by an often inexplicable need for self-sabotage. In various ways there is a desire to suffer, experience humiliation and powerlessness, and ultimately, unravel with no hope of reconstruction. He argues that such masochistic odysseys can be read as symbolic of a profound and desperate need among some men to undo themselves and their complex network of relationships, their status, their place in the world as men. His aim is to investigate to what extent this embrace of powerlessness and loss can participate in a feminist project to expose and deconstruct patriarchy. If these texts are read in a manner that examines a drive to self-destruct as a desperate yearning to dissolve man's gendered privilege, what issues, questions and difficulties then arise?

Julie Rodgers completed her doctorate at Trinity College Dublin and has been a Lecturer in French at NUI Maynooth since 2007. Her research interests include: Quebec literature; migrant writing; contemporary Francophone women's writing; Motherhood Studies; and, feminist theory. She is a working member of the AHRC-funded Motherhood in Post-1968 Literature Network and an executive committee member of both ADEFFI (Association des études françaises et francophones en Irlande) and ACSI (Association of Canadian Studies in Ireland). Her most recent publication examines the playful and emancipatory role of shopping in women's lives as depicted in the novels of Quebec writer Gabrielle Roy and can be found in *Between Work and Play*, ed. Kathryn N. Jones and Nathalie Morello, *Nottingham French Studies* 52: 1 (2013): 97-113. She is a reviewer for the *British Journal of Canadian Studies* and the appointed contributor of the annual review of publications in French-Canadian Literature for the YWMLS (*Year's Work in Modern Language Studies*).

Karin Sellberg is a postdoctoral fellow in English literature at the University of Edinburgh and the Director of the Scottish Universities' International Summer School. She teaches modules on contemporary literature and medical humanities, to English literature as well as medical students. She has published on gender studies, corporeal feminism and contemporary literature, in among others, *Australian Feminist Studies*, *Deleuze Studies* and *Transformations*. Her research interests include medical humanities, the pathologisation of gender and embodiment in contemporary and early modern fiction, and conceptions of body fat in contemporary culture and cultural theories.

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SEMINAR SPONSORS

Noreen Giffney & Michael O'Rourke have been convening events together since 2001. Noreen, Michael & Anne Mulhall have been organising events together since 2007. This event is sponsored by The(e)ories: Critical Theory & Sexuality Studies, as well as the following at University College Dublin: the MA in Gender, Sexuality and Culture, the Graduate Research and Education Programme in Gender, Culture and Identity, and the Humanities Institute.

The(e)ories: Critical Theory & Sexuality Studies is an interdisciplinary seminar series that was founded and has been organised by Noreen Giffney and Michael O'Rourke since 2002. Originally entitled The(e)ories: Advanced Seminars for Queer Research, Noreen and Michael changed the subtitle to Critical Theory & Sexuality Studies in 2007 to reflect their broadening research interests in psychoanalysis and deconstruction respectively. Anne Mulhall joined the organising committee of The(e)ories in 2012. The(e)ories is devoted to examining issues relating to gender and sexuality within the context of critical theory across a wide range of disciplines. The term 'seminar series' is a misnomer as The(e)ories also includes conferences, symposia and roundtable discussions. The series has featured speakers from Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, including some of the world's most eminent thinkers in this area: Judith Butler, Judith Halberstam, Lee Edelman,

Leo Bersani, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Jeffrey Weeks, Tim Dean, Nikki Sullivan, David M. Halperin, Bracha L. Ettinger, Sally R. Munt, Sasha Roseneil, Tamsin Wilton, Del LaGrace Volcano, Luciana Parisi, Lisa Baraitser, Sara Ahmed, Nicholas Royle, Elizabeth Freeman, Lisa Downing, Robyn Wiegman, Margrit Shildrick and Martin McQuillan to name a few. People have travelled from Europe, Australia, Canada and the USA to attend and participate in events.

The organisers have also been keen to develop links with people working on critical theory in the context of gender and sexuality, and have been committed to inviting participants and respondents—academics and postgraduates—based at UCD, TCD, UCC, NUIG, UL, QUB, UU, DBS, NUIM, DCU, NCAD, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Griffith College Dublin and Independent College, Dublin among others. Specific events have also attracted a number of professionals working in contexts outside or in conjunction with the university, in the applied fields of psychiatry, psychoanalysis, clinical psychology, counselling psychology, psychotherapy, medicine and counselling. In this, The(e)ories operates a trans-academic policy, in which the organisers endeavour to include not only health professionals, but also activists, artists and other non-academic members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community who wish to participate in events.

Web: www.ucd.ie/humanities/research/culturesocietyandchange/theories/#d.en.159954

MA in Gender, Sexuality and Culture (School of English, Drama and Film, University College Dublin, University College Dublin) Convened by Dr Anne Mulhall, this interdisciplinary MA programme draws on the extensive expertise in the area of gender studies and sexuality studies in the School of English, Drama and Film Studies at UCD. The MA offers students a dynamic and challenging range of modules where students will explore the theory, history and representation of gender and sexuality in literature, film, television, visual culture, drama and popular culture with a particular attention to the significance of race, ethnicity and class in relation to the understanding and politics of gender and sexuality across time and location. This course provides students with a thorough and wide-ranging training in the fields of literary, visual and cultural studies.

Web:

[www.ucd.ie/englishanddrama/graduatestudies/maprogrammes/gendersexualityandculture /](http://www.ucd.ie/englishanddrama/graduatestudies/maprogrammes/gendersexualityandculture/)

Graduate Research and Education Programme (GREP) in Gender, Culture and Identity (University College Dublin) Directed by Dr Anne Mulhall, this interdisciplinary thematic doctoral programme hosted by University College Dublin brings together a unique combination of expertise and postgraduate training opportunities in the humanities from specialists in gender and sexuality based at University College Dublin, the University of Limerick, and Queen's University Belfast. Courses offered include two core modules (Digital Humanities and Research Methods in Historical and Literary Studies). Students are welcome, by arrangement, to take courses forming part of the MA in Gender, Sexuality and Culture, and courses offered by staff associated with the programme.

Web: www.ucd.ie/gendercultureidentity

UCD Humanities Institute Directed by Professor Gerardine Meaney, the UCD Humanities Institute is a successful and prestigious resource for the humanities within University College Dublin and nationally. Building on its impressive record of doctoral completion rates

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