DESIRE: An Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference

Friday, August 21, 2015

1:30-3:30  **Registration – Coffee and snacks**  
*Lobby – McCain Bldg 6135 University Ave*

3:30-5:00  **Keynote Lecture – McCain 1198 – 6135 University Ave.**

Elizabeth Edwards (University of King’s College)  
Aphanisis, or, Can Desire Fail?

This paper follows a trajectory established by a possible misreading or mistranslation by Lacan of certain terms in a paper by Ernest Jones; but a misreading that becomes central to Lacan’s project. Thus I will begin with a footnote, in the best incarnation of scholarly desire. My essay then strays wildly, following the recondite term *aphanisis* in the possibility it raises for an other to desire, especially in the modernist trope of impotence or castration, towards uncovering the problematics of a ‘desire’ that is endlessly annihilating or appropriative. I will take the widest possible parameters offered by the conference theme to [briefly] consider the historical relations between desire, will, drive and concupiscence, and the long durée of the theory of the rightful disposition of desire. Insofar as desire is the motor, the drive and engine of human productivity, especially in this case poetic productivity, is it possible to do without it? I will turn to my present work on the ‘work of mourning’ in Middle English literature, a working that seems to offer some productivity outside desire, a work that does not annihilate, and cannot appropriate.

Elizabeth Edwards teaches at the University of King’s College, where she is jointly appointed to the Contemporary Studies and Foundation Year Programmes. She obtained her BA and MA degrees from Dalhousie University, and her PhD from Cambridge University. A medievalist by training, specializing in Middle English and the works of Chaucer and Malory, she is the author of *The Genesis of Narrative in Malory’s Morte Darthur* and several articles in the field. Her main teaching appointment is, however, in critical theory, and she has strong interests in contemporary theory, deconstruction, twentieth-century art, feminism, and in the psychoanalytic theory that informs all her work. She has published on Andy Warhol and Derrida. Her current research project, should it ever come to light, would be called “The Work of Mourning and the Language of Grief in Middle English Literature.” She is a founding faculty member and presently the Director of the Contemporary Studies Programme, and previously held the position of Vice President of the University, and President of the Canadian Society of Medievalists. Dr. Edwards is happy to be an adjunct to the Dalhousie Department of English.
“The Desire to Read - An Evening of Literary Performance”
Featuring Carole Langille, Donna Morrissey, Charlotte Mendel and El Jones
*Dalhousie University Club – 1 Alumni Crescent*

Featuring renowned local authors Carole Langille, Donna Morrissey, Charlotte Mendel and El Jones, all attendees are invited (and enthusiastically encouraged) to participate in the open mic section of the evening, which will immediately follow the keynote performances. Attendees are free to present any short works that they desire, so whether you've prepared something in advance or simply feel the sudden inclination to read/perform, the floor is all yours. Even if you don't feel the desire to read your work (or someone else's), come on out anyway for an enjoyable evening of food, drink and live literature.

The event will be held on-campus at The University Club. Alcohol is available for purchase, so please remember to bring photo identification.

Saturday, August 22, 2015

8:00-9:00  **Registration – Coffee and snacks**
*Lobby – McCain Bldg 6135 University Ave*

9:00-10:30  **Session 1A**
*McCain 2021 – 6135 University Ave.*

**Systems of Desire**
Chair: Danen Poley (Dalhousie University)

**Edward D. Taylor** (Concordia University)
“Desire for Virtue: Virtue Ethics and Education.”

**Fabien-Denis Cayer** (Dalhousie University)
“The Metallurgy of Desire: Power in Plato’s Republic and Contemporary Heavy Metal”

**Andrew Apong** (McMaster)
“On Affect, Beauty, and Interconnectedness in Anita Rau Badami”

9:00-10:30  **Session 1B**
*McCain 1198 – 6135 University Ave.*

**Desiring Bodies**
Chair: Graham Jensen (Dalhousie University)

**Lydia C. Miliokas** (University of Regina)
“In/Between: Desire and Subjectivity in the Art of Jeannie Mah, Sherry Farrell Racette, and Rachelle Viader Knowles”
Jane Boyes (Dalhousie University)
“Playing the Identity Quest: Dynamic Hybridity in Fran Ross’s Oreo”

Emma McKenna (McMaster University)
“Disparate Desires: Reading the Political Economic Investments of Feminist Agendas in Canadian Women’s Studies, 1980-89”

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break
*English Department Lounge – McCain 1186*

11:00-12:30 Session 2A
*McCain 2021 – 6135 University Ave.*

**Psychoanalytic Fascinations**
Chair: Genny Zimantas (Dalhousie University)

Nisha Eswaran (McMaster University)
“Gender Melancholia and Desire in Alexander Chee’s Edinburgh”

Brittany Kraus (Dalhousie University)
“Bear: A Case Study”

Andy Post (Memorial University)
“Queering the Revolution in Byron’s South Pacific”

11:00-12:30 Session 2B
*McCain 1198 – 6135 University Ave.*

**Epic Sex/ Sex Epics**
Chair: Elizabeth Edwards (University of King’s College)

Rosina Martucci (University of Salerno)
“The Decameron by Giovanni Boccaccio: Desire and Sex in Literature and Art”

Lesley A Hornal (Simon Fraser University)
“The Hunt is Always Sweeter than the Kill: Pleasure, Paradox and Suffering/Rethinking Desire through a Proustian Lens”

Talia Isaacson (University of Toronto)
“Eros and Imperialism in Thucydides’ History”

12:30-1:30 Lunch Break
*TBA*

1:30-3:00 Session 3A
*McCain 1198 - 6135 University Ave.*
Digital Desire
Chair: Geordie Miller (Dalhousie University)

Patrick Ramrattan (Western University)
“Agents of the Drives: On the dissolution of Desire in Digital Capitalism”

Eileen Mary Holowka (Concordia University)
“(Un)desirable Narratives: Reading Online Testimonies of Sexual Trauma”

Emily Raymond (Ryerson University)

3:00-3:30 Coffee Break
English Department Lounge

3:30-5:00 Keynote Lecture – McCain 1198 – 6135 University Ave

Jason Haslam (Dalhousie University)
“This Desire Called Dystopia: Lou Reed, Samuel R. Delany, and Utopia’s Queer End”

This paper is thematically and methodologically driven by death and desire. Thematically, death serves as a figure in the central creative works I discuss: Samuel R. Delany’s sword-and-sorcery novella Tale of Plagues and Carnivals—considered one of the first AIDS novels, though rarely discussed as such; and Lou Reed’s songs, especially the proto-punk “Heroin” and the queer soul song “Coney Island Baby.” All of these works take as their dispersed focus the specifically queer geography of New York, which runs next to, through, and indeed is both conterminous and not with the “straight” geography of traditional city maps. Meanwhile, my troubled and hopefully troubling methodology also concerns death. As many of us know, for the past decade or so one particular division has driven much of queer studies: the division between a queer theory that is focused on denying the future and one that is focused on embracing it, with the former tied to Lee Edelman’s No Future and the latter to José Esteban Muñoz’s Cruising Utopia. I want to work through my own reactions to this debate through the lens of the literary, or paraliterary, utopia in order to argue that the death drive and hope are locked together through desire. Hope and the death drive are simultaneously each other’s necessary foundation and negation, and both sit at the entrance to utopia.

Jason Haslam is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at Dalhousie University. His research pivots around American cultural studies, with particular focuses on popular culture, science fiction, the gothic, and identity studies. He is the author or editor of several books, including, most recently, the monograph Gender, Race, and American Science Fiction: Reflections on Fantastic Identities (2015), the textbook Thinking Popular Culture (2015), the essay collection The Public
*Intellectual and the Culture of Hope* (with Joel Faflak, 2013), and a scholarly edition of Edgar Rice Burroughs’ *Tarzan of the Apes* (2010). He currently serves as the President of the Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English (ACCUTE).

7:00PM  **Social** – *The Argyle Grill & Bar – 1575 Argyle St.*

Sunday, August 23, 2015

9:00-10:00  **Session 4A**  
*McCain 2021 – 6135 University Ave.*

**Representations of Bodily Desire**  
Chair: Mike Fontaine (Dalhousie University)

*Emily Wilson* (York University)  
“Consuming Ophelia: Beautiful Corpses and the Politics of Desire in Shakespeare, Millais and Vogue”  
*Siobhan M Carlson* (University of New Brunswick)  
“The Desire for Pain: Vampires in Popular Culture”

9:00-10:00  **Session 4B**  
*McCain 1198 – 6135 University Ave.*

**Reading and Translating Desire**  
Chair: Brittany Kraus (Dalhousie University)

*Laura Bohnert* (Dalhousie University)  
“Examining Insidious Desire in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*”  
*Derek Shank* (University of Western Ontario)  
“Translation and Desire in the Hellenism of Keats’s *Lamia*”  
*Genny Zimantas* (Dalhousie University)  
“Unruly Desire in *Anna Karenina*: Rewriting the Realism of the Novel”

10:00-10:30  **Coffee Break**  
*English Department Lounge - McCain*

10:30-12:00  **Session 5A**  
*McCain 2021 – 6135 University Ave.*

**Desiring Identities**  
Chair: Brandi Estey-Burtt (Dalhousie University)
Hannah Griggs (Boston College)  
“Reading Pauline Hopkins’s Of One Blood as Biblical Exegesis”
Bethany Daigle (University of New Brunswick)  
“‘The Miraculous and the Mundane’: Postsecularism and the Plurality of Desires in Salman Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses”
Michael Fontaine (Dalhousie University)  
“The Materiality of Home and Abroad in Colm Tóibín’s Irish Novels”

10:30-12:00 Session 5B  
McCain 1198 – 6135 University Ave.

Gaze/Gays  
Chair: Jason Haslam (Dalhousie University)

Reed Clements (Dalhousie University)  
“Prostitution in the Philosophical Fantasies of Samuel R. Delany and R. Scott Bakker”
Stephanie Vega (McMaster University)  
“‘She’s got all of these wonderful contradictions’: Jennifer Lawrence, The Hunger Games & The Eroticization of the “Vulnerable” Young Adult Female”
Katherine Connell (Ontario College of Art and Design)  
“Who is that self-satisfied adonis?”: Queer Gazes and Icons in Xavier Dolan’s Les Amours Imaginaires”

12:00-12:30 Coffee Break  
English Department Lounge – McCain

12:30-1:30 Session 6A  
McCain 1198 - 6135 University Ave.

The Desire for Accountability  
Chair: Danen Poley (Dalhousie University)

Brett Mommersteeg (Western University)  
“A Geo-analysis of Desire”
Melissa Tradel (Concordia University)  
“Can Desire be Responsible? Thinking Beyond the Ethical Limits of Desire in Hegel and Levinas”
Fadlan khaerul Anam (University of Indonesia)  
“Rumi Meets Deleuze: A New Cartography of Desire”

1:30-2:15 Coffee and conference wind up  
English Department Lounge – McCain