CFP- "Single Lives: 200 Years of Independent Women in Literature and Popular Culture" (UCD, Oct '17)

by Katherine Fama

Proposal Deadline: 1 April 2017, midnight Dublin time.
Notifications by 1 May 2017
Conference: October 13-14th, 2017, University College Dublin

This conference will explore the last 200 years of literature and popular media by, about, and for single women in relation to aesthetics and form, race, sexuality, class, space, reproduction and the family, political movements, and labor. Independent women —singly blessed, new, surplus, or adrift— have remained a center around which anxieties and excitement coalesce. A range of historians, demographers, and literary scholars have focused on the social and political significance of diverse single women in the nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first centuries. Moving between the family home and domestic independence, between household and public labor, and between chastity and a range of sexual relations, the single woman remains a literary and cultural focus.

In recent years, especially in relation to UK and US elections, there has been an explosion of popular interest in contemporary singleness. Rebecca Traister’s *Big Girls Don’t Cry* and *All the Single Ladies*, comedian Aziz Ansari’s *Modern Romance*, Eric Klinenberg’s *Going Solo*, the *Washington Post*’s “Solo-ish” column, as well as the work of psychologist and single-rights activist Bella DePaulo, author of *Singled Out: How Singles are Stereotyped, Stigmatized, and Ignored but Still Live Happily Ever After*, all explore what it means to be a socially, politically, and sexually active single person in the 21st century. News outlets, film, television, and a host of social and marketing media have demonstrated that people are fascinated by the changing status of singles.

Singleness Studies has emerged as an academic field over the last two decades but has rarely had its own forum for collaboration and exchange. This conference will bring together multiple disciplinary perspectives to uncover the social, political, economic, and cultural connections between the “singly blessed” women and “bachelor girls” of the 19th and early-20th century and “all the single ladies” of the contemporary moment. We seek proposals that analyze single lives within or across this time frame, from disciplines including literature, media studies, history, geography, sociology, architecture, political science, and more. Papers and full panels that create new perspectives by crossing boundaries and integrating multiple disciplines are especially welcome.
Keynote Speaker: Rebecca Traister

Possible topics include

- Representation of singles in literature
- Representation of singles in film, television, and other digital media
- Narrative form
- Space and architecture
- Demographic change
- Reproductive rights and family structures
- Reproduction and temporality
- Independent women’s labor and political work
- “Women adrift” and crisis narratives
- Singleness and race, class, or identity politics
- Queer singleness
- Familiar Figures: bachelor girls, spinsters, new women, and single ladies
- The single and the state
- Singleness and literary or media genre
- Conservative and radical independence
- Singleness in Trump’s America
- Singleness and disability
- Single activism
- Comparative singleness

Scholars from all disciplines are encouraged to apply.

**Full Panel Proposals:** Panel coordinators should submit a 200-word rationale for the panel as whole. For each contributor, please submit a 250-word abstract, a short bio, and contact information. Panels that include diverse panelists with a range of affiliations, career experiences, and disciplinary homes are strongly encouraged. Panels should include 4 papers. Submissions can be emailed as a Word document to singlelives2017@gmail.com.
**Individual Papers:** Individuals submitting paper proposals should provide an abstract of 250 words, a short bio, and contact information. Submissions can be emailed as a Word document to: singlelives2017@gmail.com.

**Conference Statement:** We hope to host a diverse, welcoming, open first Single Lives conference. We understand diversity to include attendees as well as academic subject, approach, and field. We welcome comparative projects, though the conference will be conducted primarily in English.

Please direct all questions about the conference and the submission process to: singlelives2017@gmail.com

For up to date conference details, see our website: [https://singlelives2017.wordpress.com/](https://singlelives2017.wordpress.com/)


Follow us on Twitter: @SingleLives2017

**Conference Sponsors**
College of Arts and Humanities, University College Dublin
Humanities Institute, University College Dublin

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