In her seminal book *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), Sarah Ahmed revisits the notion of happiness as an affective mandate, as a path-defining call that frames certain modes of being, inclinations, and projects as worth-seeking, while others are cast as undesirable, unfruitful or unprosperous. One of the most compelling arguments in *The Promise of Happiness* is the need to assemble unhappy archives, that is, texts that shed light on the importance of recognizing unhappiness as a means to undo, unravel, and revolt against all forms of normativity or oppression. In that spirit, this planned volume aims to enlarge the archives of unhappiness as proposed by Ahmed as well as other scholars working within affect theory such as Judith Butler, Laurent Berlant, and Jack Halberstam. In particular, the publication will explore North American texts that contradict, challenge, and deconstruct happiness as a teleological, normative, and monolithic concept. Contributors should rely on texts—fiction, life narratives, film, TV series, and graphic narratives—that problematize traditional frameworks of happiness by engaging with narratives of precarity, failure or resistance. We work on the assumption that such narratives could certainly provide an interdisciplinary approach that, underpinned by Ahmed’s rereading of (un)happiness, may draw on concepts like vulnerability and precarity (Butler 2006; 2010; 2012), cruel optimism (Berlant 2011) or failure (Halberstam 2005; 2011).

The proposed edited collection will contribute to enrich the field of affect theory by placing emphasis on how readings of happiness that focus specifically on unhappiness can help us critique preconceived assumptions about race, gender, class, sexuality, age or disability. Ahmed claims that the discourse of happiness overshadows the potentiality of unhappiness, not as tantamount to defeatism, but as a form of productive, creative resistance. Thus, Butler’s reflection on vulnerability as purveyor of social empathy and agency becomes a suitable companion to Ahmed’s thesis. Under the same aegis, Halberstam contends that failure can be viewed as a realm that offers opportunity for “unlearning” hegemonic forms of success, normativity, and positivity, a helpful insight for the goals of our endeavor. Finally, Berlant’s paramount notion of cruel optimism has enriched affect studies by foregrounding the extent to which subjects become invested in practices that simultaneously ground their selfhood and set them on a path toward self-destruction. All in all, our aim in this collection is to answer this question—and it is a challenging one—posed by Ahmed herself: “Can we rewrite the history of happiness from the point of view of the wretched?” (2010: 17).

Therefore, we welcome proposals that analyze North American texts that act as “troublemakers, dissenters or killerjoys” (Ahmed 2010: 17) in the attempt to widen the unhappy archives. Topics may include but are not limited to the following:

- (Un)happiness in relation to precarity, failure, and/or resistance.
- Neoliberal politics and its interrelation with (un)happiness.
- Racism, race relations, and ethnic oppressions.
- Disability, mental health, and Crip space and time.
- Ageism and obesity stigma.
- Environmentalism and Ecocriticism.
● Gender, Sexuality, and Queer Theory
● Migrant experiences.
● Other texts dealing with intersectional forms of inequality and discrimination.

Please email your abstracts to both forallar@ull.edu.es and igonzad@ull.edu.es. The deadline is July 4th, 2022. Full chapters are due by January 30th, 2023. We expect the volume to be published in late 2023 or early 2024 by a major publishing house. All submissions must include an abstract (300-400 words), keywords, and a bioblurb describing the author's research interests and recent publications.

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Works Cited: