



## **Masculinity Crisis in the Americas**

**Queen's University Belfast**

**1 – 2 November 2019**

During his inauguration in January 2019, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro delivered a speech to the chamber of deputies in which he expressed one of his goals was to “combat gender ideology”. Several months earlier, during the hearings that led to the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh as US Supreme Court justice, Kavanaugh dismissed his adolescent and college behaviour as typical to being one of “the boys”. At the core of both episodes is the reaffirmation of a dominant and aggressive masculinity which underpins the populist wave that has taken hold in politics across the Americas. In November 2019, we invite scholars from across the humanities to come to Queen's University Belfast to explore **how masculinity is formulated, codified, and challenged through North and South American literature and culture**. Gloria Anzaldúa argues that machismo and “hierarchical male dominance” are cultural practices brought to the Americas by Europeans during the colonial era. The formulation of masculinity defended by Kavanaugh and ubiquity of experience revealed through the #MeToo movement is a reminder that this formulation of masculinity remains prevalent in society today. The movement's origins in the Harvey Weinstein revelations reveals how insidious masculinities are entangled with the highest levels of cultural production, leading to an academic reappraisal of the ethics of reading and critically engaging with the works of celebrated cultural producers such as David Foster Wallace and Sherman Alexei whose unacceptable behaviour has become increasingly scrutinised.

In addition to codifying problematic masculinities, cultural products have historically promoted self-reflection in order to challenge hostile masculine behaviours. Manuel Puig's *El beso de la mujer araña* for example, presents a fluid perspective on masculinity in its dialogue between two cellmates--a transgender woman and macho male who reconcile their differences. Meanwhile Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's film *Fresa y chocolate* introduces the heteronormative character David to the openly gay Diego in order to promote a positive masculinity as David develops self-reflection and acceptance. Anzaldúa maintains that "we need a new masculinity and the new man needs a movement". Now more than ever, it is necessary to interrogate **where our perceptions of masculinity originate** and **how healthy formulations of masculinity can be promoted**.

We are delighted to confirm **Dr Clare Hayes-Brady** of University College Dublin as keynote speaker.

We seek proposals for **twenty-minute papers** from postgraduates and early career scholars. Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- Ethic and reading the work of authors whose behaviour is reprehensible.
- (Un)changing ideals of masculinity throughout the history of American culture.
- The intersections and divergences between masculine ideals across North and Latin American cultures.
- The ability for cultural products to promote positive masculinities.
- Machismo in politics.
- Queer masculinities.
- Colonial manhoods and the pervasiveness of colonial formulations of masculinity.
- Militant masculinities in the wars of independence.
- Masculinity in the legacy of slavery.
- Indigenous men and masculinities.
- Genderqueerness: constructing both masculinity and femininity, or neither masculinity nor femininity.

Please submit all proposals to [MascCrisisAmericas@outlook.com](mailto:MascCrisisAmericas@outlook.com) by **31 July 2019**. Submissions should include: **250-word abstract; brief bio; email address**.

Masculinity Crisis in the Americas Committee

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