



Irish Association
for American
Studies

**Irish Association for American Studies
Postgraduate Symposium
“Rupture and Repair”
Maynooth University
Co. Kildare
Hybrid event: virtual and in-person
4th/5th November 2022**

For the 2022 IAAS Postgraduate Symposium we invite delegates across all disciplines of American Studies to reflect on the twin themes of ‘rupture and repair.’ There have been many unprecedented and deeply divisive events in the Americas in recent years, as well as longer-standing issues of social atomisation, incarceration, gun crime and mass shootings, accelerated climate crisis, and growing social and financial inequality. Christina Sharpe has powerfully described how Black lives are lived ‘in the wake’ of slavery, and of the temporal breaks this creates: ‘In the wake, the past that is not past reappears, always, to rupture the present.’¹ Layli Long Soldier writes of how Native Americans and settler descendants ‘share a country but live in alternate nations.’² All of this leads to what Judith Butler has termed ‘precarious life,’ and a declining faith in the concept of progress. One of the definitions of ‘rupture’ is ‘the breach of a harmonious relationship’ – a concept that is ripe for exploration in our current context.

But rupturing can also be the start of a process of repair or strengthening. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes in favour of ‘reparative’ instead of ‘paranoid’ reading – a position that “undertakes a different range of affects, ambitions and risks” that teaches us “the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture – even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them.”³ We welcome proposals for papers that reflect on reparative change, the things that are salvageable from dark events and that sustain us through seemingly hopeless situations: narratives of recovery in film, literature and TV, protest movements past and present that are energising a new generation of activists, the creation of inclusive social spaces, or the consolations of art in all its forms. This includes rupture and repair of form and genre: as cultural categories peak and decline, we ask how they can be ripped apart and started afresh, with all the possibilities that new media, streaming and other means of digital dissemination present. We also invite explorations of historical moments that speak to rupture and repair or echo the issues of our present day.

¹ *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 9.

² “WHEREAS,” *Poetry*, August 17, 2022,

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/91697/from-whereas>.

³ *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 150-1

We welcome 300-word proposals for fifteen-minute papers or 500-word proposals for three-person panels, along with a short academic biography in the same document, from postgraduate and early career researchers across all disciplines of American Studies, including literature, history, film, politics, music, art, media, and more. The deadline for submissions, to be sent to postgrad@iaas.ie, is **Monday 3rd October 2022**.

We currently plan for the symposium to have an online element on Friday 4th November and an in-person element at Maynooth University on Saturday 5th November. This plan may be altered according to the ever-shifting Covid situation. Priority for online presentations will be reserved for those with accessibility issues or those who are outside of Ireland. Due to limited capacity, we may not be able to meet all requests for online presentations. **In your proposal, please indicate if you need to attend online or if you are able to attend in person.**

The IAAS and the Postgraduate Symposium are dedicated to diversity, equality, and inclusion, and we welcome papers from under-represented groups.

We also welcome papers from all disciplines. Paper and panel topics may include but are by no means limited to:

- Narratives of recovery and repair in literature, film, and television.
- Forms of biopolitical control.
- Comparative analysis of similar historical moments throughout the Americas.
- The effects of pandemics on American lives: social, political, financial.
- Evolving forms of creative expression and dissemination of information.
- The causes and consequences of the Capitol riot of 6 January 2021.
- The impact of incarceration on families and societies.
- Major formal and theoretical changes of recent times across various disciplines.
- Conspiracy theories past and present and their impact.
- New directions and/or controversies in autofiction, autotheory and autoethnography.
- Recent developments in ecofiction and ecocriticism.
- Colonial and decolonial histories and their aftermaths.

The IAAS is an all-island scholarly association dedicated to promoting interdisciplinary American Studies in Ireland. The annual Postgraduate Symposium, run by Postgraduates, aims at fostering a supportive and discursive environment for more junior scholars to share their research, exchange ideas, and create lasting connections and networks.

All presenters must become members of the IAAS before presenting. More information is available here: <https://iaas.ie/memberships/>.

The 2022 IAAS Postgraduate Symposium will be hosted by Maynooth University and run by Andrew Clarke and Janice Deitner, co-chairs of the IAAS Postgraduate Caucus.

For more information, contact us at postgrad@iaas.ie or join the IAAS Postgraduate Discord: <https://discord.gg/jasEAMKJ4b>