

>> Rita: Hello, I remembered to unmute the microphone! You're all very welcome, this is the second week of our dangerous ideas and we're delighted with how last week went, it was a huge success and your feedback was wonderful. Thank you so much for that. So I'll do a wee bit of housekeeping first of all, you'll see at the bottom of your screen there's a little button that says closed captions, if you would like to read the subtitles as we're going along you can turn on the closed captioning now.

I want to also welcome our extra tech tonight, who is the lovely Katie from GCN, and I have to give a huge thank you to GCN for, giving us Katie -- the lesbian who saved the day. St. Katie of the disastrous tech queers came to our aid and so we're delighted to have her. It was Katie who solved the video lag problem for us. So we're very grateful to have you Katie and you're very welcome.

I also want to make some apologise, I have to apologise to Jamie for spelling his name wrong on the e-mails that you got, that's entirely my fault, I can't tell the difference between I,a and E! So apologise Jamie, the correct spelling will be on the screen later.

I've also got a bit of a confession to make. When we were talking about how we were going to run this from a security point of view we decided that we weren't going to run the chat feature and that people would just be able to message the panelists but when we started last week we forgot to turn it off, we ended up having chat and it turned out to be amazing, it was just great and everybody loved it. So

we're going to keep the chat, but we have the lovely Alyssa now in the background monitoring the chat. So if anybody says anything unpleasant or horrible, we're going to kick you out! Although I expect you will all be perfectly delightful as you are.

So people are still joining us, we have 67 of you lovelies on the line at the minute. And still coming in. The other thing I want to say just another wee word about accessibility. So we got a message last week in the box from Niall, from Sligo pride and Niall is also part of full spectrum, which is a peer support network for LGBTQ people who have disabilities, so he told me, I called him afterwards and he explained to me that the closed captioning on zoom is very small if you have any visual impairment, and zoom chat box doesn't have a feature where you can make that bigger, so for people who are visually impaired here this evening, what we'll do is if there's any really interesting questions that come in the chat box or anything really important we'll read it out, but please feel free to get in touch if we can make it easier for you in anyway. So that's the accessibility bit.

Quick catch up from last week, the videos up online on our website and it's on the front page, there's a big button that says dangerous ideas, and the amazingly generous, wonderful people gave us 470 euro last week, which was amazing, can't believe it, delighted. Katie is going to pop our donation box into the chat box, please give us your money if you have any spare lying around and we'll use it to support queer artists and to do more of this kind of stuff.

I think that's probably enough of that! We'll get right into it. You'll see here on your screen the lovely Emma Hurley with her beautiful blue black ground, this is Dr Emma. Dr Emma is our resident psychologist. So what we're going to do now is a wee live evaluation.

I'm going to hand you over to Emma now and she's going to explain to you what that is. Then Emma will ask Katie to put the link to the evaluation in the chat box when she's ready., are you cool with that Emma?

>> Emma: I am absolutely cool with that, hello Rita, how are you.

>> Rita: You're so welcome.

>> Emma: I should tell you a little about myself first, don't you think? I am a psychology lecturer and researcher in UCC and I suppose my main areas of interest are social and political psychology and individual differences, and over the course of this series we'll be coming back to those particular areas.

But in the meantime we wanted to check in with you and see how you're doing, so we wanted to do an evaluation and Katie is going to pop a link in there, work away with that Katie. It takes literally a minute to complete, so it's just going to ask you about how you're doing, how you're feeling, where you're at.

It's completely confidential and anonymous, we don't be collecting any e-mails or names for this. Then at the end of the series we're going to revisit it and ask how you're doing again. So the idea behind this, it comes from positive psychology, it's positive psychology measure, and not to get into the nitty gritty, but when we look

at well being and depression in psychology, they are actually separate mechanisms, so we're going to look at how you're doing positively speaking.

And just to, yeah quickly touch on what positive psychology has to say about that, we're really aware that we're in the middle of a pandemic and things are difficult for people, so what could positive psychology have to say about that? I think you and I were talking about that Rita.

So generally, like a lot of people will be familiar with Victor Frankle and his man search for meaning, often misused in psychology it has to be said, but in situations where we can't really change the situation that we're in or we don't feel like we have a lot of control around the situation that we're in, his work in particular is really useful.

When we look at that kind of thing we're talking about coming into the present moment, being present with what is, not looking so far into the future maybe, and noticing the things around us, and I'm sure most of you are familiar with say gratitude diaries or speaking gratitude to things. And noticing the little things around us that we can be grateful for.

So my dog for example is lying on the carpet and she is behaving herself for once so that's something I'm quite grateful for! But the other thing might be something like novelty, so how do you find novelty at times like this? Lots of research done on novelty and noticing or trying new things, not talking about skydiving in the

middle of a pandemic, but maybe something simple and new, taking a different route when you're going on your walk. Maybe engaging in something like this, this is novel and quite special I think.

So looking at those kinds of things, about how you can give yourself a little pep and what we would call broaden and build positivity.

>> Rita: One of the things that when we were chatting about this Emma I thought was a great one that you were explaining to me is in terms of like talking about the gratitude diary and how if we express gratitude it makes us feel better. The other thing you were talking about was random acts of kindness? Love that one.

>> Emma: Big fan of random acts of kindness. Altruism, why do we engage in altruism? We'll talk about that later in the series in terms of in groups and out groups and what serves us when we do good things.

Random acts of kindness is a really good one. You can do simple things, check in on the neighbours, see can you get them groceries and stuff like that, what happens when we do that, when we volunteer for things, when we help other people, in really simple ways even, is that we get a little pep, it gets our dopamine and serotonin going, so we benefit from that.

>> Rita: I love that one, that's a real win-win.

>> Emma ma. Yeah, it can be something as simple as checking in on somebody you haven't spoken to in a while and asking how they are doing, that kind of thing. And you can get creative about what that can be.

>> Rita: We could run competitions there you are now, there's a challenge, what mad random acts of kindness do we all do?

>> Emma: It's one of the few things I agree, where everybody gets a medal if you engage in random acts of kindness.

>> Rita: So Emma, that has probably given people enough time to fill in our wee evaluation.

>> Emma: Should they so wish, yes.

>> Rita: I'm looking now at my running order so I am going to say bye bye Emma.

>> Emma: Bye bye, I'll sit back and enjoy the show now.

>> Rita: And we'll see you next week. Hello Cormac. So we had some really interesting questions last week that we didn't get to, I know that some questions were e-mailed directly to you and we had some questions in the question and answer box. So I'm going to pass over to Thomas now who, am I right Thomas, that you are going to ask some of the questions that came in, in the question and anticipate box?

>> Thomas: In that case, first of all let me just introduce Cormac because I do feel that we didn't do that properly last time.

>> Rita: Very good!

>> Thomas: Cormac is a lecturer in the school of English, drama and film in UCD and also a Fulbright Scholar. He teaches and researches drama, literary studies gender and medical humanities as a matter of fact you can say he combines all of these in his teachings to make points in our society and our perceived notions of ourselves and others. He has a book coming out masculinities of manhood in

contemporary Irish drama, acting the man. Which is available next year in April.

So we were going to probably talk about something related to what we want to talk about this week, heteronormativity and homonormativity, so a lot of all of it was talking about how queer theory can you used in ways of deconstructing or disseminating the ways that we see each other specially in society, but the expectations we have of each other through heteronormativity and homonormativity, but first can you explain the terms?

>> Cormac: Yes, sure. Heteronormativity, -- while they are mutually inter dependent they are separate things. So there are plenty of heterosexual people and heterosexuality as a sexual orientation is where biologically gendered different people desire each other and form relationships. Heteronormativity on the other hand is a complex cultural phenomenon that nowadays is very much tied in with neoliberalism and and capitalism, like I said last week when we say that "ive" at the end of a word it tends to indicate that there's a series of social rules and cultural codes and scripts that we're expected to follow.

So a lot of people see the word heteronormative and think that means there's an overriding cultural assumption that the norm is heterosexuality but it goes beyond that and what it does is lays down a series of often unwritten rules, and these rules then extend into legislation, we see it in our own constitution with the family being the primary unit of society, that's in our constitution or how our constitution configures woman by her place in the home.

What heteronormativity is, it's this set of assumptions built around lifestyles that say that these codes and scripts are, for example built around the patriarchal family unit, that there would be one man and one woman and that the expectation is that they will be monogamous, that they will be coupled, preferably married, that they will pro create and have families and then capitalism comes into it then around, that they will purchase a home and that they will buy their identities as much as buy into their identities.

So heteronormativity isn't just the assumption that the norm is to be heterosexual, it's all these other codes and scripts that are attached to it. Now I'll just finish up on this, in and of themselves none of those things are problematic, absolutely nothing wrong with being a monogamous couple who have children, get a mortgage etcetera. Where they become problematic is where they are pushed or corralled, people are corralled into this as the only way of being, and that if you exist outside of those configurations, that you're somehow wrong or bad, or that you're breaking the rules and as we always know people who break the rules you're punished in some way, that punishment could be through legislation, that you find yourself behind bars or more often that punishment is kind of social ostracisation or harassment, bullying or violence.

So heteronormativity is about living by certain codes and rules and scripts, and we see it even in capitalism, in terms of its much more difficult to shop for one than it is for four, because chicken fillets are sold in family packs of four, you know what I mean? It's much easier to buy a three-bedroomed house than an apartment for

one. So the whole society is structured around that idea of the heterosexual patriarchal family unit. So heteronormativity is built into the structures of how we live our lives.

>> Thomas: Very good, it also feeds into conversation that we had where it kind of, you can say drizzles down into the LGBT community, so in a lot of -- if you were a gay male you'd probably have been on grinder or another dating app and probably have seen how we have also certain trends there that you could kind of say are homo normative or heteronormative in that sense, that we have certain expectations and try to subdue each other into acting after certain expectations. What we were talking about is this little, capitalistic trend in saying that before big abs and biceps were the ways that you could achieve popularity on grinder, but now it has pretty much changed into, because of the accommodation crisis, who can accommodate essentially.

>> Cormac: Yeah that was a conversation we were having. I suppose to talk about that, Katie can I just ask you to flash up, before we move on from heteronormativity and into homonormativity, I just want to show, slide number 7. So this is from Sarah Ahmed, who is a leading queer theorist, a queer theorist of colour. She talks about heteronormativity in terms of, -- thanks. She talks about heteronormativity in terms of queer lives, so like I was talking thereabout shopping and it's easier to buy for the nuclear family unit, you know?

She's talking here, the first quotation, "Heteronormativity refers to more than simply the presumption that it is normal to be heterosexual. She says that norm is regular lay tiff, so associated with rules and regulations, and it's supported by an

ideal, the hetropatriarchal family unit, that associates sexual conduct with other forms of conduct. So the idea of heterosexual procreation all sex, if you're engaging in that then your other forms of conduct are good citizens, you know what I mean? There by the implication is you are not engaging in heteronormative activity your other forms of conduct are bad citizen things.

But the real interesting thing I find, this second quotation, she uses the analogy of a comfortable arm chair that you have at home, that you have been sitting in for years and the way it moulds itself to the shape of your body, you want me to read out the slides once again? Okay the first slide says "Heteronormativity refers to more than simply the presumption that it is normal to be heterosexual. The norm is regular lay tiff and is supported by an ideal that associates sexual conduct with other forms of conduct."

The second quotation I'm moving on to now, it's prefaced, this isn't on the slide, it's prefaced by Ahmed using the analogy of a comfortable chair like I said that you have for years, your favourite arm chair, you sit into it, it moulds itself to the shape of your body, it's really comfortable, to the extent that you don't even notice how well that chair fits your body and she goes on then and I'll read out "Heteronormativity functions as a form of public comfort by allowing bodies to extend into spaces that have already taken their shape. Queer subjects, when faced by the comforts of heterosexuality may feel uncomfortable (the body does not synch into a space that has already taken its shape). Discomfort is a feeling of disorientation, one's body feels out of place, awkward, unsettled"

So what she's saying there is really reiterating that heteronormativity with its set of codes, rules and scripts that are built and structured around facilitating the kind of heteropatriarchal nuclear family, that queers sit outside of that and it's not the comfortable chair we can slide into, that the way society is structured to facilitate heteronormativity means we're left without our comfortable chair, if you know what I mean? Is that okay Thomas?

>> Rita: Cormac that makes perfect sense.

>> Cormac: So discomfort is then kind of a structure of queer identity.

>> Rita: So what do we do with that?

>> Cormac: I think, what do we do with that? I think we've got to set about -- there are certain structures, well it depends on ...

>> Rita: What does that look like? What does that discomfort look like in our lives in the world?

>> Cormac: What does that discomfort look like? That's a really good question. Again it's tied in with I guess neoliberal capitalism, one way that discomfort looks is the idea of having to buy into an identity and that leads us into homonormativity, where homonormativity is kind of a fairly recent phenomenon that's come around from the 90s onwards really with the rise of the entrenchment of neoliberal capitalism, whereby queer politics up until the AIDS crisis years would have been about liberation from heteronormative structures, and then from the 90s onwards really LGBT rights movements and politics have moved into assimilatory politics, whereby it's about, we find our comfort now by emulating and copying heteronormativity.

So issues such as HIV and AIDS and the massive rise of infections we have in Ireland, or homophobic bullying in schools, all those kinds of things have been pushed to the back burner of our rights movement and what's come to the fore are assimilatory issues that might make the mainstream more comfortable, such as marriage or entrance into the military. So we've seen that our politics have become much more about fitting in.

If we take that another step forward, and the gay marriage, I was absolutely all for gay marriage, simply from the point of having the same rights as everybody else. But the queer in me says why don't we dismantle marriage altogether? Why should anyone have to get married? You know what I mean? Yet I know if I marry Scots Michael, my fella, my tax that I pay will fall drastically, so there is this state -- the State is corralling us into the marriage model, you know? And there's nothing that makes white middle class heteronormative people, the worst thing you can do is make them uncomfortable. So what we end up then with is this very easily digestible form of gayness that's presented to the culture.

It ties into with neoliberalism capitalism in the sense that people buy into an identity, so all of a sudden we see a real homogenizing of gay presentation, or social performances of gayness. So the assumption is that gay men have the economic capital to go to the gym and get really white teeth and become buff and that becomes how we think all gay men look and should be.

Again I'll repeat, there's absolutely nothing, that is not a problem at all if that's how you want to express your life. When it becomes problematic is when it's the only acceptable form of gayness, and it becomes problematic in particular with queer artists, in drama or poetry or theatre or whatever, because if they want to do something radical with queer representation they're not going to get the mainstream to buy into, to come. Therefore they're not going to get the funders to put their show on, because really what these assimilatory homo normative politics, it's the politics of respectability, saying let us in because we are just like you. And therefore we're presenting this easily digestible narrow version of queerness, which really ignores, because heteronormative mainstream they don't want to know about the hassles and horrors and terrors of gay living. They certainly don't want to think too long and hard about gay sex, they want this easily digestible picture.

Which then when you come to try and say -- they want this idea that it's, that gay life is easy and happy and good fun and we're all having a great time. And no one's getting bashed up down the corner or not able to come out because they will be rendered homeless if they do. So it ignores the very real challenges and traumas that queers face in every day life.

>> Rita: We have a few comments interestingly, I see that Niall, talking about this very thing in terms of disability rights, what Niall is saying is very interesting, that within the context of his disability and condition, both in the economics of society and in the performativity of his sexuality, he passes as able bodied for what it's worth but he knows of others in wheelchairs whose sexuality is cancelled. So that very thing of, he's not a good enough queer, if somebody is in a wheelchair,

how can you be a gay man if you are in a wheelchair because you can't fit the standard notion of what it should be.

Then we have another interesting question I'd love you to answer, is Leo Varadkar a sanitized version of a gay man?

>> Cormac: If I talk about Leo Varadkar I might get into a lot of trouble! He is, I would say, yeah. A yes answer. But Leo Varadkar actually, Deirdre's question about Leo Varadkar segues us very nicely into the question of homonormativity. Katie would you throw up slide number four there, sorry, slide number five.

And I will admit these are quotations from my forthcoming book, so it's a shameless plug and I make no apologise for that. So what is homonormativity?

Homonormativity looks very much like heteronormativity, it's an assimilatory politics of respectability, whereby gay couples emulate heterosexual models.

So what I've written, I'm going to read the quote out in full. "There exists a narrow, limited performance of commodified and market driven gay masculinity, which while it cannot be exactly be considered part of hegemonic masculinity, can operate in tandem with it. This is a mode of gay lifestyle and living that theorists such as Michael Warner, Lisa Duggan and Gavin Brown identify as homonormativity. This model of gay manhood, apart from a same-sex partner looks and acts very much like heteronormative masculinity and is inextricably bound up in neoliberal consumerism.

Here there is a model of gay manhood that seeks assimilation into normative structures as opposed to radical queer masculinities which look for liberation from capitalist systems of governance and their incumbent market driven lifestyle and paradigms. And while the assimilatory aspects of this gay manhood are no bad things in and of themselves, they become problematic when they become normative, by which I mean when these cultural codes and scripts are not only popularly understood but more so politically promoted as the only way in which gay masculinity can and should operate in social time and space".

So I realise that's all, that that quotation was all about gay masculinity and gay manhood, it equally applies across the gender spectrum, the reason it was focused on men is because it's from my book which is about masculinities, that's the only reason. That equally applies to any same-sex coupling.

So idea Thomas of homonormativity, of assimilating into normative cultures. And we were talking about the hierarchy, on hook up apps. And what we thought was very interesting about this hierarchy on hook up apps is how it is affected by capitalism.

Up until a few years ago on male hook up apps the hierarchy was the big Dick, muscle tops were at the top of the hierarchy, and they got to choose, and the next level down was the muscle power bottoms and they would be generally the first that they'd go do, and then after that other people found their place within that

hierarchy.

And what we found lately, I mean there's no -- this is anecdotal, there's no social study done here, maybe UCD might fund a study on this or something, but the people that have risen to the top of the hierarchy now, the people who get to pick who they hook up with, it's nothing to do with bodies, or muscle or how you look or whether you're top or bottom, it's to do with whether or not you can accommodate. Because there's such a massive housing crisis out there. So the guys at the top of the pecking order now on hooking up are the guys who can have you over. How many times, we've all gone through that rigmarole on grinder or whatever, where you have an interesting conversation with someone who looks like you're going to have a lot of fun that night can you Accom? No, neither can I shite. It's all over.

>> Thomas: That's true, it's interesting, I can see here in the panel there is a few comments. Someone is saying wondering what Cormac thinks about trans identities when it comes to homo and hetronorms is there a trans normativity? It's interesting taking trans into the debate, talking about how we have in most western Europe been fighting for same-sex marriage, but at the same time there have been trans lives at stake across the world, even in our part of the world.

>> Cormac: Absolutely. If you think about, not in Ireland but in the US when Scotus, the Supreme Court of the US, when they passed same-sex marriage, was it the year after us? I think it was 2016 or 2017, in New York, in Greenwich village all these white middle class gay men were tweeting outcome to our same-sex party, we're celebrating having a party. All these trans women of colour were tweeting

back we'd love to come to your party but we're afraid we might get murdered on the way home!

So in answer to the issue of trans bodies and homonormativity, I think, my personal view on this, I'm thinking off the top of my head here, not so much coming from a scholarship point of view, I think trans people sit outside of homonormativity and in a good way, and rightly so, because they're creating radical pathways to think about gendered bodies and operating within normative structures, whereas they are finding ways to operate outside of them. I think we have an awful lot to learn from the way trans communities are organising, particularly trans communities of colour, in the US.

The whole idea of telling your own story, from what I can tell, that came from trans women of colour in New York, Janet Mock famously said it is crucial that those whose stories need to be told tell their own stories, that's something we were hearing a lot about over the last decade or so, of your own voice, your own story and only you can tell your own story.

>> Interesting, I think there was one who was asking, you partially answered that, someone asked in terms of how homonormativity affects gay men significantly different to gay women, you came into that as well, but I do think it's about the lived experience of certain people as well and it's about also making sure that those people have the space to tell about the lived experience, because we have a lot of assumptions of what people go through, but we kind of, in the same sense, we use it in race as well, to kind of say we often hear people say oh I don't see colour, or I

don't see race, but in reality you have to then also think about saying for black people, they see colour, they see race, because it is being seen as a person of colour is something that happens every day. In the same sense, if you are a minority in anyway, you will have a lived experience that others will have ideas about, but us with privilege need to listen as well.

>> Cormac: I know we're moving to Kate now, but a final point before, it's that thing that Sarah Schulman says about homonormativity and stuff, a very -- life is presented through a very privileged lens, but presented as the norm and therefore we are all to aspire to this, and I'm wondering if that is the same for race bodies, bodies that are non white bodies, that whiteness is somehow presented to them as the aspirational model, you know? And it ties in with Lauren Berlan's idea of cruel optimism whereby neoliberal capitalism presents us with this perfect life, but our quest to get that is much more harmful to our thriving than getting that life ever could be.

Anyway, I think it's time for me to hand over now to Kate, I think, yeah?

>> Rita: You're going to hand back to me now Cormac! Thank you very much. This is just amazingly interesting and fascinating. And a perfect segue in all we've been talking about into our Break for Art. So I'm going to pass you right over to our arts correspondent in residence, Kate Brennan Harding, take it away Kate.

>> Kate: Hi everybody how are we all, yet again posting the arts correspondence from Dublin from the kitchen I grew up in, which in a subversive way is very queer for me.

I am delighted to introduce Jaime Nanci, are you there? Hi, how are you?

>> Hello (dog barks)

>> Kate: I'm worried about my dog barking as well, but that's perfect. Jaime, you have been someone that I have got to know over the years, from various queer performances, your voice is amazing and our listeners and watchers will enjoy, we will have music from you in a little bit, but I really want to start, that conversation was amazing, what it brought up for me around you, is your picture at the marriage referendum, when the results were announced and the video of you with Michael your husband is one of the most powerful images for me on that day, but to me you couldn't embody anything that is homo normative, so what has it been like being someone who is a married gay man, who is completely and utterly queer?

>> Jaime: A married queer man I guess. For us, we got married in South Africa five years before marriage was legalised in Ireland, I think we had just gotten civil partnership in Ireland, for us it was always a subversive act, it was a political thing. It wasn't sorry, first and foremost it was commitment between the two of us, because we were soul mates and that was something we wanted to do, just to be clear about who we were to each other. But also it was a fuck you to the establishment to say we are married, I don't care if you think we're not.

And that's kind of been how, with a lot of personal work and self development, that is how I have lived most of my life really. Not consciously, I just have a problem with -- I respect authority and I respect rules and I'm actually a bit of a rule follower in a lot of ways, but only if I think those rules are right.

>> Kate: I completely get that. I remember watching you guys getting civil

partnered and I remember being so proud of, not just you, but friends of mine who were doing it and it was doing it for rebellion, it was doing it to kick against the heteronormative world by ironically taking over the heteronormativity, you know what I mean and making it queer? And I just, I have been kind of getting Minister and more, when it came down to the marriage referendum I was more and more obviously campaigning and fighting for it and I'm engaging and going to be getting married myself, yay! But to me it's still a subversive act in terms of it's how I choose to live and present myself out there, you know, I think it's an important distinction to make that we still are our queer selves.

We had a conversation before we joined in here, around always being different from being very young, you were telling me about that, do you want to say a little more about that?

>> Jaime: I was a sissy, that was it really. I was a sissy. I didn't know I was gay, I didn't know I was queer, I didn't know -- before I knew I liked boys, I liked Barbies you know, I had the, my parents, obviously my dad is a builder but luckily he always had an artists kind of stole and my mother is from a very eccentric family, so it wasn't so difficult, but my dad had trained to be a priest, so there was some elements of catholicism that were there.

But there was no, I couldn't -- I was just me. I wasn't trying to be anybody else and I didn't know that it was wrong, until I started seeing people like Quentin crisp or Kenneth Williams and seeing, the only queers I saw on TV were the fairies and the sissies, often they were the butt of the joke or they were the victim.

Then obviously AIDS came along and I thought being gay meant you just died of AIDS, there was so much that was there. Then I joined, when I came out and started going out on the gay scene that was the first time I started to try and turn my, dim my light or conform a little bit to homonormativity I guess, to try and fit in there because I thought I would fit in there and it took a while to find my tribe and my chosen family I guess.

>> Kate: Yeah I'm going to talk to you a little more about that after we hear from you, the first song, will you introduce it for me please?

>> Jaime: This is a song I wrote, actually again I think this is -- I'm married, but this is about an adventure at the gay beach in the sand Dunes, it's a love song, this is called oh medusa.

>> Kate: Thank you.

oh medusa, if I had his charms I'd easily seduce ya

oh medusa

scorching dragon fly carress, up in the Dunes we undress

see the Gorgona breath

from the waters to the sand, I begin to understand

dropped stones are really far more valuable than diamonds

from the waters to the shore it's never been so clear before

turn to stone, I drag you down beneath the waves

oh medusa ...

oh medusa, if I had his strengths I'd easily refuse you

oh medusa, and from the waters to the sand

I begin to understand that I could fill you with a glance

you sing the gods on to their graves

your beauty captures and enslaves

how many sailors dived deep searching for your cave

let me be your mess

flays skin from my flesh

Macerate me

leave me washed up and parched by the sun

oh medusa, mm ...

oh medusa ...

oh medusa ... ooh ...

>> Kate: I know, I'm like, I really needed that to be honest! I think everybody else did, I love your cheeky sexy little look to the camera. Jaime, we've got some lovely comments there, not sure did you see them? One was this is wonderful, first time in ages I wish I was watching TV as there would add ad breaks I totally have to pee but I don't want to miss a bit.

I just want to talk a little bit with you, because I said to you a number of years ago, we went frolicking around electric picnic and hand in happened, and you're a costume designer, you're a milliner and you were wearing an amazing Blazer with teddy bears all over it that evening stuck to me. How you present yourself in the world has grown and evolved, have you -- do you find that you are, I suppose we were talking about this earlier, about you describe yourself mainly as Fem and you come up against people telling you that you're not, would that be right?

>> I've always thought that they was Fem, I think I'm Fem, I don't know. I think I sound Feme I think I walk Fem, I do a lot of work to accept that, I think I was as much as anybody else thinking I have to be more of a manor I'm in danger or not attractive, all of those things. Going through my 30s I was able to accept it or explore my member anyone tea, with confidence and relish it and look at the history of the queer movement and the sissies and the sissy Queens and the fairies and the trans women, they are all the people that are the champions, so crazy to me to even think that there was a time when I was embarrassed by the fact that I might be more -- that I'm feminine, feminine presenting or something, but I'm a man, so I'm a man presenting, you know what I mean? To me now, this conversation about the binary is really exciting and interesting, because I can explain myself now, you know what I mean? I feel like oh yeah ... this is, I'm not saying I'm feminine or masculine or anything and nobody has the right to say that about anybody else.

>> Kate: That's exactly it. I suppose I identify in a different way in terms of being told, with love not with badness, but being slagged when I came out about no

you're not butch, you're too soft and feminine to be butch. And it's like that butch identity is really important to me, even if I'm not a stone butch or butch enough or whatever people want to say, and it's kind of like I'm 40 now, I look back fondly at the level of queerness that five year old me had and all the way through, it's like there's some part though knows you are not swimming in the same stream as everybody else. And it's kind of exciting to then get older and own it a bit more I think?

>> Yeah it's really positive if you can. It makes your life so much easier if you can accept yourself. I think I was saying to you earlier, the biggest hurdle is, for yourself to be your own authentic self is when you look at how you, when you imagine how other people perceive you.

>> Kate: Completely. I'm just, you have two albums now, for people who want to find them and listen to you, you're on Spotify Jaime Nanci and the blue boys, what projects have you coming up that you can let people know about?

>> Obviously at the minute with Covid ... I did a masters two years ago I started a song cycle as part of that, it was about Ireland and Irish weather and about Spain and about moving to Spain and in the middle of all of that I came to Spain and then this whole thing happened, just trying to write. Here I can go out and play some gigs, but they are few and far between. So I'm just trying to really do things like this are super, and I think Emma was talking about finding the novelty, this is such a novelty to talk to people!

>> Kate: And to talk to a bunch of people who kind of, we fit in the same, sort of same stream as us.

>> That's the thing! I've made some really good friends here, but they're

predominantly straight. I met a young Irish queer about a month ago and it was so nice to have a conversation with somebody where certain things just made sense. That's the queer sensibility that people don't have. I think the closest thing that straight people have to queerness is wokeness maybe, you know people that are -- I know that's controversial really as well, but I think there are a lot of straight people that are queer minded.

>> Kate: Yeah, completely. I think queer is an umbrella for people who fit in the margins. I know wherever I go, whatever city I'm in, in the world. I find and sniff out the queerest place I can find, you know what I mean, it's not necessarily completely sexuality, you're not necessarily gay, lesbian, you're somewhere in there in the margins. Jaime we're going to another track of yours, but beforehand, anyone watching, we have a donation button, it's in your chat, I'm pointing at my screen which is probably opposite to you all. This is, we're basically asking people to put their hands in their pockets, pass the hat around, Jaime is being paid, all our artists, but we are looking to up that so therefore please donate to The Gay Project the link is in the chat box there. Jaime Nanci thank you for joining us

>> Thank you for inviting us, so nice to meet you and I'm really thrilled to be invited to do this

>> Kate: I'm going to post a link to your work to see and hear what you are about. Introduce the next song for me.

>> This is a song originally by the carpenters but in my opinion by the divine bette midler.

>> Thank you very much Jamie that was our Break for Art.

>> Love you guys bye!

long ago, not so far away

I fell in love with you, before the second show

your guitar, it sounds so sweet and clear

baby, but you're not really here

it's just the radio

don't remember you told me you loved me baby?

said you'd be coming back this way again baby

it's over baby, baby, baby, baby oh baby

love you

loneliness it's such a sad affair

oh I can hardly wait

just to sleep with him again

what can I say to make you come again,

come back to me again, mm ...

to play that sad guitar

don't you remember you told me you loved me baby

said you'd be coming back this way again baby

love you ...

loneliness, is such a sad affair

I can hardly wait, just to sleep with him again

what can I say to make you come again

baby, come back to me again

come back to me and play that sad guitar

don't you remember you told me you loved me baby

said you'd be coming back this way again oh baby

you told me baby, baby, baby, baby, oh baby

I love you

I really do

>> Kate: Oh my God, so beautiful. I'm emotional.

>> Rita: Really gorgeous, Jamie thank you so much, Kate, thank you so much.

>> Kate: My pleasure.

>> Rita: You're doing a stunning job I have to say, only two weeks in and I kind of think okay it's going to have to go downhill after this, really! But I trust you.

And I know that, Jaime thank you so much, that was absolutely gorgeous. And the saxophone, gorgeous!

So that's a lovely way now to come back into Cormac, I'm going to pass you over to Thomas again and Thomas has some more questions for Cormac, thank you Thomas.

>> Cormac: Thomas just before you ask me any question. Jaime I am profoundly moved, I don't know if you can see it here, I'm -- there's context to that song and there's history to that song for me personally and I didn't think anyone could ever best Karen carpenter's velvet voice singing that, but you have adjust done it for me, and I just -- I'm really profoundly moved by your performance, it's a

lot to do with Covid has separated myself and my partner, we can't be together at the moment, our 15th anniversary we spent apart, the first time ever, that was our song, and you just sang it. Thank you. I won't emote any more. Because I need to switch gears back into the questions Thomas is going to ask me, but Jaime, you just gave me a gift, you really did, thank you so much for that. And sorry for being a big blouse.

>> Thomas: Honestly you're not Cormac, I think this is the right space to feel, to express yourself, to emote and be honest about how you feel, that's probably why so many of us are here.

>> Cormac: I probably listen to that song daily.

>> Thomas: I have to say as well I was sitting here, it did also on an emotional level set its roots in me.

>> Cormac: It comes back to what we were saying about queer art, and homonormativity and the way Jaime said that he found a space for himself outside of normative boundaries if you like around his queerness and found, landed on a way of expressing his art that meant he stood in the truth of his own art, and therefore didn't have to make his art easily digestible to anybody, so therefore he could be true about it and therefore does what arts should do, which is provoke this kind of affective response in somebody.

>> Thomas: Definitely, I also think there is something, even though I can say because I'm not coming from a scholarly perspective on this necessarily, but there is a profound need in all of us I think to, when we are -- when we're struggling to find our place in society there's always a thing of advocating for ourselves and I think that's very important to do, and the way Jaime did that so epically with that

piece, but I think there's something that we can all do in our daily lives to advocate for who we are in that sense, because we need to -- we're talking about lived experiences before, we can all pinpoint whether we are gay men, gay women, trans -- and this is already, look how I put that in an order in itself, because that is of course what the moniker already does, when we think about sexuality we think in that order, gay men, gay female and trans, also allowing others to be included and made aware of.

But coming, as I say the lived experiences we need to advocate for and those we need to have in the centre.

>> Cormac: I think also David, Thomas! Sorry, we talk about the lived experience in advocating for the lived experience I think what we also need to be doing is when someone else one of our queer brothers or sisters is struggling is we need to know how to hold space for them until they can advocate their own lived experience again. So that's queer solidarity, where when someone needs you to put out your hands and said here I'll hold you until you take the rest you need and you can move on again.

>> Rita: Something I wanted to comment on there just from everything here, I'm thinking about intersectionality, which is something that hear and talk about, but I'm talking about it in terms of our own lives and lived experience and what Jamie was talking about, about finding a place you can stand in your truth and I was thinking about this notion of intersectionality internally as well as externally and we've all got so many bits of ourselves, I've got mother, grandmother, daughter, lesbian, friend ... all my identities. If we have to hide our identities, I notice

somebody in the chat was saying that they're still quite closeted, if we have to hide our identity, if it has to be shoved off to the side, then that feels really difficult for us. And what we want is a place where all our identities can be present, at the intersection if you like of ourselves, everybody standing at the intersection, and is present.

So I just wanted to kind of, as Cormac would say, riff off that a wee bit in terms of intersectionality, it's not always an external thing. We are intersectional beings.

>> Cormac: Absolutely. We talk about identities and landing on an identity that you're comfortable with and that we may move, like an example I gave last week was in my 30s up until my late 30s I would have identified as a gay man, now I identify as queer. What we're not talking about is bisexuality. And bisexuality seems to be sidelined in really, what I would say quite dangerous ways, because by silencing or sidelining you erase and it's an identity that then gets erased. And it's this terrible discourse, remember I said about discourse last week, it's the way we talk about something.

There's this awful discourse, particularly in Ireland around bisexuality of either undecided, that this person can't make up their mind, or that it's an excuse, a closety way of not fully coming out, or that it's having your cake and eating it. And bisexuality is none of those things. Bisexuality is another sexual orientation, just as heterosexuality is a sexual orientation and we've got to remember that, when we talk about intersectionality, it's not LG T, it's LGBTQ, you know? And because bisexuality gets this awful discourse in society of one of those three things then

there is the truth to stand in for bisexuals to stand in their own truth, it's removed from them and taken away, and that space is no longer there.

I wonder if we could maybe, Thomas have you any thoughts on that?

>> Thomas: Again, obviously I've had some scholarly perspective and literature on it, but I do think coming back to also what is happening from my contemporary gay community, in terms of I've got a couple of bifriends and many of them would say that even a lot of gay people would see bisexuals as being privileged in that sense that oh they can just choose, but that's coming from an ignorant assumption again.

>> Cormac: Bisexuals aren't choosing. We come back to the notion of human desire and then society comes along and categorises and labels human desire into all these boxes.

>> Thomas: I just wanted to come back to, it's a good train of thought you are going into, thinking about how it is that we categorise ourselves, obviously we have a struggle here that we have the right for sexual minorities in society that we want to go for. So we keep discussing whether we should go by the LGBT plus moniker or whether or not we should free those up and allow for some kind of fluidity or a gradient of a spectrum where it is that anything can happen in between there.

So there is a bit of a conflict, we had one question last time that did relate to these social groups, it was referred to as saying how can we continue the struggle when it is that we have all these gradients in between, how do we address them? And I

just want to say in comments I appreciate somebody pointing out I left out bisexuals that confirmed my own bias as well, but when we come to it, you talking about intersectionality, how we can meet at a certain point where we can all agree on the same thing, but where does the debate go from then on? Freeing up, allowing for fluidity and gradients and nuance in between the spectrum or these categorised boxes?

>> Cormac: I think that's where this wonderful umbrella term of queer comes in, and it's not just a term, but it's a space, it's a broad identity and it's also a very good friend of mine, Waterford's most wonderful lesbian, she's a therapist and she often says that queer is also a resting place where you can come to, while there's other things going on in your life, and not necessarily issues of sexual orientation or sexual identity, but that queer is a place you can come to, to rest.

And I think one of the issues we have around intersectionality in Ireland is that we are an homogenously white culture and that when we talk about intersectionality we sometimes confuse that with just the ethnic side of intersectionality, that we think oh yeah, we need to get a more diverse ethnic cultural mix into whatever we're doing or whatever our event is.

But of course intersectionality isn't just about ethnicity, it's also about bisexuality, it's about trans, it's about Femme men, it's about butch women, it's about every aspect of any person who feels that they can not or will not operate within normative structures and they need somewhere to come to. And queer I think provides that, on all sorts of levels, not just an identity, but a community, a holding

space, yeah.

>> Thomas: I think that's a great answer as well. Do you want to add on to that Rita?

>> Rita: Turn on my mic first! Which always helps. Yeah, a couple of things. I'd love us to get back to the question around gender and kind of homonormativity and what's Femme men and real men and who decides what a man is, how to build a gay man and all that good stuff.

But also somebody asked could you explain what neoliberal capitalism is Cormac?

>> Cormac: Okay, I'll pars that very quickly. Neoliberal capitalism, it's called neoliberal meaning new liberal, it's an emulation of late 19th century, early 20th century less affaire economics where the idea is that you just, that the betterment of society will, individuals will be bettered and will have better lives if government steps back and let's business get on with it, don't regulate business in anyway and just give them, you hear often in America the freedom, what they want is the freedom to make more money.

So neoliberal capitalism has emerged in the late 70s and 80s through Margaret Thatcher and Ronald ray began and Charlie Haughey here in Ireland, it's all about the creation of markets, so while it has the kind of conservative ethos of very little state involvement in the economy, it's kind of paradoxical, in that business and industry and the banks in particular will rely on government to do certain things, such as provide a viable currency, prop up the banks when they go under.

So it's all about entrepreneurial freedoms and rights which sound like good things but it's not, it creates a very divided society, so neoliberal capitalism is hyper capitalism, capitalism on speed almost. So things like where markets did not before exist, they must be created, so those of you who remember a time when your bins being collected was included in your tax, your tax covered the bins being lifted every week. Now there are bin companies that we must pay.

The same like creating markets around the environment, around water, stuff like that, they've been trying to get us to pay for water for years, whereas before all that stuff was just in the general taxation. So constantly the idea of marketing being created, then it ties in with what you're saying about gender, in that gender is commodified, so markets can be created around gender whereas there is just shampoo, all of a sudden you can create two markets by having man's shampoo and woman's shampoo, you know what I mean? So that's in a nutshell, that's what neoliberal capitalism is, giving business and bankers the freedom to make as much money as they want, reducing the role of the State, therefore that's where you get things like zero hours contracts, no health benefits etcetera.

Businesses have the freedom, not just to create as much money as they want, but they have the freedom to treat their workers as they want in the service of creating as much money as they want. Okay?

>> Rita: That's brilliant Cormac, thank you for that wonderful explanation, and it's really relevant again, and another question that was asked last week that we didn't get to was, it could be interesting if you could tie this in with the gender

thing, being specifically anti capitalist, should or where is the space or is there space for queer organisations, queer agencies like ours, NGOs, to be specifically anti capitalist, is that a good queer thing to be? We could maybe come back to that I know we're reasoning out of time and I really want to talk about building the proper gay man.

>> Cormac: I do want to come back to that, obviously my field of speciality is masculinities, it's what I wrote my Ph.D. on, it's what my book is on. Jaime said some wonderful stuff there around considering himself Femme, and then could I ever be butch? And I can't, I didn't take notes on what he said, I'm going to talk anecdotally here for a minute before I get into academia talk.

For many, many years I -- the book won't be out till April, people are asking can they get the book for Christmas, it won't be out till April sorry. I met with my editor today, it won't be out till April.

For many years up until really I went to university and studied masculinities and note I pluralise that word, masculinities. For many years people would say aren't you a great young man? And I cringed when people called me a man. So much that I went on a journey to ask myself am I trans? And I went through that questioning process and arrived at the conclusion that no I am a Cis man and it was when I got to university and started studying masculinities and we pluralise that word because there are many different ways of being a man. And what I discovered was the reason I had been cringing when somebody called me a man was because of the role model of manhood I saw growing up, as a boy in Ireland in

the 70s, just wasn't what I wanted to be. It was misogynistic, it was patriarchal, it wasn't very well presented. So in my head, when someone called me a man that's what they meant. And then when I got into in depth critical study of men and masculinities I suddenly realised there are lots of different ways of being a man and I don't need to be uncomfortable with the term "Man" because it's not that.

So it brings us onto the idea of building the man. Building the happy homo sexual or whatever. Katie can I ask you to, just slide number three would that be okay there? So this is what we're thinking about, this applies across the sexuality spectrum of masculinity and manhood, that so often, I hear it on the radio and on TV all the time, people talk about masculinity as if it's this one monolithic state, you know? And yet the way I'm expressing my masculinity right now is going to be very different to the way it will be in half an hour when I'm no longer in front of an audience of 100 or so people, then it's going to be different to how I express it when I communicate with my straight neighbour next door and then it's going to be different how I express my masculinity when I talk to Thomas next week, because we're two queers, you know what I mean?

So we've got to stop thinking of masculinity of this one monolithic thing, we have to pluralise it and realise there are many different forms of masculinity.

"Masculinity is not one aye historical fixed state of being that applies to all men at all times, but rather a set of ever changing, geo politically specific models of manhood that are shaped by socio political, cultural, religious and economic forces outside of the male subject. So it's about the environment creating the way men

express their masculinity. "This notion of many different, culturally and temporally models of manhood" meaning they change overtime "Leads to the concept of multiple masculinities. There by not only pluralising masculine characteristics and mind sets, but further making a definite separation between the bodies of men and the social configurations of masculinities that are mapped across those bodies. Men and masculinity, for so long assumed to be one and the same thing, are now intellectually conceptualised as separate but mutually dependent entities"

I wanted to come into that idea because Jaime express it had so well when he was talking about as an artist -- when I was a kid I was definitely a sissy, got a lot of homophobic bullying over it, because it was 1970s Ireland and boys didn't play with the girl next door, they played with the boy next doorment then you internalise that as you grow up, you get internalised homophobia, your internalised questioning, it can lead to anxiety and PTSD as people get older, so I think we really need to broaden that out with queer manhood, that there are very many ways of expressing your gendered identity and we need to keep pluralising and spectrumising -- did I just invent a new word. Thomas, do you have any thoughts there?

>> Thomas: I think it's very interesting, because even coming from very metro sexual Copenhagen and then coming to what you can say then actually ending updating a rural farmer from Cork, is something that, you can kind of say masculinity is defined very differently in Copenhagen compared to here in Cork as well. Then we have one shared thing of course, that we're both gay men, but we

just look at masculinity in two different ways. But we also as you say, they are also temperature oral in that sense in that they shape overtime, not just where you come from, it's also your movement through space and time that your masculinity changes.

>> Cormac: Yeah I'd have to go digging on the file system so I won't, I'll describe it, often when I'm teaching students I show a picture you know Louis 14th the sun king, big hair, a smock coat and white tights and high heels? And if you look at what's sold on, as the sexy nurse costume, they look almost identical, so the dominant form of 18th century masculinity is now a fetish ised female sex costume, so that just shows you how these things change over history.

>> Thomas: Yeah, I guess it can also open up to not only sexual minorities or minorities in general as a way of looking, I think for allies who are watching this it can also open up looking at masculinities amongst straight men, as well. There are a lot of norms that straight men are not comfortable with. This is relevant for us because we are two queers, male queers.

>> Cormac: I mentioned in the last quotation hegemonic masculinity which I didn't touch on, we are coming very close to time, but basically although there are many different forms, ways of being a man hegemonic masculinity is the term we give to, in any given era, in any given culture, in any time, one dominant form of being a man will rise to the surface and we call that hegemonic masculinity however it's an idealized guy, it's Superman, the guy in the Gillette ad, the guy in the car ad, this man does not exist. Most men, primarily heterosexual men are aspiring and trying to be this guy which leads to a lot of problems then, because internal doubt and self doubt and suspicion, but among men it's all about

competition and peer surveillance, am I being Manley enough? Is he? But all the time aspiring to this ideal guy who can never exist. So masculinity, particularly heterosexual hegemonic masculine Dee becomes problematic because people are always trying to be something they can not be. And then some theorists say if hegemonic masculinity doesn't exist, does manhood even exist? You know? And I think that might be a question to close on perhaps!

>> Rita: What a great question, does manhood exist? Cormac, I think we'll have to come back to that one. Does manhood exist?

>> Cormac: Well the first chapter of my book is called the fantasy of manhood.

>> Rita: And something we haven't touched on this evening that we will come to I'm sure through the course of events is female masculinity.

>> Cormac: Yeah Judith Jack Halverstam, before Jack transitions he was Judith and his first academic book was published under the name Judith, but he wrote his first academic book was called female masculinity and it's a really interesting book, it's accessible, not just for academics and Jack talks about the difficulty of prying apart masculinity from the male body and he says when you look at drag kings and female masculinity, that the difference between masculinity and the actual bodies that it embodies, become easier to pry apart, that masculinity and male bodies become easier to pull apart when we look at female masculinity.

>> Rita: So interesting, we could talk about this all night. I'm going to round this up and bring us to a close. Can I thank everybody. Thank you Emma, Dr Emma for your great job, thank you Kate, amazing as always. Thank you Jaime if he's still with us, Jaime, glorious and gorgeous. Thank you Cormac, Cormac your fan club is also growing! And I just want to say, I introduced you to

Cormac people, it was me who brought you Cormac, please remember that!

Thomas, sure what can I say, Thomas, again the fan club grows. He is a complete star. Cormac and Thomas want to have their own chat show. I think we could probably do that! Thank you so much to our captioner who is there in the background and has been doing a brilliant job all evening. And thank you so much to Alyssa who has been doing a fantastic job minding the chat. And of course thank you to everybody who joined us online.

>> Cormac: Can we all just thank Rita. Thank you Rita for making this happen.

>> Rita: You are welcome. It's an absolute pleasure and a joy. So again we didn't necessarily get to all the questions and they were great questions. The session will go up on the website, hopefully by Monday, we're still figuring all this stuff out, but we will get there, so the recording will be up on the website, the transcript will be available. The chat can also be made available, somebody has asked earlier on can they have the chat? Yes absolutely. And please don't hesitate to get in touch if there's anything we can do to help you enjoy this more than you are. And with that I'm going to go to Thomas and say Thomas, oh I forgot to thank Katie! Katie from GCN, who saved our bacon, St. Katie the lesbian with the lanyard who came to save us all.

And on that note, Thomas, you can turn us off!

>> Thomas: Goodbye everyone and thank you so much and thank you for the love in the comments, honestly it fills our hearts. See you!

Session concludes.