

Dr. Richard Bodek, Chair
History Department
The College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424

October 3, 2011

Dear Dr. Bodek:

I am writing to request a sabbatical for the entire academic year of 2012-2013. I will use this time to complete archival research and conduct oral histories in Ireland, as well as write an article and begin to draft a monograph.

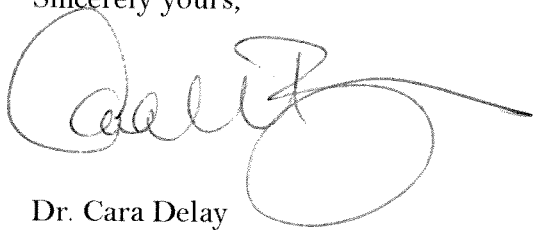
My proposed research project, *Desolate Journeys: Reproduction and Motherhood in Ireland, 1950-2000*, investigates women's experiences of sex and reproduction as well as the ways in which late twentieth-century Irish society perceived and represented reproduction and motherhood.

I intend to travel to Dublin, Ireland and Belfast, Northern Ireland, where I will conduct archival research, from September 2012 to February 2013. When I return to Charleston in February 2013, I will write an article on the Mamie Cadden case of the 1950s and will begin writing *Desolate Journeys* as a monograph.

I have included with this letter 1) my CV 2) a sabbatical proposal and 3) a bibliography for my proposed project.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Cara Delay
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History Department
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Cara Delay
History Department
Sabbatical Proposal

Ireland's most divisive scandals in the second half of the twentieth century, from the famous murder trial of midwife Mamie Cadden in the 1950s to the aftermath of the abortion controversies of the 1990s, centered on women's bodies, reproduction, and motherhood, signifying the importance of women and gender to dialogues about morality, purity, civility, and the Irish nation itself. Still, scholars, and particularly historians, have paid scant attention to reproduction and motherhood in modern Ireland.¹

My proposed research project, *Desolate Journeys: Reproduction and Motherhood in Ireland, 1950-2000*, attempts to fill these significant gaps in our knowledge by investigating women's experiences of sex and reproduction as well as the ways in which late twentieth-century Irish society perceived and represented reproduction and motherhood. This project examines how and why women's bodies and motherhood have generated controversy in recent Irish history even as it asks why historians have been reluctant to examine such topics.

I argue that the decades from 1950 to 2000 marked key moments of change within the Irish nation as it grappled with economic transformations, modernization and secularization, the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland and the subsequent peace process, as well as the sexual abuse scandals in the Irish Catholic Church. At the same time, Ireland's place in the international community was shifting; Ireland's relationship with the European Union became particularly contentious in the 1990s, in part because of Ireland's anti-abortion laws. Meanwhile, the Irish state's avowed commitment to the Irish Diaspora in the US and Britain posed challenges to its traditional, Catholic worldview. After the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, nations such as Poland looked to Ireland as a model for a modern yet socially conservative European nation, raising important questions about the place of "peripheral" and Catholic nations in the Europe of the new millennium.

Women's bodies, I contend, were and are central to debates about Ireland's place within Europe, as well as to definitions of Irishness itself. Women, the female body, and motherhood have long been representative of the Irish nation, taking on new national dimensions after independence in the 1920s and 30s. As Catherine Nash has argued, in Ireland the female body, like the landscape itself, has been "transversed, journeyed

¹ As of 2011, there is no book-length study of motherhood in modern Ireland. Works that address some aspects of reproduction and motherhood include Caitriona Clear, *Women of the House: Women's Household Work in Ireland, 1922-1961* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), Linda-May Ballard, *Forgetting Frolic: Marriage Traditions in Ireland* (Belfast and London: The Institute of Irish Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast, 1998), and Maria Cinta Ramblado-Minero and Auxiliadora Perez-Vides, eds., *Single Motherhood in 20th Century Ireland: Cultural, Historical and Social Essays* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).

across, entered into, intimately known, gazed upon.”² Controversies over reproduction and motherhood, therefore, comprise a discourse about Ireland itself. In this project, I investigate the ways in which debates about reproduction, abortion, and motherhood were representative of Ireland’s late twentieth-century transitions and attempts to define modern Irishness.

This project is unique in that it utilizes a variety of sources, including oral histories, court records, newspapers, autobiographies and life-writings, and popular cultural representations.

I will travel to Ireland from September 2012 to February 2013 to conduct research for this project. I will begin at the National Archives in Dublin researching the criminal case files of Mamie Cadden, an Irish midwife and illegal abortionist who died in prison in 1959 while awaiting execution. This case, although infamous in Ireland in the 1950s and 60s, has been ignored almost completely by historians.³

After examining the Cadden case in the National Archives, I will spend several weeks working in the Radio Telefís Éireann Library and Archives in Dublin. Here, I will analyze media representations (including television and radio programs) of women’s reproductive lives from the 1990s. At the National Library, Dublin, I will research life-stories, autobiographies, and newspapers detailing women’s experiences and public controversies from the 1950s to the 1990s. In particular, I will explore the cases of the Kerry Babies and Ann Lovett from the 1980s, as well as the infamous “X” case of 1992. In 1992, “X,” a 14-year-old Irish girl, became pregnant after being raped by a friend’s father. When she and her parents attempted to travel to Britain for an abortion, the Irish government placed an injunction on “X,” preventing her from leaving Ireland for ten months, thus ensuring that “X”’s baby would be born safely. As a result, scandal erupted in Ireland and abroad. *The Irish Times* compared Ireland to the Ayatollah’s Iran and Ceaucescu’s Romania and, on February 19th, ran a cartoon of Ireland surrounded by barbed wire, with the caption “17 February: Introduction of Internment in Ireland for fourteen-year-old girls” underneath.⁴ International newspapers called Ireland “backward,” “priest-ridden,” “misogynistic” and “barbarous.”⁵ The international scandal resulting from the “X” case forced Irish politicians to discuss abortion and ultimately to change Irish law. Again, however, historians have not turned their attention to this case. More than a debate over issues of “choice” and the “rights of the unborn,” the

² Catherine Nash, “Remapping and Renaming: New Cartographies of Identity, Gender and Landscape in Ireland,” *Feminist Review* 44 (summer 1993): 54.

³ The only book-length study of the Cadden case is the non-scholarly *Mamie Cadden: Backstreet Abortionist* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2005) by Ray Kavanagh. Kavanagh depicts Cadden as a determined and persecuted feminist heroine without situating her work within the context of 1950s Ireland. Historian Diarmaid Ferriter devotes several pages to the Cadden case in his *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* (London: Profile Books, 2009). Ferriter, however, dismisses Cadden as an “incompetent abortionist” without investigating the ways in which her case speaks to contemporary discourses on reproduction and motherhood (198).

⁴ Jeffrey Weinstein, “‘An Irish Solution to an Irish Problem’: Ireland’s Struggle with Abortion Law,” *Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law* (Vol. 10 No. 1, 1993): 191.

⁵ Ailbhe Smyth, “A Sadistic Farce: Women and Abortion in the Republic of Ireland, 1992,” in *The Abortion Papers: Ireland*, ed. Ailbhe Smyth (Dublin: Attic Press, 1992), 12.

abortion controversy in Ireland seeks to define the very nature of womanhood and thus Ireland itself.⁶

I also plan to travel to Belfast for a month to conduct archival research at the Linen Hall Library, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, and Ulster Television Film Library. At the Linen Hall Library, I will peruse women's and feminist periodicals in the Northern Ireland Political Collection (1970s and 80s) and examine archival documents relating to the Women's Committee. Housed at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum is a collection of field workers' notebooks on interviews conducted with women in the 1950s and 60s about childbirth. Next I will visit the Ulster Television Film Library to analyze a series of films made from the 1950s to the 1990s on contraception and abortion. In particular, I am interested in reel films containing interviews conducted with women in the 1950s about contraception.

Lastly, I will spend several weeks conducting oral histories. Working with university and feminist contacts, I will identify and interview women who came of age in the second half of the twentieth century, asking them a series of questions about their reproductive experiences, contraception, travel to Britain for an abortion (if relevant), and views on motherhood. I will of course secure permission from the Institutional Review Board at the College of Charleston before embarking on this oral history project.

While in Ireland I will complete the research for *Desolate Journeys*. When I return to Charleston in February 2013 I will complete one article on the Mamie Cadden case, which I will submit for peer review by May 2013. I also will begin drafting the monograph and will have three chapters drafted by August 2013. I anticipate that *Desolate Journeys* will be completed and submitted for publication by the summer of 2014.

⁶ There are only a few book-length studies of the "X" case to date and, significantly, none are written by historians. See attached bibliography for details.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Sources

National Archives of Ireland, Dublin

- Transcripts of the trial proceedings for Mamie (Mary Anne) Cadden, 1956, Department of the Taoiseach file s 16116.

Radio Telefis Éireann Library and Archives, Dublin

- Television Programme Archive, "X" Case files, 1990s
- Sound Archive, "X" Case reactions

National Library, Dublin

- Irish newspapers 1950s-1990s, including but not limited to the following:
 - *Cork Examiner*
 - *Irish Catholic*
 - *Irish Times*
 - *Limerick Leader*
 - *Sunday Independent*
- Published and unpublished memoirs and autobiographies

Linen Hall Library, Belfast

- Archival documents relating to Women's Committee and Northern Ireland Abortion Campaign, 1980s
- Women's periodicals held by the Northern Ireland Political Collection, 1970s and 80s

Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Belfast

- Archive boxes of collectors' field notebooks compiled during the 1950s and 1960s for each of the nine counties of Ulster. Subject area: childbirth and abortion.

Ulster Television Film Library, Belfast

- Tape from news transmission on abortion, 20 October 1987.
- Tape from the 'Counterpoint' series on abortion and contraceptive advice, 3 October 1991.
- Reel films, dating from c1959-c1969, containing interviews with women on contraception.
- Film on birth control, contraception and family planning in Belfast, c1959-c1969.

Published Primary and Secondary Sources

Anderson, Kathryn, Susan Armitage, Dana Jack, and Judith Wittner. "Beginning Where We Are: Feminist Methodology in Oral History," *Oral History Review* 15 (spring 1987): 103-127.

Linda-May Ballard, "'Just Whatever They Had Handy': Aspects of Childbirth and Early Childcare in Northern Ireland prior to 1948," *Ulster Folklife* 31 (1992-3): 59-72.

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Bhavnani, Kum-Kum. "Towards a Multicultural Europe? 'Race,' Nation, and Identity

- in 1992 and Beyond," *Feminist Review* 45 (1993): 30-45.
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Cara Delay, Ph.D.

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Education

Brandeis University

Ph.D. in Comparative History, May 2002

Dissertation: *The Fire of Devotion: Catholicism, Conflict, and Community Life in Rural Ireland, 1850-1920*. Thesis Advisor: Eugene C. Black. Awarded the American Conference for Irish Studies Adele Dalsimer Prize for a Distinguished Dissertation, 2003

M.A. in Comparative History, 1999

Thesis: *The Death and Life of Bridget Cleary*

Boston College

- A.B. in History, cum laude, 1993

Academic Employment

Assistant Professor, The College of Charleston, 2006-present

Assistant Professor, Framingham State College, 2004-2006

Visiting Assistant Professor, Denison University, 2003-2004

Visiting Assistant Professor, The University of Delaware, 2002-2003

Publications while at the College of Charleston

Articles and Essays: Published and Accepted

“‘The Gates Were Shut’: Catholics, Chapels, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Ireland,” *New Hibernia Review* 14, 1 (March 2010): 14-35 (submitted in 2009).

“Churchings and Changelings: Pregnancy and Childbirth in Modern Irish History,” in *Women in Irish Culture and History*, eds. Maria Luddy, Gerardine Meany, and Anne Mulhall. Forthcoming, Irish Academic Press, 2012 (submitted in October 2007; revised in December 2010).

“Ever So Holy: Girls, Mothers, and Catholicism in Irish Women’s Life-Writings, 1850-1950.” Accepted for publication in *The Country of the Young: Interpretations of Youth and Childhood in Irish Culture*, eds. Kelly Matthews and John Countryman (submitted in January 2011).

Currently Under Review

“Uncharitable Tongues: Women and Abusive Language in Early Twentieth-Century Ireland.” Under review at *Feminist Studies*.

“‘Language Which Will Move their Hearts’: Priests, People, and Speaking Power in Modern Catholic Ireland.” Under review at *Journal of British Studies*.

“‘Deposited Elsewhere’: The Sexualized Female Body and the Modern Irish Landscape.” Under review at *Etudes Irlandaises*.

Research and Writing in Progress

Within Her Reach: Irish Catholic Women, 1850-1937. Manuscript in preparation. Will be completed and sent to the University of Wisconsin Press for review in May 2012. University of Wisconsin Press has reviewed the book proposal and has requested the full manuscript for peer review.

“‘My Own Share of Troubles’: Women, Suffering, and Authority During the Great Famine.” Chapter solicited for an edited volume on politics and the Irish Famine, eds. Breandán Mac Suibhne and Enda Delany. Will be submitted in January 2012.

Ordinary and Outcast: Poor Women, Family, and Sexuality in Ireland, 1840-1950. Volume in preparation, edited by Cara Delay and Christina Brophy. Will be submitted in May 2012.

“‘A New and Exciting World’: Girlhoods, Adolescence, and Sexuality in Ireland, 1880-1950,” chapter in *Ordinary and Outcast* (see above). Will be submitted in May 2012.

Published Before Arrival at CofC

“Confidantes or Competitors? Women, Priests, and Conflict in Post-Famine Ireland,” *Éire-Ireland* 40, 1&2 (Spring/Summer 2005): 107-125.

“The Devotional Revolution on the Local Level: Parish Life in Post-Famine Ireland,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 22, 3 (Summer 2004): 41-60.

Review of *Muslim Women in the UK and Beyond: Experiences and Images*, ed. Haifaa Jawad and Tansin Benn (Leiden: Brill, 2003) in *Hawwa, Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 3, 2 (2005).

Book Reviews

Review of *Knock: The Virgin’s Apparition in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* by Eugene M. Hynes. *History: Reviews of New Books* 39: 1 (January 2011): 19-20.

Review of *Politics, Pauperism and Power in Late Nineteenth-Century Ireland* by Virginia Crossman. H-Albion, H-Net Reviews. March, 2010.
 URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=29784>

Review of *The Bible War in Ireland: The "Second Reformation" and the Polarization of Protestant-Catholic Relations, 1800-1840* by Irene Whelan in *Journal of British Studies* 45, 4 (October 2006).

Invited Lectures, Conference Papers, and Conference Participation

"Ill-Tempered and Ill-Tongued: Verbally Abusive Women in Early Twentieth-Century Ireland." *American Conference for Irish Studies* annual meeting, University of Wisconsin, March-April 2011.

"Catholic Girlhoods in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Ireland." *Northeast American Conference for Irish Studies* annual meeting, Massachusetts, November 2010.

"The Irish Catholic Mother: Constructions and Realities, 1850-1920." *Northeast Conference for British Studies* annual meeting, University of Vermont, September 2010.

"'I Know Who I Am': Rethinking Women, Agency, and Power in Ireland, 1850-1920." *Remarkable Irish Women: Radicals, Republicans and Writers*, Drew University, New Jersey, June 2009.

"Women, the Lifecycle, and the Landscape in Post-Famine Catholic Ireland." *Irish-Scottish Women's History*, Trinity College Dublin, April 2009.

"Women and Religious Spaces in Late Nineteenth-Century Ireland." *Society for the Study of Nineteenth-Century Ireland* ("Visual, Material, and Print Culture"), Limerick, Ireland, June 2008.

"Childbirth Rituals in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Ireland: Official and Alternative Sources." *Women in Irish Culture and History*, Dublin, Ireland, October 2006.

Invited Lectures, Conference Papers, and Conference Participation Prior to Arrival at CofC

"Women, Language, and Power in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Abusive Language Charges at the Castlegregory Petty Sessions Courts, 1915-16." *American Conference for Irish Studies* annual meeting, St. Louis, April 2006.

"Churching and Changelings: Women and Birth Rituals in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Ireland." *Women's and Gender Historians of the Midwest*, Loyola University Chicago, April 2004.

“A Controversial Religious Episode: The Station-Mass in Post-Famine Ireland.” *Society for the Study of Nineteenth-Century Ireland* annual meeting, DePaul University, Chicago, 2004.

“Women, Priests, and Local Power in Post-Famine Ireland.” *Irish Catholics: Belief, Practice, and Representation, 1750-2000*, Notre Dame University, South Bend, Indiana, 2003.

“Defining Woman, Defining Nation: Abortion, Ireland, and the New Europe in the 1980s and 90s.” *Women’s Studies Lecture Series on Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*, The University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, 2003.

“The Clamor of the Women’: Women, Priests, and Parish Conflicts in Catholic Ireland, 1850-1920.” *The American Historical Association (AHA) Annual Meeting*, Chicago, 2003.

“Community Lives Here: The Catholic Chapel in Ireland, 1880-1920.” *The American Conference for Irish Studies Annual Meeting*, Milwaukee, 2002.

“Uncharitable Tongues: Women, Scolding, and Community Life in Post-Famine Ireland.” *The Third Annual Graduate Symposium on Women’s and Gender History*, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, 2002.

“She Would Not Yield to Me’: Disorderly Women and the Catholic Church in Post-Famine Ireland.” *Boston College Graduate Irish Studies Conference*, Chestnut Hill, MA, 2001.

“Exploring Church Archives: Uncovering Catholicism, Culture, and Community in Post-Famine Ireland.” *Boston Irish Colloquium*, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA, 2001.

Chair, “Imagining the Nation in Revolutionary Europe,” Consortium on the Revolutionary Era Conference, Charleston, SC, March 2010.

Chair, “Irish Gender in the Atlantic World,” Irish in the Atlantic World Conference, Charleston, SC, March 2007.

Awards and Fellowships

American Conference for Irish Studies (ACIS) Adele Dalsimer Prize for a Distinguished Dissertation (2003)

Dissertation Year Fellowship, Brandeis University (2002-3)

American Association of University Women (AAUW) American Fellowship (2001)

Sachar Grant for International Research (1999)

Women’s Studies Graduate Research Grant, Brandeis University (1998-9)

Chris Lerman Prize for Essays on Extraordinary Women (1999)

Fellowship in Comparative History, Brandeis University (1996-1999)

Service

Professional:

- History Representative (Executive Board), American Conference for Irish Studies, (current)
- Editorial Board, *New Hibernia Review* (current)
- Prize Committee, American Conference for Irish Studies James S. Donnelly Sr. Prize, 2010

Community:

- “The Irish Catholic Mother: Constructions and Realities,” presentation at Center for Creative Retirement, Charleston, SC, March 2011
- “Death and Burial in Irish Tradition,” presentation at Center For Creative Retirement, Charleston, SC, October 2010
- Co-Chair and Organizer, My Life as A Girl Program (a partnership between the Women’s and Gender Studies Program and Burke High School, Charleston), 2009
- “Churchings and Churchyards: Birth and Burial Rituals in Modern Irish History,” public lecture as part of the Charleston Historical Society’s celebration of St. Patrick’s Day, March 2007

College-Wide

- Interim Director, Women’s and Gender Studies Program, Jan - Dec 2010
- President’s Advisory Committee, 2010-2011
- Departmental Senator, 2008-2009
- Faculty Member, College Honor Board, 2007-9
- Women’s and Gender Studies Steering Committee, 2006-2011
- Organizer and Participant, Irish Studies Film Festival, spring 2011
- Executive Committee, Faculty Club, 2010-2011
- Affiliated faculty member, British Studies program, 2006-present
- Women’s and Gender Studies Curriculum committee, 2007-9
- Women’s and Gender Studies Philanthropy committee, 2008-9
- Honors Faculty Lecture Series: “Before the Pill: Women, Reproduction, and Birth Control in History,” April 2, 2010.
- Panelist, “The Twilight Series: Vampires, Teenaged Girls, and Abstinence Porn,” A Women’s and Gender Studies Third Thursday Discussion, October 2009
- “Teaching Women’s History,” published in *Cheek*, The Magazine of Women’s and Gender Studies at CofC, Volume II (Winter 2007-8), 8-9.
- “Well-Behaved Women Rarely Make History,” presentation for Women’s and Gender Studies’ Third Thursdays series, 2008
- “Uncharitable Tongues: Women, Language, and Power in Modern Irish History,” Women’s History Month Brown Bag Luncheon/Colloquium (co-

sponsored by Women's and Gender Studies and the History Department),
2007

- Panelist for discussion after the showing of *The Life and Times of Sara Baartman, the Hottentot Venus*, a film for Women's History Month, March 2007
- Panelist, History Department colloquium, "Gender, Daily Life, and Religion in the Year of the Plague in Seventeenth-Century England, 2006
- Planning committee, Irish in the Atlantic World Conference, College of Charleston, 2006-7

Departmental

- Chair, Scheduling Committee, History Department, 2010
- Chair, Research and Development Committee, History Department, 2010-2011
- Merit Review Committee, spring 2010
- Scheduling Committee, History Department, 2009-present
- Graduate Program Committee, History Department, 2008-2010
- Search Committee, US Women's and Gender History position, 2008-9
- Personnel Committee, History Department, 2007-9
- Chair, Goals and Objectives Committee, History Department, 2007-8
- Organizer and Representative for the History Department at the College's Open House, April 2008
- Speakers/Phi Alpha Theta Committee, History Department, 2006-2007

Professional Memberships

The American Historical Association
American Conference for Irish Studies
National Women's Studies Association