

CALL FOR PAPERS

Constructions of Love and the Emotions of Intimacy, 1750-1850

Keynote Speakers: Dr Daisy Hay (Exeter) and Dr Sally Holloway (Oxford Brookes)

Saturday 9th February 2019, The University of Warwick

Funded by a HRC Doctoral Fellowship

In recent years the development of the history of emotions has resulted in an increase of scholarly interest in love and emotions as they were experienced by those in romantic relationships. 'Love' has always been an elusive concept to define, and it is clear that distinct conceptions of love have been specific to their culture and historical period. Although it is rarely the focus of research (unlike sex), love features frequently in cultural historiographies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is over this period, we are told, that the concept of love was redefined; over the course of the Enlightenment the concept of individualism was developed and the individual's right to personal happiness was asserted, thus love and affection were represented as the necessary foundations for a happy marital relationship. At the same time, these concepts have been implicated in attempts to reinforce patriarchal society - by associating love in marriage with concepts of obedience for women and with responsibility for men. Exactly how quickly, and the extent to which these ideals disseminated in contemporary culture varied according to status group; it is clear that they formed an intrinsic part of the developing middle-class identity from the beginning, whilst elite practices supposedly retained their traditional forms for much longer. Examining the roles love and intimacy played in interpersonal relationships is crucial to understand how power relations could be negotiated between the sexes, and often reveals gender relations to have been far more complex in practice than they appeared.

Objectives of the conference are to consider the following:

- To identify different conceptions of love over this period, and to explore the links between love, sex and marriage.
- What other emotions were associated with intimate relationships?
- Did emotional expectations of relationships vary according to class/gender?
- To understand the role notions of 'intimacy' played in interactions between the sexes/people who were romantically linked.
- To explore love as a focus of writing in the, perhaps ill-named, Romantic period!
- Were there any significant changes or continuities over the course of 100 years?

Topics of potential conference papers could include, but are not limited to:

Sentimental friendships and platonic love; Representations of love and intimacy in images/novels/forms of media; uses of the concept of 'love' and other emotions by individuals in marital or less conventional relationships; illicit love and adulterous liaisons; unrequited and thwarted love; and how intimacy was negotiated in same-sex relationships.

The history of love is a multi-disciplinary topic, and so we welcome papers from History and its sub disciplines, Literary Studies, Gender and Queer Studies and any other relevant disciplines.

We welcome proposals from academics at all stages of their careers. Please send an abstract of a maximum of 300 words for 20-minute papers, along with a short biography, to constructionslove@gmail.com by 17th August 2018.

Please follow us on Twitter @constructoflove for conference updates.

Conference website: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/hrc/confs/love/>