

QUEEN MARY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

CENTRE FOR THE HISTORY OF THE EMOTIONS



Lunchtime Seminars, 2012-13

SEMESTER 2

23<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY 2013

**Dr Tuomas Tepora (University of Helsinki; Visiting Post-Doctoral Researcher, Queen Mary, University of London)**

Coping with Violence: Sacrifice, Collective Memory and Emotion in Finnish Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century War Experiences

This talk looks at the role of national myths, memories and other cultural reservoirs in organizing social emotions in Finland during the interwar period from the Civil War of 1918 until the end of the Second World War. It will shed light on the ways in which the various groups in Finnish society tried to transform divisive and even traumatic experiences resulting from the Civil War into socially productive narratives and why some groups did not accept reconciliation of any kind. The talk analyses the role of collective symbols and realms of memory such as flags and cemeteries in carrying and reworking the emotions such as mourning, hate, attachment and love. The Civil War represented internal and reciprocal violence and victimization. The transformation of these elements into unifying self-sacrifices proves to be the most crucial act in Finnish memory culture and emotional navigation during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

13<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2013

**Susanne Stoddart (Royal Holloway, University of London)**

“Life has been hardly worth living,” he said, as a tear trickled down his cheek’: Exploring Print-Press Representations of Edwardian Old Age Pensioners

This paper explores print-press representations of Edwardian old age pensioners as they collected their first pensions from post offices across Britain in January 1909. A non-contributory system of state pensions for the poorest, passed by the Liberals in 1908, was not universally supported. This paper suggests that the very public act of pension collection, set out by legislation and heavily-attended by journalists and the wider public at first, provided an important arena for the enhancement of sympathy for the elderly poor. For example, pensioners were frequently represented by the

print-press as emotional beings, as they reflected on former struggles and expressed gratitude. This paper notes distinctions between Liberal and Conservative press representations, as well as distinctions between reports on male and female pensioners. This paper finishes by considering that promoting sympathy was not the only impact of public observation and press reportage. A significant minority of the elderly poor resented a pension collection process that subjected them to public scrutiny, and identified the process as a reconfiguration of the culture of feeling shamed that devalued their lives before the introduction of pensions.

6<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2013

**Dr Stella Moss (Royal Holloway, University of London)**

“Happy drinkers, sad drunks”?: Emotion and the English Public House, 1918-39

The public house has long been a central feature of the British social landscape, and in the 1920s and 1930s continued to play a major role in working-class communities across the country. While acknowledging the influence of social histories which emphasise the pub as a vital setting for leisure and recreation, this paper seeks to open new ground by considering the emotional dynamics at work within the public house. Conviviality and companionship were often centre stage: the affective bonds forged and consolidated in the pub will be uncovered, with particular emphasis on the practices and habits of courting and married couples, and the homosocial bonding linked to masculine drinking cultures. Pubs were also the setting for ritualised social shaming, often as a result of, or in reaction to, drunken behaviour. Indeed, the emotional dynamics of the pub were inevitably shaped by the complex and varying impact of alcohol, both on the individual drinker, and his or her companions. This paper asks what exploration of the pub’s social setting offers the historian of emotion in twentieth-century Britain.

27<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2013

**Professor Stephanie Trigg (University of Melbourne; Visiting Fellow, Queen Mary, University of London, 2013)**

“Especially delicious and exquisitely tender”?: Chaucer, Coleridge, Emotion and Affect

The most common narratives in Chaucerian reception history use broad brushstrokes to contrast discrete phases of Chaucerian readership and interpretation. We customarily say that in the sixteenth century, for example, Chaucer was prized as a courtly poet; in the eighteenth century, as a bawdy or satirical poet; and in the nineteenth century, as a poet of sentiment. Coleridge described his “unceasing delight in Chaucer” as an “exquisitely tender” poet, a reading that would have been unrecognisable a hundred years earlier, and that is now marked primarily by its own historicity as a ‘romantic’ construction, or reading, of Chaucer. Such shifts are usually read through the history of taste and changing fashions in medievalism and the readerly constructions of different Chaucers. But this reception history might also function as an important source for the history of emotions; and the representation in critical discourse of changing patterns of affect and feeling in response to literary texts. In this paper I will use Coleridge’s reading of Chaucer to test ways in which the history of emotions and the study of these longer patterns of Chaucerian reception might inform and illuminate each other.

**Seminars take place on Wednesdays at 1pm in Laws building, Room 1.00.**

**The Laws building is number 36 on the map below and is accessed via the Westfield Way entrance.**

These relaxed and informal research seminars are scheduled to finish at 2pm but participants are welcome to stay and extend discussion beyond that time if they are available to do so.

Lunch is provided. To book your place, please email [emotions@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:emotions@qmul.ac.uk) at least a week in advance of the event, specifying which seminar(s) you wish to attend.

