

Picturing Women's Health 1750-1910
A One-Day Postgraduate Interdisciplinary Conference

University of Warwick, Saturday 22nd January, 2011

"One hears sometimes of a child being 'the picture of health;' now Emma always gives me the idea of being the complete picture of grown-up health. She is loveliness itself. Mr. Knightley, is not she?"

Jane Austen, *Emma*, chapter 5

Confirmed plenary speakers:

Professor Hilary Marland (University of Warwick)

Dr. Claire Brock (University of Leicester)

The conference Picturing Women's Health 1750-1910 will explore the interface of diverse discourses that constructed ideas about women's health in Britain during the Romantic and Victorian periods. In these years, writers and artists documented extraordinary discoveries and advancements in science, anatomy, and medicine. This inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary conference will examine the vicissitudes of attitudes towards women's 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' bodies over the one-hundred-and-sixty year period. In particular, conference papers will consider representations of the female body in fictional/non-fictional literature, fine arts, and visual media and how they reflected or influenced women's understandings and experiences of their own health and bodies.

Possible approaches could include:

How did different women's testimonies or documentations of health relate to each other? How accurately or inaccurately did men and women artistically portray the female body in health and illness? How were scientific and artistic ideas about women's health in dialogue? What is the relationship between the representation of woman's body and her (in)ability to perform certain familial and social roles? How are contemporary critical debates on Romantic and Victorian public and private spheres complicated by the periods' representations of women's health?

Key topics could include (but are not limited to):

Madness and hysteria Prostitution Virginitv Sexuality
Motherhood and wifehood Birth and breast-feeding
Pregnancy, birth-control, and abortion Fashion (dress, cosmetics, decoration)
Exercise and well-being Age (childhood, puberty, menopause)
Un/healthy spaces (including spa and resort towns, hospitals, slums, factories, home)
Illness and disease (venereal diseases, hereditary diseases, contagion)
Disabilities and disfigurations
Death and grief (terminal illness, death of spouse or child, execution)

Medicine (diagnosis, prescription, treatment) Medication and surgery
Health and superstition Metaphors of health Definitions of health

Please send your abstract of 250-300 words for a 20-minute paper to womenshealth.2011@gmail.com or submit online at the conference website (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/events/pwhconference/>) along with name, affiliation, e-mail address, and title of paper. The deadline for submissions is **5th November, 2010**. You will be notified whether or not your paper has been selected by 22 November. Acknowledgement of receipt of proposal will be sent. If you do not receive a reply from us, please resend.

If you have any questions regarding the conference and/or the proposal, please feel free to contact us at the above email address. Conference website will update details of the conference programme, registration, accommodation, and travel details one month prior to the conference.

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/events/pwhconference/>

Organising committee: Kate Scarth, Fran Scott, Ji Won Chung (Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, University of Warwick)