

Call for Papers

Postgraduate Conference

The Popular and The Middlebrow: Women's Writing 1880 - 1940

12 April 2012, Newcastle University

Keynote Speaker:

Professor Nicola Humble (Roehampton)

This event aims to bring together postgraduate researchers from across the UK and beyond to discuss the growing interest in and importance of the categories of the middlebrow and the popular as ways of engaging with women's writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both of these terms have become crucial ways of exploring the work of more marginalised female writers who were not directly involved in larger intellectual discourses such as Modernism or social realism, but who enjoyed a great deal of success during their own time. From the regency romances of Georgette Heyer to the crime fiction of Agatha Christie, from the muted socialist politics of Winifred Holtby to the witty asides of Molly Keane, the conference reasserts the importance of these women's writing as part of a wider literary tradition. It encourages papers which both work with and interrogate the terms 'popular' and 'middlebrow' as well as those which choose to apply them to the work of a specific woman or group of women in order to challenge or consolidate their usage. It asks: do the terms still contain inherent value judgements? Are they problematic when applied to women's literature? Or do they engender a challenge to preconceptions about women and literary history, allowing for a reconceptualization of notions of canonicity?

Possible topics include:

- Women writers and the popular
- Women writers and the middlebrow
- Domesticity and the home
- Place and landscape
- War and politics
- Queer fictions
- Marginalised women writers
- Violence
- Women writing romance
- Women and historical fictions
- Women writers and science fiction

Proposals of no more than 300 words should be emailed to middlebrow-conf@ncl.ac.uk by 30 November 2011. For more information: www.pop-middlebrow.com

In association with the Long Nineteenth Century Research Cluster (School of English) and the Gender Research Group (Newcastle Institute for the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities) and supported by a grant from the Catherine Cookson Foundation.

Organized by Katherine Cooper and Jodie Laird

**This conference will run in conjunction with another event, 'Gender, Travel and Modernity, 1850-1950' taking place on 13th and 14th April 2011. Delegates may wish to attend both events. For more information: <http://movingdangerously.wordpress.com/>.