

EMOTIONS: THE ENGINES OF HISTORY

<https://enginesofhistory.wordpress.com>

Sosnowiec, Poland, Nov. 23rd-24th 2018

CALL FOR PAPERS

The etymology of the word “emotion,” whose first use dates back to the sixteenth century, betrays the multiplicity of its meanings. Derived from the Middle French *emouvoir* (to stir up), it traces its origins back to the Latin *emovēre* (to remove or displace), which in turn comes from the Latin *movēre* (to move). The notion of movement, then, or a change of state, has always accompanied the way people conceptualise emotions. History is, similarly, a record of movement, fluidity, and volatility, and this approach is increasingly being extended to the study of humanity’s past, with emotion studies bringing increased sensitivity to historical, literary and cultural enquiries. Approaching emotions as “engines,” that is catalysts of past events and processes is, however, fraught with challenges. It is largely due to the fact that the roles of irrationality and emotionality as motivating elements in history and its narratives are not easy to determine and often elude scientific study due to their intimate and highly personal nature. Likewise the very thought that historical decisions affecting the lives of many might have been made under the capricious influence of somebody else’s emotional state fills us with dread. And yet, we suspect or perhaps even know that many events of both distant and not so distant past have been dictated by emotional disposition and moods of those who made them. If fear, hatred, desire, disgust, pity, envy, love and shame affect our individual choices, they might as well influence the decisions whose consequences go beyond one’s singular or communal experience. From the Ides of March, through the separation of the Church of England from Rome, to the role of the social media in the most recent presidential elections in the USA, emotions have shaped and influenced historic events giving rise to groundbreaking social and political changes.

Seeking to bridge the gap between various approaches to the study of motivations in the past, the conference *Emotions: the Engines of History* aims at a multidisciplinary examination of the connection between emotions and history as well as of the multiplicity of ways in which this connection has manifested itself across cultural and literary studies. Thus, we invite scholars working in various disciplines and fields of study to consider the points of intersection between the study of emotions and the study of history, and to engage in a discussion concerning the representations of these intersections in different media across cultures and centuries.

Specific topics may address, but are not limited to:

- history of emotions (changing perceptions on how emotional states used to be understood)

- historical takes on emotions (the Annales school, psychohistory, externalists vs. internalists debate)
- historical text as an emotional artefact, historical narratives of emotionality
- influence, manipulation and emotional provocation in history
- emotions in history-making and history-writing processes
- irrationality, chance, moods and dispositions in history
- emotional disorders and mental infirmity in history
- propaganda and the language of emotion
- empathy and sympathy in history and its narratives
- the opposition between rationality and irrationality in history and its narratives
- historical taboo topics and emotions related to them
- emotions behind mistakes and misunderstandings in history
- methodologies in the history of emotions
- the emotional turn and the turns in history and historiography
- the migrant experience and emotions
- emotions in the histories of indigenous cultures
- concealing emotions in texts (literature under censorship)
- emotions in popular culture and the history of fan studies
- emotional fragility of genders in history

We are happy and honoured to announce that two eminent scholars have agreed to give plenary addresses at the conference:

Prof. Catherine M. Clarke (University of Southampton), who has published widely on the literature and culture of the Middle Ages, as well as experiences and uses of medieval culture today.

Dr. Kristine Steenbergh (Vrije Universiteit van Amsterdam) who specialises in early modern English literature and has published on the cultural history of emotions, ecocriticism / critical ecologies and the environmental humanities, and gender theory.

We welcome scholars from various academic fields to submit their proposals (ca. 250 words) by **31 May 2018**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent out by 30 June 2018. A selection of papers will appear in a post-conference monograph.

The proposals should be sent to: enginesofhistory@gmail.com

The conference fee is 120 EUR and 90 EUR for full fee participants and graduate students respectively (for participants from Poland the full fee is 450 PLN and the reduced fee is 350 PLN). The fee includes a meal, coffee breaks and conference materials.

Conference Organisers:

Rafał Borysławski, Ph.D., D.Litt.,
Nina Augustynowicz, M.A.,
Alicja Bemben, M.A.,
Marta Gorgula, M.A.,

Justyna Jajszczok, Ph.D.,
Aleksandra Musiał, M.A.,
Agnieszka Podruczna, Ph.D.,
Patrycja Sokołowska, M.A.