

Contemporary Love Studies in the Arts and Humanities

Madalena Grobbelaar
Elizabeth Reid Boyd • Debra Dudek
Editors

Contemporary Love Studies in the Arts and Humanities

What's Love Got To Do With It?

palgrave
macmillan

Editors

Madalena Grobbelaar
School of Arts and Humanities
Edith Cowan University
Joondalup, WA, Australia

Elizabeth Reid Boyd
School of Arts and Humanities
Edith Cowan University
Joondalup, WA, Australia

Debra Dudek
School of Arts and Humanities
Edith Cowan University
Mount Lawley, WA, Australia

ISBN 978-3-031-26054-4 ISBN 978-3-031-26055-1 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-26055-1>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2023

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

ABOUT THIS BOOK—OR OUR LOVE STORY: FINDING LOVE IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

What's love got to do with it? That was the question we posed to our colleagues for the first Love Studies Symposium in the School of Arts and Humanities at Edith Cowan University, in Perth, Australia in February 2021. Our goal was to establish a network and to bring together research in the area, as well as to increase knowledge of Love Studies and its growing application in research and teaching content. We wondered if we would be lonely hearts, or if others would share our passion.

Academics from every discipline in our School (Social Work, Counselling, Literary and Media Studies, Communication, Journalism, Cultural Studies, Psychology, Social Science, Criminology, Law and Justice Studies, and the Creative Arts) responded and soon, more joined. Mapping the field, we discovered research in areas as diverse as popular romance studies to border criminology, from sexology to peace studies, with multidisciplinary connections that gave strength to Love Studies as a vital new field of knowledge in the Arts and Humanities. We also reached out to researchers at other institutions including the new Australian cross-university initiative, the *Heart of the Matter Health Humanities Project*, which aims to deepen our understanding of the heart and improve human well-being through fostering dialogue and innovation across the fields of health, medicine, engineering, philosophy, literary studies, and the humanities. This book is the shared result. It brings together recent research on love and takes it in important and unexpected new directions.

Current definitions of love include words such as *profound affection*, *passion*, *tenderness*, *attachment*, and *devotion* (www.dictionary.com; www.merriam-webster.com). Strike “love” followed by “sex” on search engines, and love yields billions of hits, double that of sex! Erich Fromm (1957) proposed that the central desire in individuals is for an interpersonal union: “It is the most fundamental passion, it is the force which keeps the human race together, the clan, the family, society. The failure to achieve it means insanity or destruction—self-destruction or destruction of others” (22). Humankind’s awareness of the transient nature of life and the separateness of each person arouses anxiety. To be separate means we are born and we die. Against our will, we die before those we love, and we are helpless before the forces of nature. A prison of isolation and aloneness may lead to insanity, a withdrawal of the self from the external world so that separation dissolves. The continuation of humanity is because of love.

This love that we could not do without, that appeases our existential anxiety, is multifaceted, leading May (2011) to propose that throughout history “love has been captive to an obsession with opposites. It is either self-seeking or self-giving; either possessive or submissive; either illusion creating or truth-seeking; either conditional or unconditional; either inconstant or enduring; either mired in fantasy or a privileged window onto reality” (235). This ideological Manichean territory of good and bad persists for most people through their ideal of love as situated to the right of each of these splits: self-giving, truth-seeking, submissive, unconditional, enduring; anything to the left is the antithesis of genuine love.

Past research across cultures has concluded that love is an emotion that is experienced throughout historical eras, in all cultures by the majority of the world’s population (Karandashev 2015). However, expressions and manifestations of love vary as culture influences how one thinks, feels, and behaves in loving and intimate relationships. Symbiotic union, our entry into the world, is the biological preserve of the pregnant mother and the foetus (Fromm 1957), where there are two beings, yet only one. Herein exists a physical as well as a psychological symbiosis, a way to “at-onement” (Fromm 1957, 16). To conform, to dominate, to control, to self-sacrifice, to withdraw, to defend, or to destroy represent ways of attempting to fuse with another and ease our existential conundrum—the awareness of death’s inevitability and our wish to continue to live—but do these states describe love?

This collection of contemporary essays on love reveals a revaluing and deeper understanding of the complexity and sophistication of love and its

cultural expressions. It includes analyses of the multiple ways love has been constructed, and hence shapes our ways of being and knowing. It goes beyond these ideas to explore love and desire in intimate relationships, and it shows how love shapes and it is shaped in diverse dynamics and domains, both public and private, and across the lifespan. This collection is both a reflection and a call for a greater understanding of the complexity and importance of love in our lives, and in our world, and as such is integral to broad applications in the arts and humanities.

The collection begins with “The Love Ethic: Love and Activism for Ecosocial Justice” by Naomi Joy Godden and Shajimon Peter. This chapter broadly defines different manifestations of love and then moves to a more specific outline of a love ethic modelled on the interconnectivity and cyclical process illustrated in a tree and its saplings. In this arboreal metaphor, love as action, process, and result stem from roots through trunks, branches, and fruit, in a cycle of transformational inter-relatedness. Godden’s research with three communities defines this love ethic, which is then imagined in practice with Transnational Social Workers who engage in global practice. Janine Joyce also writes about the connection between people and place in her chapter “The Power of Love: Love in Peace and Conflict Studies.” In this essay, Joyce calls for a suturing of love studies with peace and conflict studies, which she argues would invite peace studies scholarship to shift away from efforts to end war and structural violence and towards an equal valuing of the inner transformation of the individual in a relationship with all forms of life. An interrogation of the love of the nation state comes to the foreground in Jamal Barnes’s chapter, “Love and Hospitality: Love, Refugees, and Challenging Indifference.” In his essay, Barnes—like Joyce—draws upon the concept of *agape* love to suggest that, “love can be practised through hospitality, or welcoming of the stranger,” which encourages empathy for refugees and a “political culture of love for others.”

The next three chapters take interdisciplinary approaches to analyse how love is represented in literature. Amy Burge’s “Romantic Love across Borders: Marriage Migration in Popular Romance Fiction” may be read fruitfully alongside Barnes’s essay in their combined interest in the intersection between love of country and romantic love. Burge’s essay combines migration and literary studies to analyse how migration features in two 2019 romance novels. In this chapter, Burge demonstrates how migration functions as both an element of the romance plot and as a metaphor for the protagonists’ journey towards love. In “The Heart of the

Matter: Love and Care in Health Humanities,” connections between love and the heart are examined through the disciplines of literary studies and biomedical engineering. Analysing the technology of the artificial heart alongside the representation of the heart in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, Brid Phillips, Michael Stevens, and Claire Hansen show how the heart is considered as both a body part and a site of care. “Queering Love: Love in Literary and Media Studies” continues to interrogate how love is represented in literary studies, including adaptations of Shakespeare, but expands this focus to analyse how love is queered in novels, film, and serial television. Debra Dudek, Julia Wexler, and Tania Visosevic summarise how love initiates plot, sustains narrative, and ends stories, but the main focus of the chapter is to show “how love works within narrative progression and audience obsession to queer its own story, especially in its powers of resolution and closure.”

Intimate civility, a code of conduct based upon mutual respect to guide interpersonal relationships, is a concept referenced in several chapters in this collection. In her chapter “Embracing *Intimate Civility*: Love of Kith and Kin,” Elizabeth Reid Boyd, who first coined and developed the term *intimate civility* with Abigail Bray in 2005, utilises “*kith* (friendship, or *philia*) to expand the model of intimate civility, as a resource for those for whom *kin* (family) represents less than loving relationships.” In “The Tyranny of Love” Madalena Grobbelaar and Eyal Gringart—both of whom also conduct research to develop the construct of intimate civility—examine a tension between love and freedom to ask, “how loving is love”? They pose answers to this question by looking at how love manifests in a variety of binaries that lock love into its own destruction. Instead, they suggest a reconsideration of love that does not rely on opposites—such as good and bad, selfless and selfish—but rather accommodates a spectrum of love states. Rose Williams, a creative arts psychotherapist, attends to the close connection between self and world as she maps scholarship about consensuality, an idea originally used to describe a child at play as “imaginative and creative absorption,” but which Williams links to intimate civility. Williams’s goal in her chapter “Consensuality: Love and Sex Post #Me too” is “to contribute to theorising a psychology of consent as an essential component of love studies.” In “Love of Process: Intimacy and Attention within Painting, Life, and Art,” Paul Uhlmann and Gregory Pryor draw upon a framework of phenomenology to posit a connection between the process of creating art and the act of becoming a love dyad

and to “underscore the importance of *close attention* as a form of love within creative process.” They highlight the importance of resisting a separation between self and world as key to love as inter-relationality, which recalls the opening chapter’s love ethic and Iris Murdoch’s notion of attention, as discussed by Reid Boyd.

The collection concludes with a poetic, political, personal essay by Pearl Proud. “The Fire of Love” calls back to many of the concepts, ideas, and provocations from the previous chapters, and it also moves forwards and upwards in its affirmations and invitations and in its invocation of *Ubuntu*, a Zulu way of life that is “a ‘seeing’ of the other, an extending of a humanity and generosity of spirit to the other [that] has love at its core.”

Madalena Grobbelaar
Elizabeth Reid Boyd
Debra Dudek

REFERENCES

- Fromm, Erich. 1957. *The art of loving*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Karandashev, Victor. 2015. A Cultural Perspective on Romantic Love. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* 5, 4: 3 <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1135>
- Mai, Nicola, and Russell King. 2009. Love, Sexuality and Migration: Mapping the Issue(s). *Mobilities* 4, 3: 295–307.
- May, Simon. 2011. *Love: A History*. Yale University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vm43t>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are committed to reconciliation, and we recognise and respect the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' communities, cultures, and histories. We acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the land.

Thank you to Camille Davies at Palgrave Macmillan, London, for her enthusiasm and encouragement of the Love Studies project. Thanks also to Sujatha Mani, project coordinator at Springer Nature for her support and guidance. Thank you to Barbara Campbell and Kylie Wrigley, who assisted with the formatting and referencing of this book. With respect to the research programme being conducted at Edith Cowan University, Western Australia, regarding the construct of *intimate civility*, thanks are due to the supervisors leading the research: Associate Professor Eyal Gringart and Dr Madalena Grobbelaar; as well as to the students who have conducted or are conducting research with this concept, Barbara Campbell, Nigel Healy, and Alise Bender. To colleagues who have supported and been part of our growing Love Studies Network, we extend our thanks as well as our hopes that we continue this research collaboration. Our final thanks go to the School of Arts and Humanities at Edith Cowan University, including Craig Speelman the Associate Dean (Research), for supporting the Love@ECU Love Studies Network through a Research Culture Fund grant and a Research Support Fund grant.

CONTENTS

1	The Love Ethic: Love and Activism for Ecosocial Justice	1
	Naomi Joy Godden and Shajimon Peter	
2	The Power of Love: Love in Peace and Conflict Studies	15
	Janine Joyce	
3	Love and Hospitality: Love, Refugees, and Challenging Indifference	27
	Jamal Barnes	
4	Romantic Love across Borders: Marriage Migration in Popular Romance Fiction	39
	Amy Burge	
5	The Heart of the Matter: Love and Care in Health Humanities	51
	Bríd Phillips, Michael Stevens, and Claire Hansen	
6	Queering Love: Love in Literary and Media Studies	63
	Debra Dudek, Julia Wexler, and Tanya Visosevic	
7	Embracing <i>Intimate Civility</i>: Love of Kith and Kin	75
	Elizabeth Reid Boyd	

8	The Tyranny of Love: Love and Psychology	87
	Madalena Grobbelaar and Eyal Gringart	
9	Consensuality: Love and Sex Post #Metoo	97
	Rose Williams	
10	Love of Process: Intimacy and Attention Within Painting, Life, and Art	109
	Paul Uhlmann and Gregory Pryor	
11	Conclusion: The Fire of Love	123
	Pearl Proud	
	Index	131

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Jamal Barnes is a lecturer in the School of Arts and Humanities at Edith Cowan University.

Amy Burge is a Senior Lecturer in Popular Fiction at the University of Birmingham.

Debra Dudek is an academic in the English Program at Edith Cowan University. She has published widely in the area of visual and verbal texts for young people and a focus on love and ethics informs her research more generally. She is the lead Chief Investigator on the ARC Discovery Grant “A comparative investigation into Australian adolescents’ perceptions of harm from accessing online sexual content” and the author of *The Beloved Does Not Bite: Moral Vampires and the Humans Who Love Them* (2017).

Naomi Joy Godden is a Vice-Chancellor’s Research Fellow at Edith Cowan University’s School of Arts and Humanities and Strategic Research Centre for People, Place and Planet.

Eyal Gringart is an Associate Professor and the Coordinator of Psychology, International Programs within the School of Arts and Humanities.

Madalena Grobbelaar (she/her) is an academic, a clinical psychologist and clinical psychosexual therapist in private practice (<http://www.womensexualityaustralia.com.au/>). She is a lecturer in the Counselling and Psychotherapy programmes at Edith Cowan University, and has taught into the Master of Sexology at Curtin University. Madalena’s area of inter-

est and research is in sexuality, intimate relationships, and interpersonal violence. Her work and therapeutic orientation is informed by the role of dysfunctional attachments in adult sexuality and intimacy, as well as the role of sexual socialisation, attitudes, and beliefs and how these contribute to the intergenerational cycle of intimate partner violence, areas she has recently published in.

Claire Hansen is a Lecturer in English at the Australian National University, a researcher on the Shakespeare Reloaded project, an award-winning educator and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and holds an honorary virtual Fellowship with the Centre for the History of Emotions.

Janine Joyce is an Associate Professor of Social Work at Edith Cowan University's School of Arts and Humanities.

Shajimon Peter is a Senior Lecturer of Social Work at Edith Cowan University's School of Arts and Humanities.

Brid Phillips is a research Fellow at The University of Western Australia. She has extensive background in clinical nursing and holds a PhD in English and Cultural Studies.

Pearl Proud is the Chair of CANWA and ConnectGroups, NE Director, Senior Consultant (Diversity|CaLD). She is also a Psychologist, AHPRA Accredited Supervisor, Governance Mentor and Executive Coach.

Gregory Pryor is a Visual Arts Lecturer within the School of Arts and Humanities at Edith Cowan University.

Elizabeth Reid Boyd (she/her) is an academic in the School of Arts and Humanities at Edith Cowan University. On the topics of gender, culture, romance and etymology, Elizabeth has published widely and as a media commentator. She writes fiction as Eliza Redgold, based upon the Gaelic meaning of her name. After *Naked: A Novel of Lady Godiva* was published she is currently in script development as feature film GODIVA. She also writes historical romances.

Michael Stevens is a Senior Lecturer in the Graduate School of Biomedical Engineering at UNSW Sydney.

Paul Uhlmann is a Senior Lecturer within the School of Arts and Humanities at Edith Cowan University, where he is the Course Coordinator of the Bachelor of Arts and coordinator of the Visual Arts and Printmaking and Artists' Books Studio.

Tanya Visosevic is the major coordinator for Screen Production in the School of Arts and Humanities at Edith Cowan University.

Julia Wexler is a Senior Learning Adviser in the School of Arts and Humanities at Edith Cowan University.

Rose Williams is a Lecturer and Clinic Director, and she holds a Masters in Creative Arts Therapies within the Discipline of Counselling. She works in the College of Science, Health, Engineering and Education (SHEE) at Murdoch University.

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1.1	The love tree	8
Fig. 10.1	Paul Uhlmann, <i>everything is movement</i> 2022, oil on canvas 55 × 35 cm. (Photography: Christophe Canato)	113
Fig. 10.2	Paul Uhlmann, <i>life is movement</i> 2022 oil on canvas, 55 × 35 cm. (Photography: Christophe Canato)	114
Fig. 10.3	Gregory Pryor. <i>They followed a star to meet under the trees.</i> 2019, oil on wood panel, 60 × 39.6 cm. (Photography: Eva Fernandez)	116
Fig. 10.4	Gregory Pryor. <i>This is the place of skin and bones</i> (detail). 2019 oil on wood panel, 60 × 39.6 cm. (Photography: The artist)	117