

Female suffrage in British art, literature and history

University of Toulouse, France, 24-25 May 2018

Organized by Catherine Delyfer and Catherine Puzzo (C.A.S. and "Jeudis du Genre", U. Toulouse Jean-Jaurès)

Keynote speaker: Julie Gottlieb, University of Sheffield, author of *'Guilty Women', Foreign Policy and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) and editor of *'Feminism and Feminists After Suffrage'* (Routledge, 2015)

Though the 1832, 1867 and 1884 Reform Acts introduced wide-ranging changes to the electoral system in Britain, and organized campaigns for women's suffrage began to appear as early as 1866, British suffragists had to wait until 1918 for the franchise to be extended to women (25 years after women obtained the right to vote in New Zealand). In the UK, 2018 will be marked by various festivities and cultural events, such as the unveiling of Gilliam Wearing's memorial to Millicent Garrett Fawcett in Parliament Square, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage. Yet in 1918 the "Representation of the People Act" was considered a controversial piece of legislation, even sometimes a failure, because it still discriminated between different groups of women, depending on class, age, and marital status. It was not until 1928 that a Conservative government passed the "Equal Franchise Act" which gave the vote to all women over the age of 21 on equal terms with men. Over the following decades, women's participation in public life and the political arena grew, arguably reaching an important turning point in 1979, when Margaret Thatcher was appointed Britain's first female Prime Minister. How is this trajectory viewed and assessed today?

Our 2018 interdisciplinary conference on "Female Suffrage in British Art, Literature and History" seeks to revisit the first female suffrage law of 1918, re-assess its long history and its controversial representations, and gauge its legacy today. How was women's suffrage imagined, negotiated, criticized or supported in the press and the media, in political speeches, in fiction and painting, in the performing arts, or in photography and film? How did the role and image of women as legal and political agents evolve? How was female (non-)citizenship conceptualized and legitimized socially, culturally, morally, economically, aesthetically?

Possible topics include

- Redefining the image, role and place of women in the public sphere in the 19th and 20th centuries
- The suffragist in fiction, theatre, art, the press, the media, film etc.
- The relationship between the "suffragette" and the fin de siècle "New Woman"
- Suffragist texts and suffragist thought
- Victorian, Edwardian and post-war discourses on women's rights and responsibilities
- Political activism and the transformative power of writing and art
- Men's involvement in the struggle for women's political rights
- Contradictory voices, performances, and political/textual strategies of Victorian and 20th-c. activists
- Men's and women's (anti-)suffragist plots, arguments and rhetoric
- International dimensions of British women's suffrage history

- Major, minor or forgotten supporters or opponents of women's suffrage; networks of influence; leagues, societies and parties
- Law-making and law-breaking in British women's political history, art and literature

All papers will be presented in English. Please send your 300-word paper proposals to catherine.delyfer@univ-tlse2.fr AND c_puzzofr@yahoo.fr before 20 December 2017. A selection of papers will be considered for publication