

## 5HUM0271 Lecture 5: Sex, Gender and Authority

### Conduct books:

Richard Allestree, *The Ladies' Calling* (1673), Chapter 'On Virgins',

pp. 168-9

For to speak a plain tho perhaps ungrateful truth this together with some of the modish liberties now in use is it which keeps so many young Ladies about the Town unmarried till they lose the epithet of young Sober men are afraid to venture upon a humour so disagreeing to their own least whilst according to the primitive reason of Marriage they seek an help they espouse a ruin But this is especially dreadfull to a plain Country gentleman who looks Upon one of these fine Women as a gaudy idol to whom if he once become a votary he must sacrifice a great part of his fortune and all his content.

p. 164

There is another thing to which some devote a very considerable part of their time and that is the reading of Romances which seems now to be thought the peculiar and only becoming study of young Ladies I confess their youth might a little adapt em to them when they were children and I wish they were always in their event as harmless but I fear they often leave ill impressions behind them Those amorous passions which tis their design to paint to the utmost Life are apt to insinuate themselves into their unwary readers

Isabella Howard [Countess Dowager of Carlisle], *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims Addressed to Young Ladies on their first Establishment in the World* (1789), pp.1-3

Habituate yourself to that way of life most agreeable to the person to whom you are united; be content in retirement, or with society, with the town or the country...

Make choice of such amusements as will attach him to your company; study such occupations as will render you of consequence to him, such as the management of his fortune, and the conduct of his house; yet, without assuming a superiority unbecoming to your sex...

Should he be neglectful of his family interests, supply his place with redoubled attention...

If public employment demands frequent absences from home, make his supposed intentions there to be as much respected as if he were present, by your own deference to them.

This lecture discusses changing discourses of sex and gender in:

1. science
2. religion
3. work
4. politics.

Historiography and the question of 'separate spheres'.

Three main shifts:

1. rise of a ..... notion of gender difference;
2. transformation of areas of ..... and the authority associated with it;
3. changing notions of ....., and their particular implications for women.

Older views of sex and gender:

- Galenic system of medicine.....
- religious.....

C18 views:

- Biology and the Enlightenment - shift from an idea that sex was a social or cultural role, to the idea that sex was an essential aspect of being.
- Religion – Evangelical Revival.....
- Politeness.....
- Work – professionalization and institutionalisation
- Political thought.....

'Separate spheres':

L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (1987)

Amanda Vickery, 'Golden age to separate spheres?: a review of the categories and chronology of English women's history', *Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 383-414

Arguments against the concept of 'separate spheres':

- Women did not.....
- Divide did not suddenly occur in the eighteenth century.....
- Women's lives became more .....
- Work and the working classes.....
- Politics and the upper classes.....

Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792)

Consider---whether, when men contend for their freedom, and to be allowed to judge for themselves respecting their own happiness, it be not inconsistent and unjust to subjugate women, even though you firmly believe that you are acting in the manner best calculated to promote their happiness ? Who made man the exclusive judge, if woman partake with him of the gift of reason?

**Further reading:**

- H. Barker and E. Chalus (ed.), *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850: An introduction* (2005)
- R. Shoemaker, *Gender in English society, 1650-1850: the emergence of separate spheres?* (1998)
- E. Chalus, 'Elite women, social politics, and the political world of late eighteenth-century England,' *Historical Journal*, 43:3 (2000), 669-98.
- Lawrence E. Klein, 'Gender and the public/private distinction in the eighteenth century: some questions about evidence and analytic procedure', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1995), 97-109