

The ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions (Europe 1100-1800) presents:

# PROFESSOR WILLIAM M. REDDY DO EMOTIONS HAVE A HISTORY? THE EXAMPLE OF ROMANTIC LOVE

ARE EMOTIONS HARD-WIRED?  
OR ARE THEY SUBJECT TO CULTURAL  
OR HISTORICAL VARIATION?



Angelica Kaufmann (1771), Rinaldo and Armida.

Date: Thursday 14 March 2013  
Time: 5.15pm  
Venue: Elisabeth Murdoch Theatre A  
Elisabeth Murdoch Building  
The University of Melbourne  
Parkville 3010

In general, emotions are not subject to voluntary control; we do not get to pick which ones we will feel. Some emotions, like fear or anger, may trigger physiological changes. Others, like pride or nostalgia, do not. Are emotions hard-wired? Or are they subject to cultural or historical variation? Or perhaps, some are hard-wired, others shaped by culture?

For decades experts have been divided on the subject. The question of romantic love is a good entry point for appreciating the complexities social scientists face in trying to make sense of emotions. It seems that romantic love, of one kind or another, can be found in almost every part of the world. Is it universal, a product of neurotransmitters interacting with subcortical structures? The record suggests, on the contrary, not only that romantic love has gone through some striking transformations over the centuries, but also that collective action can make a difference in how we feel.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Professor William M. Reddy  
DUKE UNIVERSITY,  
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William M. Reddy is William T Laprade Professor of History and Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Duke University, North Carolina.

Author of the seminal work on the History of Emotions, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*. (Cambridge University Press, 2001), his most recent book is *The making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia and Japan, 900-1200CE* (University of Chicago Press) was published in 2012.

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