

Conviviality and Sociability in the Long Eighteenth Century:

Restoration to Romanticism

(Essen, Germany, 3-5 March 2023)

We are delighted to announce the Call for Papers for LAPASEC 2023. Christoph Heyl (Univ. Duisburg-Essen) and Rémy Duthille (Univ. Bordeaux-Montaigne) are continuing the long tradition of the **Landau-Paris Symposia on the Eighteenth Century**, welcoming both established scholars of the field and early career researchers. The symposium focuses on the literature and culture of the British Isles of the period, but it is also open to topics relating to the British colonies, France, Germany, and further afield. The conference will include a panel of emerging scholars who are working on their PhD projects or are planning to begin a PhD project in the near future. For those in the early stages of their academic careers, we are seeking to fund travel, accommodation and related conference costs. We invite 20-minute papers with a discussion time of 10 to 20 minutes; papers for the early-career panel are expected to last 10 minutes with a discussion time of 10 minutes.

As soon as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and a freedom from solicitude:
[...] wine there exhilarates my spirits, and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love: I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinion and sentiments I find delight.
(Samuel Johnson, as quoted in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, 354)

Any attempt at revisiting Johnson's time will immediately unlock models of sociability that dominated early modern and Enlightenment philosophies. Sociable spaces such as tea gardens, alehouses, inns, salons, pleasure gardens, operas, exhibitions, all furnished extraordinary opportunities for engagement, enjoyment and rational discussion. In stark contrast to the delights of conversing over drinks or supper in public, most of us will only have experienced purely virtual forms of sociability during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, we deem it quite apt to reassess normative notions of conviviality and sociability in the cordial setting of our conference.

Traditionally, our understanding of early modern sociability, and by extension, conviviality, has been underpinned by the Habermasian concept of the bourgeois public sphere. However, recent critical engagement with Habermas has justifiably postulated the existence of "non-bourgeois, plural, public spheres catering to people of varying social standing on very different occasions" (Duthille 2020, 2), built upon what Brian Cowan has termed the "practical public sphere" in explicit opposition to Habermas's "ideal" one (Cowan 2001, 133). Interventions such as these challenge customary periodisations and frameworks, necessitating renewed critical analysis of all aspects of our understanding of sociability in general and conviviality in particular.

To broaden the scope of our discussions and to allow for diverse approaches, we bookend the eighteenth century beginning with the Restoration and ending with the Romantic period. During this time sociability was undergoing fundamental changes. From at least the 1650s onwards, conviviality was central to the expression of political allegiance: Herrick's anti-Puritan poetry celebrates conviviality, love and drink, as do the song-books of the Interregnum period. In the

early years of the Restoration, Margaret Cavendish provides her readership with a plethora of fictional letters containing gossip as well as social, political and philosophical commentary in the *Sociable Letters* (1664). The Royalist culture of toasting to the King was carried forward into the Age of Reason as a mostly homosocial practice in clubs such as the Whig Kit-Cat Club, the Tory October Club or the Beefsteak Club. Later, neoclassical ideals of refined sociability moulded civil societies in a way that was regarded as constraining by the Romantics.

The conference aims at bringing together a diverse range of approaches and methodologies addressing topics which may include, but are not restricted to:

Conviviality and/or sociability and

- Literature
- Sociable spaces (e.g. coffeehouses, tea gardens, tea rooms, alehouses, clubs, salons, learned societies, pleasure gardens, exhibitions)
- Material cultures, fashion and taste
- Textual simulations and evocations of conviviality and sociability in periodicals and magazines such as *The Spectator* and *The Gentleman's Magazine*
- Convivial practices (e.g. drinking and toasting)
- Identities (cultural, English / Scottish, Irish, sexual, queer, etc.)
- Sentiment and sociability
- Dissipation (criminal conversation, perversions)
- Intoxication
- Gender and sexuality
- Music (e.g. choirs, amateur music-making, dance)
- The senses
- Myths of sociability
- Social and sociable networks
- Performativity (the social calendar, wit, sprezzatura)
- Cultures of conviviality in various age groups
- Politics (radicalism, Whigs/Tories, Jacobitism, extra-parliamentary politics, dissidents)
- The French Revolution
- Metropolitan and provincial centres
- Scholarly/scientific communities
- Travel
- Religion
- Charity / philanthropy
- Crime and violence

Selected contributions will be considered for inclusion in a volume of conference proceedings.

Conference languages: English, French

Convenors: Prof. Dr. Christoph Heyl; Dr. Rémy Duthille, MCF; Prof. Dr. Tristan Coignard; Anjali Rampersad, M.A.; Christian Feser, M.A.

Deadline: Please e-mail your proposal* (c. 250 words), contact information and a brief biographical note (c. 100 words) to the conference organisers (lapasec_essen@uni-due.de) by 10 June 2022. If you are an early career academic, please indicate whether you would like to present your paper in the ECR panel. For more information, please [click here](#).

* With the submission of your proposal you consent that any data you submit will be saved by the organisers until the end of 2023 (or the publication of the conference proceedings should you submit a paper to be published). As part of our application for funding, your data will be shared with the Université franco-allemande/Deutsch-Französische Hochschule (UFA/DFH). Your e-mail address will be used for the limited purpose of informing you about updates and news relating to the conference and will not be passed on to any third parties, including UFA/DFH.