



## Modern Love: Romance, Intimacy, and the Marriage Crisis

By David Shumway

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“My ideas of romance came from the movies,” said Woody Allen, and it is to the movies—as well as to novels, advice columns, and self-help books—that David Shumway turns for his history of modern love.

**Modern Love** argues that a crisis in the meaning and experience of marriage emerged when it lost its institutional function of controlling the distribution of property, and instead came to be seen as a locus for feelings of desire, togetherness, and loss. Over the course of the twentieth century, partly in response to this crisis, a new language of love—“intimacy”—emerged, not so much replacing but rather coexisting with the earlier language of “romance.”

Reading a wide range of texts, from early twentieth-century advice columns and their late twentieth-century antecedent, the relationship self-help book, to Hollywood screwball comedies, and from the “relationship films” of Woody Allen and his successors to contemporary realist novels about marriages, Shumway argues that the kinds of stories the culture has told itself have changed. Part layperson’s history of marriage and romance, part meditation on intimacy itself, **Modern Love** will be both amusing and interesting to almost anyone who thinks about relationships (and who doesn’t?).

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Review

“Fascinating and timely.”

-*Intams Review*

“A wide-ranging and beautifully dialectical analysis of the modern discourses on love and intimacy. David Shumway overturns some of the usual assumptions about romantic love and, in the process makes original, often surprising observations about literature, movies, pop music, self-help books, and a variety of other texts. **Modern Love** is a pleasure to read, and it contributes significantly to our understanding of modernity.”

-James Naremore, Indiana University

“A cultural study of love and marriage in fiction and film rather than a history of recent marriage, **Modern Love** illuminates the complexities of an important recent development in American marital ideals.”

-*The Journal of American History*

“An extremely valuable contribution to the history of that supposedly timeless ideal, the intimate relationship.”

-Elizabeth Freeman, author of *The Wedding Complex*

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About the Author

**David Shumway** is Professor of English and Literary and Cultural Studies at Carnegie Mellon University, and author of *Michel Foucault*, among others.

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