



ROSEMARY
BREWER

MONDAY
25 JULY

5.30–6.30pm

WG 404, WG Building
AUT City Campus

For enquiries email
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To register for this event,
please [CLICK HERE](#)

Light refreshments will be
served after the address.

“You married for better or worse, didn’t you? You are having a spot of worse”: Changing attitudes to love, marriage and divorce in New Zealand 1950 and 1980

The anonymity of agony aunt columns allows for relatively unedited voices from the past to express the ‘common sense’ attitudes of their times, particularly to personal and family matters. In the study which forms the basis of this lecture, those voices help to explain the rapid rise in rates of divorce and drop in rates of marriage between 1950 and 1980 in New Zealand. Sexual infidelity was the most frequently mentioned source of relationship disruption in both years and called into question any belief the correspondent may have had that they were living a grand romance, or even experiencing ‘real love’ in their relationship. Although the attitudes of correspondents to both love and infidelity reveal continuities across the three decades, the agony aunts give dissimilar advice, reflecting the major social changes which had taken place in the interim.

Rosemary is a long-standing member of the School of Communication Studies who has recently completed a Master of Philosophy degree at AUT under the supervision of Lorna Piatti-Farnell. This lecture is based on her thesis and brings together some of her research interests within 20th century New Zealand social history, particularly the role of women’s magazines and Eurocentric ‘common sense’ about romantic relationships, marriage and divorce.

