

Conference Call for Papers: Affect, Mood, Feeling: 1748-1819

Romanticism at Western
The University of Western Ontario: London, Ontario
25-26 April 2009
<http://publish.uwo.ca/~jking65/conference/>

Keynote Speaker: **Professor Ross Woodman (UWO Emeritus)**

Recent work in Romanticism encourages us to consider the myriad manifestations and roles of affective experience in Romantic theory and criticism. In *Romantic Moods*, for example, Thomas Pfau locates within the folds and crosscurrents of European Romanticism “a persistent and unsettling ‘feeling’ of the irreducible tenuousness and volatility of being.” The wide-ranging implications of such an innovative re-imagining of Romantic affect may be felt in the various conscious and unconscious resistances to an Enlightenment faith in the unity of experience, a progressive concept of history, and the transparency of the public sphere, resistances that perhaps come to light in Keats’ yearning, “O for a life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts!”

As a focus for its third annual conference, the Romantic Reading Group at UWO encourages enquiry into Romantic affect, mood, and feeling. The historical timeframe suggested by the conference title aims to impose some restriction on a potentially expansive thematic: 1748 reflects the publication of Hume’s *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* and 1819 marks a watershed year in Romanticism—a year witnessing the publication of major works by Percy Shelley (*The Cenci*), the first two Cantos of Byron’s *Don Juan*, three novels by Scott, Coleridge’s public lectures at the Crown and Anchor, and much of Keats’ most well known poetry. Far less triumphantly, however, it is also the year of the Peterloo massacre.

Topics may include, but are certainly not limited to, the following:

- the nature of Romantic feeling ● the revolutionary potential of feeling ● feeling and the formation of the subject ● Romantic moods (anxiety, trauma, melancholy, boredom, paranoia) ● the socio-economics of feeling ● the historicity of sentiment ● the pathology of feeling ● symptomatic appearance of emotion ● sentimentality, sensibility, and genre ● the Gothic ● affect and embodiment ● Romantic sympathy and community ● the rhetoric of emotion ● the poetics and dramatics of passion ● affect and empiricism ● Romantic feeling and the transcendental ● the boundaries between the understanding, feeling, and judgment ● the ethics of affect ● negotiating sincerity ● confessional narratives ● moral sentiment, education, and virtue ● affect, feeling, and the Scottish Enlightenment ● excitability, irritability, and contagion ● metropolitan moods ● the psychosomatics of passion ● political feeling

We invite abstracts of 250 words that explore the ideas and implications (political, historical, literary, philosophical, aesthetic, economic, medical, scientific, and so forth) of Romantic affect, mood, and feeling.

Deadline for Abstracts: 1 March 2009
Please send abstracts to: westernromantics@gmail.com