

CFP “Romanticism in the Age of World Wars” (Leuven, 11-13 November 2018)

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:

Santanu Das (King’s College London)

Marc Redfield (Brown University)

Paul K. Saint-Amour (University of Pennsylvania)

Confirmed Panel Conveners:

Karen Hagemann (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Jan Mieszkowski (Reed College)

Debjani Ganguly (University of Virginia)

Recent scholarship has productively situated romanticism against the background of ongoing global wars (Bainbridge, Shaw). It has also shown how the romantic experiences of total war (Mieszkowski) and of a weirdly mundane wartime (Favret) have decisively shaped modern conceptions of war. Such critical work has enriched our understanding of romanticism and our appreciation of its planetary entanglements, but it also invites us to revisit cultural production in the war-torn long twentieth century that measures its distance from, and proximity to, romantic war-work. Timed to coincide with the Centennial of the World War I Armistice, and taking place in an iconic world war heritage site, this conference is not only interested in the discrete (if protracted) events of the two World Wars. Taking seriously Paul K. Saint-Amour’s compelling thesis that the aftermath of World War I inaugurated a “perpetual interwar” lived in anticipation of an always imminent coming war, we also want to explore to what extent war is an encompassing rather than an intermittent condition in the age of the War on Terror and ubiquitous drone warfare.

How does the legacy of romanticism inform literary, aesthetic, and cultural responses to the age of World Wars? Do literary and artistic engagements with the World Wars fit or update romantic templates for writing war(time)? To what extent do romantic evasions and obsessions persist in global responses to war? How does the planetary scale of modern war perpetuate romanticism’s disavowals of its colonial entanglements? To what extent does the global career of romanticism animate non-Western responses to wars that, even if they are called World Wars, were unevenly distributed across the globe? And does the war-afflicted

afterlife of romanticism open up new avenues for a comparative romanticism—for discovering novel differences and resonances between different national romanticisms? What is the cultural impact of the fact that Britain was not involved in European wars between 1815 and 1914 (excepting the Crimean War) while casually waging World War as a Brexit Empire *avant la lettre* (if never), and how does this affect cultural responses to twentieth- and indeed twenty-first-century World War across Europe and the globe? The conference wants to explore these and other questions through a sustained confrontation of the legacy of romanticism in the age of World Wars.

Apart from a number of sessions tailored by invited conveners, the conference will consist of sessions culled from the responses to the call for papers, two keynote lectures (by Santanu Das and Paul K. Saint-Amour), and a Geoffrey Hartman Memorial Lecture delivered by Marc Redfield. The work of Hartman, who died in 2016, consisted in a sustained reflection on the interface of romanticism and the aftermath of trauma. As Hartman was born in the interwar period in Germany, spent World War II in rural England, and moved on to a brilliant postwar career in the United States, his legacy invites us to probe the geographical and historical reach of the interface of romanticism and war. His stunning claim that somehow Wordsworth saved English culture from the disastrous ideologies that ravaged continental Europe in the twentieth century still deserves testing.

We invite proposals for 20-minute presentations or for three-paper panels. Topics could include, but are emphatically not restricted to

- Romantic resonances in literary and artistic responses to the World Wars
- Challenges to romantic notions of war in global engagements with World War
- The afterlife of romantic tropes and techniques in World War literature and art
- The persistence of the lyric and other romantic genres in an age of war
- Transnational redeployments of romantic elements
- The relation between romanticism and modernism in the face of war
- Romanticism between revolution and catastrophe
- Romantic aspects of the imagining of globality, planetarity, and total war
- Liberalism, nationalism, and other political romanticisms

Organizers: The conference is a joint initiative of University of Leuven's Department of Literature and the Institute for Jewish Studies at Antwerp University. The organizers are

Vivian Liska (Antwerp), Ortwin de Graef (KU Leuven), Tom Toremans (KU Leuven), Pieter Vermeulen (KU Leuven), and their doctoral students Laura Cernat (KU Leuven) and Kahn Faassen (KU Leuven).

Venue: The conference will take place at the Leuven Irish College (<http://www.leuveninstitute.eu>), a magnificent residential conference facility in the city centre. Leuven is easily accessible by road, rail (with international trains arriving at Brussels-South Railway Station, which is a 25-minute train ride away), and air (Brussels airport [BRU] is just 15 minutes away by train).

* Please keep in mind that Brussels South Airport [CRL] is NOT located in Brussels, but in Charleroi. From there it is still a two-hour journey to Leuven. Also please note that KU Leuven is based in Leuven (Louvain), in Flanders, and not in Louvain-la-Neuve (the home of Université Catholique de Louvain, a different institution).

Submission: Send proposals as a Word-document to raww@kuleuven.be or use the online application at <https://www.arts.kuleuven.be/raww/submission>

Paper proposals should contain a 300-word abstract, a 100-word bio, and contact data. Panel proposals should contain a 200-word panel description, 300-word abstracts for the different papers, short bios of all panelists, and contact data.

Deadline: 1 May 2018. We will inform you about the acceptance of your proposal no later than 30 May 2018.

Costs: €50 attendance fee. This includes lunches, coffee breaks, and one reception. If you would like to join us for our conference dinner, the total fee is €90. We offer accommodation at the Irish college (just next to the conference venue). The fee including the lunches, coffee breaks, reception, dinner, and accommodation (three nights in a single bedroom) is €290.

Questions? For all queries, please contact raww@kuleuven.be.

Conference website: Check www.arts.kuleuven.be/raww for regular updates.