

The Uses of Romanticism

School of English and Digital Humanities, University College Cork, Ireland

18-19 February 2026

As a convenient way to organise knowledge — to describe a historical period, to address questions of cultural style, to open up comparative debates — romanticism remains a useful term. But what does it mean to think about romanticism as useful? What kinds of knowledge, in which languages and from what places, does the term collect and organise? What work does romanticism do in the present and can its critical utility outlast our growing understanding of its alliance with historical injustices? The symposium will consider the relevance of romanticism for a discussion of literature created in a range of British, Irish and imperial locations and consider the extent to which use itself is a concept that is imprinted by colonialism.

Among the topics to be discussed will be:

- Geographies of romanticism
- Comparative romanticisms
- Romanticism across media
- Decolonising romanticism: colonial and imperial histories
- Use, usefulness and utility as critical categories
- The present uses of literary history
- Romanticism and its relation to political activism: sedative or spur?

Contributions from: Prof Mary-Ann Constantine (University of Wales Trinity St David), Dr Elisa Cozzi (University of Notre Dame), Prof Porscha Fermanis (University College Dublin), Prof Penny Fielding (University of Edinburgh), Prof Nigel Leask (Glasgow University), Prof Omar Miranda (University of San Francisco), Dr Jane Moore (Cardiff University), Prof Tina Morin (University of Limerick), Prof Tríona Ní Shíocháin (University of Galway), Dr Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh (University of Edinburgh), Prof Diego Saglia (Università degli studi di Parma), Dr Brandon Yen (Independent Scholar).

Reading by: Maureen McLane (New York University)

USES OF ROMANTICISM: PROGRAMME

Wednesday 18 February 2026, Dora Allman Room, the Hub

6pm Reading by Maureen McLane (New York University), chaired by Liz Quirke (UCC Creative Writing)

Thursday 19 February 2026, Dora Allman Room, the Hub

9.30-11.15

Chair: Daragh O'Connell (UCC Italian)

Penny Fielding (University of Edinburgh) 'The Uses of Romantic Secrecy'

Diego Saglia (Università degli studi di Parma), 'Ship, Boy, Sea: Felicia Hemans's "Casabianca" as Mediterranean Text'

Omar Miranda (University of San Francisco), 'Shadownomics and the Uses of Romanticism: Byron, Shelley, and the Architecture of Erasure'

Elisa Cozzi (University of Notre Dame) Romantic Ireland and Italy, "Inflammable matter": Editing Shelley's Irish Letters'

11.15-12.45 Coffee

12.45-2

Chair: Heather Laird (UCC English)

Porscha Fermanis (University College Dublin) 'The Uses of Romantic Utopianism'

Tina Morin (University of Limerick), 'The absurd notions of a useless education: reading Regina Maria Roche in colonial Australia'

Jane Moore (Cardiff University) 'To the Bower and Beyond: the Legacy of Thomas Moore'

Brandon Yen (Independent scholar), 'Wordsworth's Irish Gaze'

2-3 Lunch

3-4.30

Chair: Finola O'Kane (University College Dublin)

Tríona Ní Shíocháin (University of Galway), "A wild and inarticulate uproar":

Romanticism and the Politics of Sound in Written Representations of Irish Keening'

Mary-Ann Constantine (University of Wales Trinity St David), 'Events and Transitions: the Uses of Romanticism in Wales'

Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh (University of Edinburgh) and Prof Nigel Leask (University of Glasgow) 'Gaelic Romanticism in the Caribbean?'

4.30-5 Panel discussion: James Chandler (University of Chicago), Clíona Ó Gallchoir, Pádraig Ó Macháin, Mary O'Connell (UCC)

5.30 -6.30 Book Launch, the Hub Atrium

Claire Connolly, *Irish Romanticism: a Literary History* (Cambridge University Press, 2025)

Introduced by John Cryan, Vice President for Research (UCC)

Speaker: Clair Wills (University of Cambridge)