

Poetry and Belief

A Two-Day Conference

University of Central Lancashire

24-25 April 2009

This two-day conference aims to explore connections and/or disconnections between poetry and belief, so to determine their currency in recent academic debate and poetic practice. The term 'belief', here, serves a broader purpose than to simply identify a particular poet's religious (or political) affiliations, and it is hoped that papers will seek to sound the range of its applications both to the reading and the writing of poetry. Above all, it comprehends attitudes to time and eternity, beauty and truth, self and other, which condition the poetic process, tense as this is with pressures that concomitantly attenuate belief. The conference will include an evening of public readings by poets who, in their different ways, have engaged with these matters, with papers and panel discussions on the Friday and Saturday.

Papers are invited on any aspect of poetry and belief, and on any poet, ancient or modern. Papers on any of the poets reading at the conference would be especially welcome. Possible points of focus may include (but are not restricted to): (in-)sincerity; ambiguity; doubt and uncertainty; hope and despair; silence; negation; alienation; the otherness of God; waiting; spiritual journeying; mystical experience; vocation; self-sacrifice; the role of the reader/the relation of the reader to the poem; poetry and prayer; Romantic aesthetics (eg. Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief', Keats's 'negative capability'); I. A. Richards's and T. S. Eliot's theories of poetic belief; secular responses to religious poetry and poetics; theological approaches to poetic language; politically-inflected conceptions of belief.

Papers submitted for the conference will be considered for publication in a special issue of *Literature and Theology*.

250-300 word abstracts for 20 minute papers should be emailed to TADay@uclan.ac.uk by 30th of November 2008.

Confirmed plenary speakers: Michael O'Neill (Durham)
Eric Griffiths (Trinity College, Cambridge)
Michael Edwards (Collège de France)

Poetry readings from: Michael Edwards, UA Fanthorpe, Michael Hulse,
Michael O'Neill, Deryn Rees-Jones, Michael Symmons Roberts

For further information on the conference and/or to request a booking or please contact:

Emma Kelly, Conference Officer, Conference and Events Management University of Central Lancashire, Foster Building Rooms 10, Preston PR1 2HE, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1772 892654 Fax: +44 (0) 1772 892977 Email: eakelly1@uclan.ac.uk