

# Affecting Feminism

## Feminist Theory and the Question of Feeling

Newcastle University, 10-12 December 2010

compassion hatred grief love happiness sadness faith  
despair courage contempt dejection melancholy  
humour anxiety beauty charm elegance humiliati  
resolution sunkennes balk

**Keynotes: Ann Cvetkovich, Kate Chedgoy, Ranjana Khanna, Alison Light, Patricia Waugh**

Over the past decade, there has been a notable turn to feeling or emotion across the humanities, social sciences and neurosciences. *Affecting Feminism* brings into focus the particular impact that feminist theory has played in this work on feeling and considers emotions from the mediaeval to the modern.

This conference addresses two points of central importance. The first is a recent identification of the tendency to distinguish between good and bad feelings. What are the implications of privileging emotions such as happiness, compassion and empathy over more negative affective states? Has recent work on 'negative' emotions such as melancholia, shame, grief or disgust sought to challenge or revise such perceptions? The second point concerns the historicisation of affect. Our modern understanding of feeling has its roots in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century discourses of sentiment, sympathy and passions. Does the prominence of these discourses of affect obscure earlier languages of feeling? How can feminist scholarship act to recover and interpret such discourses? What can feminist theory learn from attending to historical accounts of emotions and how are they, in turn, re-inflected by and through contemporary debates?

*Topics may include but are not limited to:*

- ❖ Historicising language and feeling
- ❖ Emotion and embodiment
- ❖ Sexuality and affect
- ❖ Histories and cultures of feeling
- ❖ Positive and negative affects
- ❖ Affect and the nonhuman
- ❖ The neurobiology of emotion
- ❖ Feminist theory and affect
- ❖ Emotion in feminist histories
- ❖ Feeling and technology

This conference marks the launch of the journal *Feminist Theory* in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics at Newcastle University.

**Conference Organisers: Stacy Gillis, Robin Stoate and Anne Whitehead**

We invite paper or panel proposals that will address these questions across different cultural and historical contexts and forms of media, including literature, film and visual cultures, as well as engaging with a range of affects or feelings. Please send 300-word abstracts for 20-minute papers (or 900-word panel proposals), with a brief bio note (50 words), to [affect-conf@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:affect-conf@ncl.ac.uk). The deadline for submissions is 15 May 2010 (with notification of decision by 1 June 2010).