



Society for Renaissance Studies

‘Such Total and Prodigious Alteration’ / ‘The Wounds May Be Again Bound Up’:

Readings and Representations of the Seventeenth Century

An academic conference to be held in Chetham’s Library, Manchester, 28th-29th January, 2011

During the restoration and eighteenth century, the civil war period was consistently represented as a traumatic break in the history of England and the British Isles, separating the institutionally and culturally modern Augustans from either the primitiveness or idealised simplicity of the earlier epoch. Today, much academic practice silently repeats the period’s self-representation as *a century divided* between pre and post civil war cultures, whether in research, job descriptions or in undergraduate survey courses. Among the effects of this division of labour is a tendency for the earlier ‘Renaissance’ decades to be privileged over the restoration, which is frequently treated as a poor relation to the eighteenth century.

This conference provides a forum for researchers in all disciplines whose work spans all or any part of the long seventeenth century. As our titular quotations from Clarendon’s *History of the Rebellion* and Swift’s sermon ‘On the Martyrdom of King Charles I’ suggest, we also encourage papers on subsequent imaginings of the period that have contributed to or contested the ways in which it is read today. Concerns include but are not limited to:

- The comparative study of seventeenth-century writing, sciences, visual arts and music before, during and after the civil war period; their material and intellectual dissemination; their relationship to ideas of what constitutes the early modern and the restoration.
- Constructions of the seventeenth century from the restoration to the present; representations in literature, art, history and film; the cultural influence of the seventeenth century on subsequent periods.
- The role critical theory can play in our reading of the period and/or narratives of the long seventeenth century from within literary criticism and critical theory; e.g. Leavis and Eliot on the Metaphysical poets, Walter Benjamin on the baroque, Foucault on madness, Habermas on the public sphere.
- The study of non-canonical and marginalized texts and materials, and nationally comparative readings of the period.
- The representation and reception of pre-seventeenth-century culture during the seventeenth century; the place of the past in the period’s self-representations.

Please send abstracts of 300-500 words to James Smith (Manchester) and Joel Swann (Keele) by 15th October 2010: c17.conference@manchester.ac.uk. Further information: <http://www.chethams.org.uk/c17conference.html>. Proposals from postgraduate students are particularly welcome and student attendance will be subsidised by the generous support of the Society for Renaissance Studies.