

Excess and Exhaustion: Byron in 1818

Newstead Abbey

Friday & Saturday, 27-28 April 2018

Plenary: Jonathon Shears (Keele)

1818 saw Byron both exhilarated and exhausted by the Venetian carnival. It saw him publish *Beppo* but also write 'Ode on Venice'. The excitements of Italian politics lay ahead, but so did the idea that Europe was an 'exhausted portion of the globe'. In 1818, poised between an idealised Venice and disillusionment with Venetians, Byron is also poised between comic and tragic imaginings, personal/sexual cynicism and his 'last attachment', past crisis and future glory, the Byronic Hero and Don Juan, epic and satire. All of these contrasting influences speak of excess and exhaustion at one moment in Byron's life – personal, literary, political – but also point to the holding together of opposites that is definitive of so much of Byron's poetics, of the 'hot and cold' admixture of the contrary, the contradictory, the irreconcilable that marks so many of Byron's poems and letters.

This conference looks to explore the doubleness – or even multiplicity – that characterises so much of Byron's writing. Paper and panel proposals (10-minute papers tightly knit around a topic) are invited on any aspect of Byron's life and writing in 1818, but also on any aspect of Byron's poetry that exhibits that contradictoriness that was so marked in, but hardly limited to, 1818. Topics might include:

- Byron's life in, and writing on, Venice;
- 1818 as the transition year between *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*;
- Byron and Shelley's poetic 'Conversation' on Venice;
- Byron's poetic silence in 1818;
- Byron's Venetian self-reinventions;
- Byron's poetic poise between extremes – passion and detachment, idealism and cynicism, politics and popularity;
- Byron between England and Italy, English and Italian literatures, English and Italian readers;
- duplicity, doubleness and deception in Byron's poetry;
- Byron's Italian 'medley mode';
- Byron's Proteanism;
- Byron's poetic and personal 'mobility'

Please send abstracts of approximately 300 words to newstead2018@gmail.com
by **15 February 2018**.

The conference will start at 1 p.m. on Friday with lunch at Newstead Abbey, followed by afternoon sessions, and dinner.

On Saturday, the conference will run from 10 a.m. till 5 p.m.