

Call for Papers

Sylvia Townsend Warner and Modernism

6-7 April 2018

Confirmed speakers: Claire Harman and Jan Montefiore

Today, when political misinformation abounds, nationalism and Fascism have reappeared, and we find ourselves contending with ideology in simple, complex and covert forms, Sylvia Townsend Warner's writing seems ever more relevant. In turns insightful, comic, cutting, and poignant, her texts ask what art is for, and how we might navigate personal relationships, social change, belief and the past. Warner has an acute sense of the relationship between material conditions and human consciousness, of place and the ordinary. This conference seeks papers that analyse her importance for studies of, among other possibilities, modernism, politics (specifically communism), gender and sexuality.

Claire Harman's 1989 biography began a revival of interest in Warner. Virago published her fiction, Carcanet the *Collected Poems*, and *Literature Compass* undertook a special issue in 2015. Her relationship with Valentine Ackland and the queerness of *Summer Will Show* have attracted critical attention, and *Lolly Willowes* continues to feature on undergraduate courses on gender and sexuality. Critical discussions of Warner's work though deserve to be broadened further in terms of themes and the texts addressed – for example her later novels, short stories and non-fiction. She participated in Marxist, musical and artistic communities, and had friends such as composers Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gerald Finzi; poet, journalist and editor Edgell Rickword; prominent Communist Party member Tom Wintringham; and poet Edith Sitwell. Warner published 6 novels and 11 collections of short stories during a literary career that spanned 5 decades. An expert musicologist, she translated Proust, published widely in the *New Yorker*, wrote a travel guide to Somerset, a biography of T. H. White, a short book on Jane Austen, six collections of verse, and a wealth of material is to be found in her non-fiction, diaries, letters and essays.

The range of Warner's work and thought has not yet received its due. We welcome proposals on any aspect of her writing, translation or musicology, especially those committed to taking debate in new directions.

Proposals for 20-minute papers will be considered, including (but not limited to):

- Modernism
- The historical novel
- Critical Theory
- Postcolonial Warner
- Marxism
- Feminism
- Realism
- The Communist Party
- Everyday life
- Review culture
- Fascism and the 1930s
- Lesbian modernism
- Translation
- Travel writing
- Queer Warner
- Cultures of the left
- *Left Review*
- Relations with particular writers, artists and composers
- Internationalism
- Books, magazines and publishers
- Letters and diaries
- *The New Yorker*
- Warner and Europe
- Music, musicology and composition
- Biography

Conference location: Friends' Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester.

Organisers: Dr Howard J. Booth (University of Manchester) and Dr Gemma Moss (Birmingham City University).

250 word proposals should be sent to stwconference2018@gmail.com by 30 January 2018. There are two bursaries for graduate students of £100, kindly offered by the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society (<http://www.townsendwarner.com/>); please write to the conference email address above for information on the application procedure.