

Call for Papers

THE GENDER OF APOCALYPSE: CROSS-DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

Queen's University Belfast and The Panacea Charitable Trust

Thursday 28th and Friday 29th of January 2016

The Panacea Museum, 9 Newnham Road, Bedford, MK40 3NX

It has long been recognised by feminist scholars and others that religions of all types generally place women in subordinate roles in relation to men. Within Jewish, Christian and Islamic contexts, for example, elevated structural positions of power and religious leadership tend to be closed to women. Yet the picture remains complex, with many forms of religious life also acting to subvert these patriarchal norms. From spirit possession cults in Northern Sudan, to Hindu female ascetics in Sri Lanka, to the global evangelical televangelist empires of Tammy Faye, Joyce Meyer, and Wendy Alec, experiences of religiously inflected gender inequality are far from straightforward.

This symposium seeks to debate where apocalyptic and millenarian religion fits into this context. Is millenarianism a striking example of religion enacting gender equality, or on the contrary, does it reinforce existing inequalities? Why are so many apocalyptic religions founded by women? Why have the doomsday predictions of female prophets established successful global religions such as Seventh Day Adventism, while the more 'moderate' claims of women within 'mainstream' religions go unnoticed? How does religious patriarchy seek to reassert its structural advantage when challenged by the apocalyptic revelations of female visionaries? How can we better understand the gender of prophecy and religious charisma? Is eschatological thought patriarchal, matriarchal, both, or neither? How do millennial religions imagine the transformation of sex and gender at the establishment of the new heaven and new earth? What, in short, is the gender of apocalypse? This symposium seeks to investigate such questions as a way to better understand the role of women and men within apocalyptic movements, as well as the gendered nature of millenarian religion more generally.

Contributions from across the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences are welcome.

For those giving papers, accommodation costs, as well as travel costs within the UK, will be covered.

The event is open to the public, and attendance is free.

Abstracts (200 words) to be sent to Joe Webster at j.webster@qub.ac.uk by 18th December 2015.