

CALL FOR PAPERS

Affective Apocalypses and Millennial Well-Being

18-19 August 2016

Queen's University Belfast

We live in an era driven by new forms of apocalypticism. Religious fundamentalism, New World Order conspiracy belief, run-away climate change, post-humanism, the 6th extinction, global economic crises, post-Marxist social theory – all these produce intensified debates about our own imminent end. What, in this context, is the connection between millennialism, affect, and wellbeing? Popular stereotypes of millennial religion often assume such groups are motivated by psychologically and physiologically harmful 'anxieties' about present decline and future destruction. Yet, many millennial groups explicitly claim that their beliefs and practices create healthy minds and healthy bodies – as well as healthy souls. For Mormons and Seventh Day Adventists, for example, dietary regulations are a central part of wider millennial commitments to living healthy lives. Equally, for the 3HO movement, being 'holy' is inextricably linked to being 'happy' and 'healthy' – attitudes that also find resonances among some millennial expressions of the 'Prosperity Gospel'. Yet, the picture remains complex and contradictory. Christian and secular expressions of survivalism, for example, while seeking to safeguard human wellbeing during the impending spiritual-cum-environmental apocalypse, also always run the risk of exposing members to the social, psychological, and economic traumas of 'failed prophecy', as experienced by Harold Camping's Family Radio group in 2011.

In this context, this workshop will explore the affective power of religious and secular thought as related to the contested notion of 'wellbeing'. How have human emotions – hope, resentment, anxiety, fear, pride, disillusionment – contributed to or undermined societal wellbeing within apocalyptic communities? What kinds of affective qualities do moral resentment and apocalyptic hope produce, and how do they relate to a person's sense of physical and mental wellbeing? How and in what ways might these apocalyptic imaginations be regarded as simultaneously secular, religious, and post-secular?

Possible topics include: The affective lives of millennial movement 'survivors'; Millennialism and revolution – past, present and future; The relationship between religious grief, hope, and

death; Failed end- times date setting and cognitive dissonance; The science fiction imaginary: zombie apocalypses and post- apocalyptic survival; Post-humanist disasters, the singularity, and the 'AI apocalypse'; Yoga, vibration, and the embodied self; Food and vice consumption; Post-war PTSD and embodied apocalypses; 'Preppers' and survivalist culture; Secular predictions of apocalyptic disaster: asteroids, UFOs, climate change, pandemics, nuclear war; Christian Zionism and Messianic Judaism; Islamic eschatology; NRMs, 'cults', and charismatic leaders at the End.

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

Submit 250 word abstracts by 30 June 2016 to Tristan Sturm (t.sturm [at] [qub.ac.uk](mailto:t.sturm@qub.ac.uk)) and Joe Webster (j.webster [at] [qub.ac.uk](mailto:j.webster@qub.ac.uk)).

Speakers' accommodation and travel expenses (within the UK) will be covered.

This event is free to attend, and is open to the public.