

Call for Papers

Natural disasters and the Apocalypse (1500-to present)

Centre for the Critical Study of Apocalyptic and Millenarian Movements
(CenSAMM)

**September 13-14, 2018. Inside the Big Top at the Panacea
MuseumGardens, Bedford, United Kingdom**

CenSAMM Symposia Series 2018 / www.censamm.org

Since the early modern period, societies located in different parts of the planet have experienced natural disasters. Ranging from earthquakes to volcanic eruptions, from flooding to tidal waves, communities have variously responded to unpredictable and catastrophic natural events. Strategies of human resilience to shattered urban and rural territories were undertaken against a backdrop of cultural responses to trauma caused by natural disasters. Located within a variety of contexts (notably religious, political and socio-economic), natural disasters have usually modified collective perceptions of the world, time, and the position of humans in history. Within a millenarian context, natural disasters have often been interpreted as a prelude to the end time. From a political angle, natural disasters have been seen as the solution to a dystopian world characterized by political ineptitude, moral decay and unsustainable inequality. Similarly, within a religious context, natural disasters have often been interpreted as rooted in the relationship between humans and the divine. Thus, disasters have been interpreted as the first manifestation of divine judgement against human misconduct, and as a prelude to the apocalypse. Interestingly, even in contemporary societies interpretations and responses to recent natural disasters have been variously linked to religious, political and socio-economic apocalyptic visions.

This conference seeks to explore the different forms through which the idea of natural disasters and the apocalypse has taken shape in geographically distant and culturally different societies from the early modern period to the present.

We welcome papers in any disciplinary field (including, but not limited to, Religious Studies, the Humanities and Social Sciences, and the creative arts in all their forms) that contribute to understanding and promoting discussion on this topic. Approaches may include cross-cultural and interdisciplinary studies, literature and theology; history, oral history, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies; political theory or theology.

Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be emailed to simonrobinson@panaceatrust.org no later than March 31, 2018. In the body of your email, please include your name, institution if applicable, contact information, and the title of your abstract.

Accepted abstracts will appear in the conference programme. It is the lead author's responsibility to ensure his/her abstract is accurate and ready for publication at the time of submission. Papers should be no longer than 20 minutes in length in order to accommodate

questions. Presentations and subsequent discussions will be live streamed via the internet and will be digitally archived and made available for future reference.

We encourage the use of accessible language and approaches to communicate concepts and ideas to a broad public audience.

Applications for accommodation and travel cost reimbursements may be considered.

Find our conference archives and 2018 calls for papers at www.censamm.org

About CenSAMM

CenSAMM is an initiative of the Panacea Charitable Trust in Bedford, UK and is led by Panacea trustees, **Justin Meggitt** (University Senior Lecturer in the Critical Study of Religion, University of Cambridge and Visiting Researcher at the Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender studies, Stockholm University), **Naomi Hilton** (has a PhD from the University of Cambridge and has taught at the University of Cambridge and Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. She is a former Research Associate at Victoria University of Wellington and is a researcher in early apocalyptic texts and movements), and **Christopher Rowland** (who retired in 2014 as Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at the University of Oxford, after teaching at the Universities of Newcastle upon Tyne and Cambridge).

Its vision is to ensure that anyone will have access to quality resources to enable education, and understanding about apocalyptic and millenarian movements. It will realise this vision by developing and maintaining a centre of excellence in the critical study of apocalyptic and millenarian movements and aid the public understanding of the legacies and future possibilities of these crucial, creative and often misunderstood forms of human culture.