

Dr Simon Marsden is lecturer in English Literature at the University of Liverpool. He writes on literature and theology from the nineteenth century to the present, with a particular emphasis on Gothic fiction. He is the author of *Emily Brontë and the Religious Imagination* and is currently writing a monograph on theological themes in contemporary Gothic fiction.

Dr Victoria Brownlee writes: Reformed commentators read Revelation's persecuted faithful as Protestants, and announced the impending defeat of an antichristian enemy who was invariably Catholic. But how did the reformers reconcile these figurative readings of Revelation with their commitment to hermeneutic literalism? And what was the effect of announcing the last battle as 'now'? This paper considers exegetical and literary works which engage with John's prophecy to assess the cultural impact of the apocalypse, and its delay, in post-Reformation England.

Selected Reading

Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth Century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism, and the English Reformation, from John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman*, 1978.
Kevin Killeen, Helen Smith and Rachel Judith Willie, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530-1700*, 2015.
Adrian Streete, ed., *Early Modern Drama and the Bible: Contexts and Readings, 1570-1625*, 2012.

Dr Victoria Brownlee is a lecturer in English (1500-1700) at NUI Galway. Her research focuses on the relationship between literature and the early modern Bible, and female devotional literature. She has recently completed a book called *Biblical Readings and Literary Writings in Early Modern England*.

Tom Docherty writes: Can language long? What might it long for? Does it have a divine end as well as a divine beginning? I will argue that in Geoffrey Hill's work the longing of language, most distilled and best expressed in poetry, is for consummation. This consummation is manifold: it is the action of perfecting; the completed marriage of words, and of meanings in words; the meeting of man and God; it is, as in Hamlet, 'deuoutly to be wist'. My paper will examine the linguistic couplings – puns, tautologies, rhymes – that Hill's poetry arranges in order to reach its consummation.

Tom Docherty is studying for a PhD in English at the University of Cambridge. He completed an MPhil in Medieval and Renaissance Literature there after receiving graduate and undergraduate degrees from the University of Glasgow. He writes poetry, and plays the organ.

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DAY CONFERENCE

Shaping Ends: Aspects of Apocalypse

Saturday 5 November 2016

The Seminar Room
Corpus Christi College
Merton Street
Oxford
OX1 4JF
Tel. (lodge) 01865 276700



Programme

- 10.00 Arrivals and coffee
10.30 Introductions
- 10.45 **Andrew Tate**
The Storm Cloud of the Twenty-First Century: Biblical Apocalypse and Climate Change Fiction
- 11.45 **Roger Pooley**
'A disaster of Biblical proportions': apocalyptic, crisis and the everyday'
- 12.45 Lunch
- 13.45 **Simon Marsden**
Redeeming the End in Contemporary Gothic Fictions
- 14.30 **Victoria Brownlee**
Reading Revelations: the End in Post-Reformation Literary Culture
- 15.15 **Tom Docherty**
Geoffrey Hill's Longing for the End of the Word
- 16.00 Tea
Work in progress
Plans
Prayer
- 16.30 Close

Dr Andrew Tate writes: Contemporary culture is extraordinarily interested in imagining its own catastrophic end. This paper focuses on the representation of environmental devastation in recent novels by Ian McEwan, Kim Stanley Robinson and David Mitchell. How might these ostensibly secular visions of destruction engage with Biblical ideas of revelation, renewal and hope? The paper will draw on recent theoretical debates regarding the Anthropocene and explore the ways in which a/theological narratives might prove crucial in re-thinking disenchanting understandings of nature, dwelling and the concept of 'the future'.

Selected Reading

Michael S. Northcott, *A Political Theology of Climate Change*, 2014
Stefan Skrimshire, ed., *Future Ethics: Climate Change and Apocalyptic Imagination*, 2010

Adam Trexler, *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change*, University of Virginia Press, 2015
Louise Westling, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Environment*, 2014

Dr Andrew Tate is Reader in Literature, Religion and Aesthetics in the Department of English & Creative Writing at Lancaster University where he is also associate director of the Ruskin Research Centre. His books include *Contemporary Fiction and Christianity* (2008), *The New Atheist Novel* (co-authored with Arthur Bradley) (2010) and *Apocalyptic Fiction* (forthcoming, January 2017). He is also the co-editor, with Jo Carruthers and Mark Knight, of *Literature and the Bible: a Reader* (2013) and, with Roger Kojecký, *Visions and Revisions: The Word and the Text* (2013).

Dr Roger Pooley writes: In 1960 Ernst Käsemann argued that 'Apocalypticism is the mother of all Christian theology'; in 1966 Frank Kermode's classic treatment of apocalyptic literature, with its explicit debt to Wallace Stevens on the explanatory power of fictions, argues rather that apocalyptic comes into its own at times of crisis. So is apocalyptic crisis literature? Or should a proper Christian literary critical response attend to the everyday in apocalyptic literature?

Literary examples: Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita* (several translations: ensure that yours is based on the complete text; first published in Russian 1966-7; Russell Hoban, *Riddley Walker*, 1980)
On apocalyptic: Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 1993; Judith Kovacs and Christopher Rowland, *Revelation: the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*, 2004

Dr Roger Pooley recently retired after forty years teaching English at Keele University. He is a founder member of the CLSG, and Reader in a group of rural parishes in North Staffs.

Dr Simon Marsden writes: In Gothic narratives, the end – of the text or of the world – is often figured as a descent into chaos or the negation of meaning. How and why is this trope resisted in some recent Gothic fictions? How do Gothic endings become moments of renewal and redemption? Can Gothic 'returns' of the past and of the dead become images of resurrection? The paper considers the literary and theological significance of endings in recent novels by Peter Straub and Justin Cronin.

Selected Reading

Fred Botting, *Gothic Romanced: Consumption, Gender and Technology in Contemporary Fictions*, 2008
Paul S. Fiddes, *The Promised End: Eschatology in Theology and Literature*, 2000
John Milbank, *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon*, 2003
Catherine Pickstock, *Repetition and Identity*, 2013

Booking Form

CLSG Conference 5 November 2016

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Dr Roger Kojecký, CLSG Secretary, 10 Dene Road,
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