



Sheffield Centre for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies

Research Seminar Schedule 2023-24

Unless otherwise noted, seminars take place online on Mondays from 2–3:30pm.
Please email m.j.warren@sheffield.ac.uk for the link to join.

Schedule

Semester 1

30 October

Clair Hutchings-Budd, University of Sheffield
“The Nightmare Before Hogswatch”

13 November

Valerie Hobbs, University of Sheffield
“No Love in War: A Story of Christian Nationalism”

~~27 November~~

~~Cath Kennedy, University of Sheffield
“Time for her to get married”: Forced Marriage as a Trope in Jerome Berryman’s *Complete Guide to Godly Play*~~

Semester 2

12 February

([Poster](#))

Anna Budhi-Thornton, University of Manchester
“Jesus the Model Man? A Comparison of Ancient Masculinities and the Jesus of the Johannine Passion Narrative”

26 February

Yii-Jan Lin, Yale
“The Use of Revelation in American Immigration History”

18 March

Jamie Broad, Liverpool University
“I Don’t Play with the Bible”: An Examination of How the Bible is Employed in UK Christian Rap

15 April, 5pm. [Please book at ticket at EventBrite](#)

Hugh Pyper, Emeritus University of Sheffield
“The Five Scrolls: Scots Biblical Translation”

Abstracts

Semester 2

Anna Budhi-Thornton, University of Manchester

Jesus the Model Man? A Comparison of Ancient Masculinities and the Jesus of the Johannine Passion Narrative

The study of the masculinity of Jesus as presented in the New Testament is a fairly recent phenomenon, following the more established feminist analysis of the Biblical texts. The consideration of gender and the androcentric nature of the texts have only been a recent realisation within the field of Biblical studies, which is now creating the space for the additional study of masculinity to occur. As a key figure of ideal masculinity impacting modern faith contexts regarding what ideal masculinity is, the depiction of Jesus and his perceived masculinity is essential to include when considering gender and masculinity studies within Biblical Studies. The aim of this research is to analyse the perceived masculinity of Jesus as depicted in the Johannine Passion Narrative when compared with other ancient standards of manliness. When compared with these models, the Jesus of the Passion Narrative of John both embodies certain aspects of ancient perceived masculinity and subverts them simultaneously. This is seen in the Johannine Jesus challenges certain masculinities by through other models, the illumination of internal complexities within single models and so on. Consequently, the findings of this study could be considered as queer in nature, as the boundaries of certain standards of gender are crossed and challenged in the authors depiction of Jesus.

Yii-Jan Lin, Yale

The Use of Revelation in American Immigration History

From European discovery to the present, America has been imagined as a heavenly destination—as the New Jerusalem of the Book of Revelation. This apocalyptic metaphor and the narratives and images of Revelation have played a significant role in American discourses about national identity and its attitudes toward immigrant groups. This talk examines the America-as-New Jerusalem metaphor and its role in anti-immigrant movements, focusing on anti-Chinese discourse in particular.

Jamie Broad, Liverpool University

“I don’t play with the Bible”: An Examination of How the Bible is Employed in UK Christian Rap

The paper will examine the use of the Bible by rappers in select UK Christian rap songs, analysing lyrics to identify musical presentations of a Christian identity. The paper will examine how specific texts are appropriated and employed lyrically, using examples from songs where verses are quoted directly. In doing this, the paper will also focus more broadly on how the Bible is presented in the songs. The paper will argue that presentations of the Bible as a weapon are employed both externally, as a

challenge to other rappers and internally as weapon against self. In each case, the understanding of the Bible is linked to the presentation of self and the construction of a Christian identity post-conversion.

Hugh Pyper, Emeritus, University of Sheffield

“The Five Scrolls: Scots Biblical Translation”

Based on his recent publication, *The Sang O Sangs, Ruth, Lamentations, Qoheleth And Esther Owerset frae the Hebrew intil Scots* (Handsel Press 2023), this talk will give an overview of Pyper’s translation from the original Hebrew into Scots of five books from the Hebrew Scriptures: The Sang o Sangs, Ruth, Lamentatiouns, Qoheleth and Esther. These books, besides being important Jewish scriptures and part of the Christian Old Testament, are fascinating and still relevant examples of ancient literature for those of any religion or none. The publication of translations of great works of world literature into Scots is a crucial part of demonstrating its continuing vitality as a literary language.

Semester 1

Clair Hutchings-Budd, University of Sheffield

“The Nightmare Before Hogswatch”

Tim Burton’s 1993 stop-frame animation musical fantasy *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and Terry Pratchett’s 1996 novel *Hogfather* both have central characters who are anthropomorphic personifications. *Nightmare* tells the story of Jack Skellington, the Pumpkin King, whilst *Hogfather* centres Death, the Grim Reaper of Discworld. As the embodiment of Halloween, Jack leads the monstrous citizens of Halloween Town as they spread the mayhem of the season throughout the real world. Death is a seven foot tall skeleton with glowing blue eye sockets who is responsible for helping the inhabitants of Discworld transit the boundary between this life and the hereafter. Like Jack, Death inhabits his own liminal realm, and both characters can move freely between these supernatural spaces and the living world. As well as being anthropomorphised embodiments of human concepts around mortality and the occult, Death and Jack also happen to be fascinated with human behaviour, and their curiosity leads them to temporarily assume the roles of two other holiday personifications, Santa Claus and the Hogfather. Using Nathan Ballantyne’s work on epistemic trespass as a framework, I explore the implications of these two characters’ refusal to stay in their professional lanes. Drawing upon my own ongoing doctoral research into liminality and belief in Pratchett’s fiction, I identify thematic connections (including tropes of the horror genre) between *Hogfather* and Burton’s film as Death and Jack make their personal journeys towards a deeper understanding of the meaning of the festive season.

Valerie Hobbs, University of Sheffield

“No Love in War: An Auto-Ethnography Documenting the Everyday Violence of Christofascism in the United States”

In this talk I will, first, briefly introduce my latest book, which details my first 22 years of life moving through three concentric circles in the Christian Far Right in the United States. Next I will discuss in more detail the book’s feminist, auto-ethnographic approach and, through that, what messages about the sacralisation of escalating violence I aim to convey.

Cath Kennedy, University of Sheffield

**'Time for her to get married': Forced Marriage as a Trope in Jerome Berryman's
Complete Guide to Godly Play**

Forced marriage (FM) is an ongoing problem worldwide. Despite FM being illegal in the UK (explicitly since 2007) and sustained rhetoric against it, it persists alongside widespread institutional apathy. For some reason, British society is incapable of taking FM seriously and erroneously associates it exclusively with recently migrated communities. Many religious materials for children encode the characteristics of FM in traditional narrative, thus normalising it and associating it with belonging, virtue, and family life. Given the profound effect of narrative on children's emerging worldview, it would be preferable for church communities and schools to review the materials they use, become skilled at identifying the trope of FM, and adapt their resources accordingly.