Call for Papers
Religion & Theatre Focus Group – Emerging Scholars Panel

Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) 2022 Conference
Detroit, MI
July 28 – July 31, 2022

The ATHE Religion and Theatre Focus group invites current graduate students and/or independent scholars who have not presented at a major national conference to submit papers for the 2022 Emerging Scholars Panel.

The 2022 ATHE Conference theme:

Rehearsing the Possible: Practicing Reparative Creativity
Building upon the work of the 2021 conference of RE: (claim, frame, pair, write, etc.), 2022 invites ATHE to deepen engagements with questions that Detroit urges us to address. How will we abolish institutional, embedded racist structures? As we seek to reimagine, rebuild, and rise up, what are some new arrangements of the possible that we might pursue? In Worldmaking, Dorinne Kondo asserts that "reparative creativity offers possibilities to work through effects of affective and structural violence," reminding us that the “reparative is a critical, political, and artistic practice.” Engaging this line of thinking, we query: How will we engage our practices to harness the power of theatre for social justice?

Many religious paths espouse that humanity plays a key and creative role in repairing the world prior to its redemption by a divine figure. Judaism teaches tikkun olam, which obligates Jewish people to social responsibility and justice both for the earth and its inhabitants. Buddhism argues that dismantling causes of systemic suffering requires dismantling causes of personal suffering. Contemporary witches mix morals and magic, conjuring spells for healing the planet, the social body, and the self. Catholic liberation theology seeks to root out sinful structures that cause social inequities, and the Christian concept of postmillennialism preaches that Christ will only establish his kingdom on earth only after humans have created a world of righteousness and peace.

ATHE’s Religion and Theatre Focus Group seeks scholarly and artistic responses to religiously inflected performances that represent a world in need of repair and rehearse visions of redeemed ones. How do these works embody and exorcise the racism, violence, abuse, and pain that threaten the possibility of a more just and more holy existence? How do spiritually literate performances do the work of healing? How do they imagine liberation? How do these works engage with the possibility that if we can stage lions lying with lambs, perhaps we can make it so? Submissions in dialogue with a wide variety of religious and spiritual traditions are highly encouraged.

Submission Guidelines:

• Papers should be approximately 8 to 10 pages in length
• Please include a cover page with your name, paper title, institutional affiliation, contact information, and a brief abstract (250 words). Please remove your name from the body of the submission, as it will go through a blind vetting process.
• Please send your paper, bio, and cover page in one word document by March 1, 2022 to JM Christiansen at jacob.christiansen@umontana.edu (PLEASE NOTE: While completed papers are preferred, in the case of extenuating circumstances abstracts may also be accepted.)
• For more information about the 2022 conference, please visit www.athe.org. Contact the Religion and Theatre Graduate Representative, JM Christiansen, with any questions or concerns at the email address above. We look forward to reading your submissions!