University of Birmingham

Dr Deryn Guest BA, PhD (Birmingham)

Senior Lecturer in Biblical Hermeneutics

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About

Deryn is interested in contemporary biblical hermeneutics, specifically in the ways gender theory and queer theory is utilized in the interpretation of scriptural texts. Her work currently engages with the disciplinary boundaries of feminist biblical scholarship, problematising its agenda, methodologies and politics by pioneering a lesbian-identified hermeneutic. Her interest in theories of gender, sexuality, and race inform work on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender interpretations of scripture in a range of contemporary global contexts and the role of the Bible in contemporary political debate relating to lesbian, gay and transgender human rights. Applications of this include the imaging of masculinity and femininity in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, the role of women within Ancient Israelite society, and the interpretation of texts in the light of contemporary hermeneutical theory.

Biography

I ventured into academic life relatively late having spent some years as a minister of religion with the Salvation Army, working in Manchester. During the Salvation Army residential training I took up study for a Cambridge Diploma which introduced me to biblical study, church history and theology from academic perspectives. I was an engaged student and when my ministerial vocation unravelled I furthered this study by undertaking a BA Theology at Birmingham. Enthusiastic and encouraging tutors encouraged me to stay for a PhD which I completed in 1996. While studying for the PhD I worked full-time at Westhill Teacher Training College, delivering modules on Greek and Hebrew, Biblical studies, and Women and Christianity. In 2002 I moved to the University of Birmingham where I am now Senior Lecturer in Biblical Hermeneutics.

Teaching

Deryn's teaching includes modules on methods and approaches to interpreting the Hebrew Bible, the images of men and women in the Hebrew Bible and their significance for contemporary readers, specialised study of 1 Samuel, Queer Theology, and the study of women's spirituality with particular reference to the Thealogy and Goddess spirituality.

Postgraduate supervision

- Gender and sexuality studies with reference to the Hebrew Scriptures
- Queer Theology and Queer Biblical Studies
- Gay and lesbian theology
- Thealogy, Goddess, and women's spirituality
- Transgender discourses and Biblical Studies/Theology/Religion
- Thealogy and postfeminism.

Research

- The application of contemporary theory (feminist, gender, postructuralist, postcolonial, queer) to scriptural texts.
- The strategic use of the Bible in contemporary discourses pertaining to various human identities and sexualities
- Goddess feminist thealogy and its applications to the postfeminist generation
- Transgender discourses and its application to Biblical texts.

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Other activities

- Member of the Society for Old Testament Study

Publications

- **Beyond Feminist Biblical Studies (http://www.sheffieldphoenix.com/showbook.asp?bkid=221)** by Deryn Guest. Sheffield Phoenix Press 2012
- 'From Gender Reversal to Genderfuck: Reading Jael through a Lesbian Lens' in Teresa J Hornsby and Ken Stone (eds) *Bible Trouble: Queer Reading at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship* Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2011, pp. 9-43
- 'Liturgy and Loss: A Lesbian Perspective on using Psalms of Lament in Liturgy' in Stephen Burns, Michael N Jagessar and Nicola Slee (eds.) *The Edge of God: New Liturgical Texts and Contexts in Conversation* London: Epworth Press.
- 'Encountering Beasts: Lesbian Biblical Hermeneutics on the Road' *Conclilium: International Journal for Theology* 1 (2008) pp. 105-119.
- 'Looking Lesbian at the Bathing Bathsheba' *Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches*, Vol. 16, No. 3. (2008), pp. 227-262
- *The Queer Bible Commentary* co-edited by Deryn Guest, Bob Goss, Mona West and Tom Bohache, SCM Press (2006)
- *When Deborah met Jael: Lesbian Biblical Hermeneutics,* SCM Press (2005)
- 'Judges' in JD Dunn & JW Rogerson (eds) *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, Eerdmans (2003)
- 'Battling for the Bible: Academy, Church and the Gay Agenda', *Theology and Sexuality* (2001)
- 'Hiding Behind the Naked Woman: A Recriminative Response' *Biblical Interpretation* VII/4 (1999)
- 'Can Judges Survive Without Sources? Challenging the Consensus' *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 78* (1998)

Expertise

Biblical studies and biblical interpretation; lesbian and gay theology

Alternative contact number available for this expert: **contact the press office (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/contacts/index.aspx)**

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