

International Society for Heresy Studies

Fourth Biennial Conference 2020

Call for Papers

Heresy: Between Choice and Compulsion

Our word “heresy” comes from the Greek verb *hairein*, “to choose.” While the term in Greek was originally value-neutral, one method of maligning heretics as ancient as the Christian invention of heresiology itself is to depict ideological enemies as making intentionally deviant choices. Of course, individuals and groups derided as heretics might construe the origins of their belief, thought, practices, or perspectives more positively, whether as resulting from the fruits of reason, a preponderance of the evidence, or even from an innate evolutionary and biological compulsion, as has been recently argued by social scientists such as Jonathan Haidt and John Hibbing. At the same time, these lines of argumentation are equally available to those propagandizing or policing such differences as “heresy.”

For its Fourth Biennial Conference, the International Society for Heresy Studies seeks proposals navigating this gulf between choice and compulsion. Successful submissions will grapple with the degree to which their subjects have chosen dissenting views or whether their views have been compelled by different means, whether through reason, environment, culture, receptivity to new thinking, genetic predisposition, or some other force. Proposals are encouraged to approach the topic of choice from a perspective relevant to their chosen era and culture and to the sources supplying evidence for their subject, without ignoring modern research or theory on choice, freedom, coercion, etc. Submissions are sought from all disciplines intersecting with heresy, from religious studies in late antiquity to literatures, philosophy, and politics in any century of the common era. Papers using methods from neuroscience, political science, and social psychology are also encouraged.

Please submit a proposal of no more than 300 words to Robert Royalty, Jr., Royaltyr@wabash.edu by February 1, 2020 to be considered for the conference, to take place June 11-12, 2020, at New York University. Submitters will be notified by March 1, 2020.