

PCR Is Reauthorized

After the 2001 AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in Denver the PCR group was reviewed by the AAR to determine whether or not the group's status as a program unit would be reauthorized for another five-year term. This process involved submitting a lengthy report to the AAR and having representatives from the AAR observe our 2001 sessions and meetings. We are pleased to report that the PCR Group has been officially reauthorized. Great thanks are due to the group's co-chairs, Franz Metcalf and Kelley Raab, who did the bulk of the work required by the reauthorization process.

In the official letter from Barbara DeConcini, the Executive Director of the AAR, the following passage was printed in bold type for our consideration:

Some members of the Program Committee suggest that you consider widening your focus to include more work in non-western religious traditions. You might find interesting conversation partners in the various units that study religion in south and east Asia and the Middle East.

Given that PCR has sponsored several program events in recent years on exactly this topic (and see this year's call for papers for further efforts along the same lines), this suggestion is perhaps best taken as encouragement to continue our work in this regard and develop even broader interdisciplinary connections with scholars of non-western religious traditions.

Call for Papers

AAR Annual Meeting, November 23-26, 2002, Toronto, Ontario

We invite papers addressing (1) idealizations of gender, country, and God in a time of war, and (2) psychological theory and practice in Islam and Islamic cultures, including views of personhood and modes of caregiving. Additionally, celebrating the centennial of William James' Varieties of Religious Experience jointly with the Mysticism Group, we invite papers on the contribution of the Varieties to our current understanding of mysticism and/or personhood. Papers on all these topics may include theoretical, therapeutic, theological, or other perspectives. We welcome papers on other themes dealing with person, culture, and religion, and encourage proposals from Canadian perspectives.

Instructions on how to submit paper proposals and other information about the Annual Meeting is available on the AAR website at www.aarweb.org

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Robert Fuller (Bradley University) has published a new book titled *Spiritual, But Not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America* (Oxford University Press, 2001). Robert says “the book’s argument is fairly simple. Sixty percent of Americans are churched. Forty percent, therefore, are unchurched. But many of those—as PCR members know well—are nonetheless still vitally concerned with spiritual matters. A full twenty percent of the population consider themselves spiritual, yet not religious in the sense of embracing a single, set doctrinal system. This book explores the history and present status of unchurched religion in the United States. It argues that there are enduring traditions within American unchurched religion. And it argues that our unchurched spiritual traditions are as mature and viable as can be reasonably expected in our modern era.”

Peter Homans (University of Chicago) is teaching courses in “Histories and Psychologies of Mental Health/Mental Illness” and “Jung: Life, Work, and Times,” and syllabi are available on request. He also recommends to PCR members a book by Louis A. Sass, *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought* (Basic Books, 1992).

Hendrika Vande Kemp reports the following publications: “Gordon Allport’s pre-1950 writings on religion: The archival record.” In J. Belzen (Ed.), *Aspects and contexts: Studies in the history of psychology of religion* (pp. 129-172). International Series in the Psychology of Religion. Atlanta: Rodopi (2000); “Wholeness, holiness, and the care of souls: The Adler-Jahn debate in historical perspective.” *Journal of Individual Psychology* (2000), 56, 242-256; “Mentoring as a witness to the way of exchange.” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* (2000), 19, 350-354; “The patient-philosopher evaluates the scientist-practitioner: A case study.” In B. D. Slife, R. N.

Williams, & S. H. Barlow (Eds.), *Critical issues in psychotherapy: Translating new ideas into practice* (pp. 171-185). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001; “Women’s contributions to psychology and religion: Historical and contemporary data.” (Co-authored with R. Wiseman, N. Friesen, & C. Young.) *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* (2001), 20, 109-131; “Reclaiming our heritage: Helen Flanders Dunbar.” *Psychology of Women: Newsletter of Division 35, American Psychological Association* (2001), 28(1), 15, 17. Hendrika says “I have left my faculty position at Fuller Theological Seminary and am exploring new options for the future. Any leads would be appreciated! Hendrika Vande Kemp, Ph.D., 219 N. Primrose Avenue, Monrovia CA 91016-2118; 626.357.8983; hendrika@earthlink.net.”

Kelly Bulkeley (The Graduate Theological Union) is writing a book with Paulist Press titled *Dreams of Terror, Visions of Hope* that discusses the role of dreams and nightmares in people’s reactions to experiences of sudden disaster and trauma. The book will take its point of departure from the events of September 11, but will go from there to discuss

more broadly the psychological, cultural, and religious dimensions of caregiving in times of collective crisis. Any comments or suggestions about this project would be welcome.

Nancy Grace is co-hosting the 19th Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Dreams, which will be held at Tufts University outside of Boston from June 15 - 19, 2002. The program should be available by late February at www.asdreams.org/2002. PCR members **Kelly Bulkeley** and **Nancy Grace** will be among the presenters, and many other papers, panels, etc. are likely to be of interest to PCR folks.

Feel free to email Nancy at ngrace@bcn.net with any questions.

News from PCR Members

PCR News

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Editor: Kelly Bulkeley

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Person, Culture and Religion Website:

- <http://home.att.net/~pcr-aar>.

PCR-List online e-mail discussion group:

- To subscribe send a message to pcr-list-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Program Events at the 2002 AAR/SBL Western Regional Meeting

March 23-25, St. Mary's College, Oakland

Person, Culture & Religion Panels

PANEL 1

THEME: EMBODIED PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGIOUS FAITH

Kirk A. Bingaman, Presiding
San Francisco Theological Seminary

Katie Meier

Arizona State University

Missing Pieces: Creating a More Educated Christian

Steve Sommers

Fuller Theological Seminary

The Lord's Supper: Paradigmatic Form of Christian Confession

Kyeong-Seog (Peter) Kwon

San Francisco Theological Seminary (Southern Calif.)

I-Thou Relationship: Buber's Theory of Life's Dialogue

PANEL 2

THEME: VIOLENCE, CULTURE AND RELIGION

Kirk A. Bingaman, Presiding
San Francisco Theological Seminary

Lissa McCullough

Hanover College

Reflections on Terrorism in a Post-Human Era

Janet E. Schaller

Claremont School of Theology

Women with Disabilities and the Threat of Annihilation

Raedorah Stewart-Dodd

Pasadena, CA

A Sin and a Shame: Domestic Violence in Religious Homes

Robert Strong

Fuller Theological Seminary

Existential Aggression as Self-Defining Act

Psychology and the Social Sciences Section Panels

PANEL 1

THEME: SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC REFLECTIONS ON RELIGION

Kelly Bulkeley, Presiding
San Francisco Theological Seminary

Joseph W. H. Lough

University of California, Berkeley

The Persistence of Religion within the "Iron Cage": New Perspectives on a Weberian Theme

Mark Fagiano

Graduate Theological Union

The Phenomenology of Religion: From Archetypes to Oikotypes

Jonathon Scott Feit

Boston University

Toward an Empathic "Why?": Beginning a New Examination into the Psychology of Religious Attribution

PANEL 2

THEME: SYMBOLS IN PRIVATE AND COLLECTIVE CONTEXTS

Siroj Sorajjakool, Presiding
Loma Linda University

Soo-Young Kwon

Graduate Theological Union

The Parental Figures and/or Cultural Symbols: Ana-Maria Rizziuto and Melford Spiro on God-Representation

Kelly Bulkeley

San Francisco Theological Seminary

Dreams and Nightmares Relating to the 9/11/01 Terrorist Attack

Carla Gober

Emory University

Episodic Memory: Significant Moments as a Conversion Experience According to William James



PCR in China: A Letter from Jim Higginbotham

Editor's note: PCR member Jim Higginbotham contacted me to renew his membership and mentioned his current visit to China. I asked to hear more about his experiences, and this was his reply.

Thanks for asking about my adventure. My wife and I are here for one year at the invitation of Jinling Union Theological Seminary in Nanjing and the China Christian Council. She has been teaching Old Testament and Hebrew this fall (and will continue) since that was an area of great need. I will be teaching History of Christian Thought from the Enlightenment to the present next semester. Another scholar was originally supposed to come teach in that area, so this fall I was teaching English at a local teachers' college. Since theology was sort of a minor field of mine, I was asked to fill in when he couldn't come. I will also be meeting with some second year students (it is a 3-year masters; this seminary is the only one of 18 in China which offers a graduate degree, since most pastors have a bachelors degree) to help them get started on their thesis for next year.

I did have the opportunity to give a lecture in Pastoral Care (it was as much a pastoral theology of contextualization actually) to the seminary also, which was very well received. The administration decided, however, that the contextual issues were too great for

me to teach PC at the seminary. I think the students wanted the course, especially since there is really nothing being taught in Pastoral Care or Practical Theology (other than Church administration) anywhere in China.

I am excited, but feel rather challenged by the opportunity. It will be new experience to teach using a translator, and try to evaluate the students for their ideas and not be too influenced by the difficulty in communicating.

The "war on terrorism" is generally supported by the average Chinese, I believe, because they were shocked by the events of 9/11. Perhaps the perceived American invulnerability was in the minds of foreigners almost as much as Americans, and so even Chinese might have felt a little less secure.

Certainly most people who spoke to me were sympathetic about 9/11, and even those who said the bombing wasn't the right action implied that their view was not adamantly held. The government (like many in the region) see the American actions as a chance to crack down harder on "extremists who act in the name of religion or democracy" (that is almost a quote from the English broadcast report of a joint statement made by China and Tadjikistan this week).

Hope 2002 brings great joy to you and yours!

Peace, Jim

PCR Commentary

*"I Do Not Do the Good I Want, but the Evil I Do Not Want Is What I Do":
The Concept of the Vertical Split in Self Psychology In Relation to Christian
Concepts of Good and Evil*

Pamela Cooper-White

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

Editor's note: this excerpt comes from the concluding section of Pamela Cooper-White's 2001 AAR Annual Meeting presentation. The full text is available on the PCR website.

Is the self-psychological concept of the vertical split an adequate theoretical paradigm to account for good and evil (particularly evil) as understood in Christian theology? Well, in good Anglican fashion, I think the answer to the question is "yes" and "no"

Yes – especially as understood empathically from those whose suffering falls most prominently under the category of narcissistic pathology. From the narcissistically damaged individual's point of view, evil is most often experienced as an alien part of one's self-identity and character, corresponding well with the vertical split. Early experiences are predominantly of deficit and lack, specifically of appropriate mirroring and provision of reliable selfobjects for idealization. The process of

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removing contents from ordinary awareness is a conscious process of disavowal. Evil is experienced as lack, and one's own self-defeating behavior is experienced as both unintended and unwanted, or as necessary recompense, as in "filling an empty hole inside" or in its most sociopathic form, "the world owes me." The classical theological doctrine of evil as privation of the good fits well with this psychological model, and the pain experienced by such individuals is the pain of compulsion.

But also, no—the concept of the vertical split, in my view, is not sufficient to explain all conceptions of evil—with two objections. First, in the experience of trauma victims, and secondly, in the larger sense of corporate, systemic evil.

In the subjective experience of traumatized persons, evil is most often described as a malevolent attribute of someone else's identity and character, based on early experiences of injury and later life experiences born of projection of inner persecutory objects outward where they are then battled or feared. Early experiences are not predominantly of deficit and lack, but of active trauma. The process of removing contents from ordinary awareness is an unconscious process of splitting and dissociation. Evil is experienced as "out there," and one's own self-defeating behaviors are understood, if at all, as righteous attacks on evil that has been projected onto or into others. The classical theological doctrine of evil as privation of the good fits less well with this psychological model, and competes with views of evil as an active cosmic force battling the good. The pain experienced by these individuals is the pain of expulsion, and the resulting experience of terror of what is out there, repeated, baffling experiences of intense attachment and rejection in relationships, internal fragmentation and constant, undifferentiated psychic pain.

This is not a gender-neutral conclusion. While certainly both men and women experience trauma, the disproportionate number of women survivors of sexual abuse and assault in our culture may suggest that clinically, the object-relational and intersubjective psychoanalytic theories which can accommodate this experiential understanding of evil as something positive (i.e., active) within a framework of multiplicity, may be

especially relevant to women's experience. The Augustinian notion of sin as pride or inordinate self-reliance (which I have correlated above with the self-psychological understanding of narcissism) has been further challenged by feminist theologians as inappropriate when applied to women and other marginalized groups within patriarchal society. In the words of Elizabeth Johnson:¹

If pride be the primary block on the path to God, then indeed decentering the rapacious self is the work of grace. But the situation is quite different when this language is applied to persons already relegated to the margins of significance and excluded from the exercise of self-definition. For such persons, language of conversion as loss of self, turning from *amor sui*, functions in an ideological way to rob them of power, maintaining them in a subordinate position to the benefit of those who rule... Analysis of women's experience is replete with the realization that within patriarchal systems women's primordial temptation is not to pride and self-assertion but rather to the lack of it."

Second, the answer to the question, "is the self-psychological concept of the vertical split an adequate theoretical paradigm to account for good and evil as understood in Christian theology?" is no, again, in a larger sense: What about corporate, and long-term consequences flowing beyond individuals?

Feminist and Womanist writers' approach to the subject of evil has tended to de-emphasize classical arguments about the abstract nature of evil and individual sin and atonement, and to focus much more on what Noddings calls "cultural evil." Noddings highlights women's experience of suffering and participating in evil through complicity with the cultural conditions of poverty, racism, war, and sexism.² Womanist theologians especially have highlighted the systemic, institutionalized aspects of evil, as noted above.³ Delores Williams redefines individual sin as participation in the larger social systems that devalue Black women's humanity through a process of devaluation and "invisibilization."⁴

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Neither psychoanalytic model described above has actually paid adequate attention to the larger systemic, cultural, and social forces that are implicated in human cruelty and human suffering. But at least one reason, and perhaps the most profound reason, that evil *is* evil, is that it not only destroys individuals intrapsychically, but it tears at the fabric of human relationship and confounds the human capacity for community. In the words of David Tracy and Hermann Haring, “Evil has no center, but is everywhere. It does not send out its raiding parties, but spreads like moods and rampant growths.”⁵ The image here is not one of either of sheer nothingness nor of purposeful malevolent planning, but of *metastasis*. The rejection of the image of “raiding parties” may be more debatable after Sept. 11. However, in the larger sense, the image of metastasis still works: there is no precise beginning or end to contemporary terrorism, and no precise boundaries. Local, temporal acts are subsumed under larger movements and counter-movements and cycles of retaliation across many centuries and continents.

While few psychoanalytic theorists have yet adequately addressed this larger systemic and social dimension, (although there are a few exceptions, from both self psychology and object relations points of view), my sense is that an appreciation of the dynamics of projection not only by individuals but entire groups, and further application of theories of intersubjectivity, alterity, and social constructivism, may yield important understandings of the systemic dimension of evil than the concept of the “vertical split,” or indeed any theoretical conceptualization of intrapsychic pain can do by itself, without the application of a wider social and cultural lens. This seems especially poignant now, in the wake of a massive cultural mobilization of Americans to split off and locate the enemy “out there,” to disavow

all complicity in the evils of the world, and to claim only the virtues of American ideals of freedom and democracy, without any of the pitfalls of unfettered global capitalism or militarism. The consciously held self-identity, purified of problematic elements, is then packaged in the symbol of the flag.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), p. 64. See also an earlier exposition of this theme by Valerie Saiving [Goldstein], “The Human Situation: A Feminine View,” *Journal of Religion* 40 (1960) 100-112; reprinted in *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion* (SF: Harper & Row, 1979), 25-42. Saiving proposes that patriarchal attention to sins of self-absorption are less relevant for women, and suggests as alternatives the sins of “triviality, distractibility, diffuseness; lack of an organized center or focus; dependence on others for one’s own self-definition; tolerance at the expense of standards of excellence; inability to respect the boundaries of privacy; sentimentality; and mistrust of reason.” Saiving’s proposals have more recently been debated as inadvertently reinforcing essentialist stereotypes of women, and insufficiently critical of women’s own participation in cultural evils, particularly racial and class oppression. See also Rankka, *op. cit.*
2. Noddings, pp. 120-21.
3. Emilie Townes, Ed., *A Troubling in My Soul*.
4. Delores Williams, “A Womanist Perspective on Sin,” in Townes, Ed., *A Troubling in My Soul*, p. 146.
5. David Tracy and Hermann Haring, “Introduction,” in D. Tracy and H. Haring, Eds., *The Fascination of Evil*, p. 1.

PCR Membership

Membership in PCR entitles you to three copies of PCR News, goodies at the Friday pre-session, advance copies of the papers for PCR sessions, plus the warm glow of knowing that you're helping us distribute PCR-related information to scholars, clinicians, and clergy members interested in our work.

\$15.00 Regular Membership; \$10.00 Student Membership (with copy of student ID). Checks should be payable to Person, Culture, & Religion Group. Send to: Kelly Bulkeley, Secretary/Treasurer, 226 Amherst Avenue, Kensington CA 94708; Phone: 510-528-0226; Fax is same; E-mail: kellybulkeley@earthlink.net

2001 paid members to date are listed below; if you think we missed you, contact Kelly Bulkeley at the address above.

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If you found a red dot on the address label on your copy of PCR NEWS, it means that time has run out. We hate to drop anyone from our mailing list; please send in your dues!

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INFORMATION FOR PCR NEWSLETTER VOL. 25 NO. 2

I. These days I find myself thinking about . . .
CURRENT RESEARCH INTERESTS AND WRITING

II. What we need is a good course in . . .
COURSES BEING TAUGHT OR PLANNED

Would a syllabus be available on request? yes___ no___

III. Have you seen ? . . .
ARTICLES, BOOKS AND PRESENTATIONS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE
TO BRING TO OUR ATTENTION
[PLEASE GIVE FULL CITATION IF KNOWN]

IV. INFORMATION OF GENERAL INTEREST [calls for papers, announcements, travel, promotions, job searches . . anything you would like to share in the newsletter]

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