

AAR

2005 Annual Meeting
November 19-22
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

PERSON, CULTURE & RELIGION ANNUAL MEETING SESSIONS

Pre- Sessions:

Friday, Nov 18, 2:00- 6:30

BOOK PANEL: *SHARED WISDOM: USE OF THE
SELF IN PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELING*

PANEL: VISUAL EXPERIENCE IN THE
WONDERING BRAIN

EXPERIENTIAL: THE PSYCHOLOGY AND
SPIRITUALITY OF MARTIAL ARTS PRACTICE

PCR DINNER

Saturday, Nov 19, TBA

WORKS IN PROGRESS

SPIRITUALLY-ORIENTED APPROACHES TO
THERAPY

BUSINESS MEETING

Main Sessions:

Sunday, Nov 20, 1:00 pm-3:30 pm

THE PSYCHODYNAMICS OF RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

Monday, Nov 21, 1:00 pm-3:30 pm
(with Wesleyan Studies Group)

TRANSFORMATION IN WESLEYAN TRADITIONS

Monday, Nov 21, 4:00 pm-6:30 pm

**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ANOMALOUS EXPERIENCE AND
THE NONUNITARY SELF**

Program details on page 2&3

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Person, Culture & Religion Annual Meeting Pre-Sessions

PRE-SESSIONS

Friday, Nov. 18, 2005

Location TBA

2:00-3:45 PM BOOK PANEL:

Shared Wisdom: Use of the Self in Pastoral Care and Counseling
by Pamela Cooper-White

Presider: **Lallene Rector**, Garret Theological Seminary

Panelists:

- **Rodney Hunter**, Emory University
- **Wally Fletcher**, Philadelphia
- **Bonnie Miller-McLemore**, Vanderbilt University
- **Pamela Cooper-White**,
Lutheran Theological Seminary Philadelphia

3:45 COFFEE BREAK

4:00-5:30 PANEL

VISUAL EXPERIENCE IN THE WONDERING BRAIN

Presider: **Diane Jonte-Pace**, Santa Clara University

Panelists:

- **Kelly Bulkeley**, Graduate Theological Union
- **Serinity Young**, American Museum
of Natural History
- **Carol Rausch Albright**, Chicago, Illinois

5:30-6:30 EXPERIENTIAL SESSION: THE PSYCHOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY OF MARTIAL ARTS PRACTICE

Presenters:

Lisa Cataldo, Union Theological Seminary

James Jones, Rutgers University

PCR Friday Dinner

Saturday, Nov. 19, 6:30- 9:30 p.m.

It is our annual custom to go out to dinner together on Friday evening. This year, dinner will be hosted at the home of co-Chair **Pamela Cooper-White** outside of Philadelphia. Look for details as we get closer to the Annual Meeting.

Saturday, Nov. 19, 2005

Location and Times TBA

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Presider: John McDargh, Boston College

SPIRITUALLY-ORIENTED APPROACHES TO THERAPY: WHAT ROLES DO RELIGIOUS AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES PLAY?

Carrie Doehring, Iliff School of Theology, Presenter

BUSINESS MEETING

Pamela Cooper-White and Kathleen Bishop, presiders

Other AAR Sessions of Interest

Religion and the Social Sciences Section

A19-12 Saturday - 9:00 -11:30 am, CC-110B

BEYOND FREUD AND JUNG: NEW PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO COMPARATIVE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

A19-110 Saturday - 4:00 -6:30 pm, MP-Salon K

RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE: SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC ANALYSES

A20-108 Sunday - 4:00 -6:30 pm, MP-Salon I

CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION

A21-12 Monday - 9:00 -11:30 am, MP-Independence III

NEGOTIATING BOUNDARIES: RELIGION, MIGRATION, AND CULTURAL INTERACTION

A21-60 Monday - 1:00 pm-3:30 pm, CC-113A

ROBERT WUTHNOW: THE SIGNIFICANCE AND METHODOLOGY OF HIS WORK FOR RELIGION AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

A22-10 Tuesday - 9:00 am-11:30 am, MP-Salon K

ETHNOGRAPHIES OF MEDIA: PERFORMANCE, AUDIENCE, AND MEANING

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Person, Culture & Religion

Annual Meeting Regular Sessions

A20-66, Sunday, November 20
1:00 pm- 3:30 pm, CC-103C

The Psychodynamics of Religious Violence

Pamela Cooper-White, Lutheran Theological Seminary at
Philadelphia, Presiding

Terry Cooper, St. Louis Community College District
*Religious Aggression from a Cognitive-Behavioral and Psychoanalytic
Perspective: A Comparison of Aaron Beck and Erich Fromm*

Thomas B. Ellis

University of South Carolina, Columbia
Religion and Terrorism: Reflections on the Controversial Conjunction

Marsha Hewitt, Trinity College
Enemies of God:

An Exploration into the Psychodynamics of Religion and Violence

James W. Jones, Rutgers University
The Psychodynamic Roots of Religious Terrorism

A21-118, Monday, November 21
4:00 pm-6:30 pm, LH-Regency C1

The Psychology of Anomalous Experience and the Nonunitary Self

Kathleen Bishop, Madison, NJ, Presiding

G. William Barnard, Southern Methodist University
*Henri Bergson and William James on Paranormal Experiences
and the Multi-Dimensional Self*

Jaesung Ha, Vanderbilt University
*Spirit Possession, Shin-Byung, and the Restoration of the Self
in Korean Shamanism*

Felicity Brock Kelcourse
Christian Theological Seminary
*Intersubjectivity, Infantile Helplessness and Occultism: Non-Ordinary
Experience in the Dialogue between Freud and Jung*

Andrea Mundis, Drew Theological School
*Psychology, Neurology, and Their Attempt to Dismiss
Mystical Experiences: Should They Succeed?*



Co-sponsored with Wesleyan Studies Group

A21-73, Monday, November 21
1:00 pm-3:30 pm, MP-Salon A

Transformation in Wesleyan Traditions

Rebekah Miles, Southern Methodist University, Presiding

Keith Haartman, University of Toronto
*Watching and Praying: John Wesley's Method
of Personality Transformation*

Lallene Rector, Garrett-Evangelical Theological
Seminary and Lacey Warner, Duke Divinity School
*A Psychoanalytic Investigation of the Transformative Impact
of Sanctification Experience and Belief in the Conversion
of Julia A. J. Foote, Nineteenth-Century Holiness Preacher*

Hetty Zock, University of Groningen
*Paradigms in Psychological Conversion Research:
The Emergence of the Biographical-Narrative Approach*
Responding:

A. Gregory Schneider, Pacific Union College

SBL Sessions of Interest

S19-20: Saturday, 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM
**PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE BIBLICAL
CONTEXT: HEART, SOUL, AND MIND**

S19-68: Saturday, November 19th, 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM
**AGGRESSION AND THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THE
BIBLE I: ANGER AND AGGRESSION IN SCRIPTURE**

S19-121: Saturday, November 19th, 4:00 PM to 6:30 PM
**AGGRESSION AND THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THE
BIBLE II: THE BIBLE AND CULTURES OF VIOLENCE**
Includes a Panel Review of *The Destructive Power of Religion*, J.
Harold Ellens, ed. (Praeger, 2003)

See the Psybibs website for complete listings and location
information: www.psybibs.org

Kelley Raab has momentous news to share: “I’m no longer teaching at St. Lawrence University and have accepted a position as a psychiatric chaplain at the Royal Ottawa Hospital in Ottawa, Ontario. Also, I was ordained a minister in the United Church of Christ in June 2005. Big changes!”

Dan Merkur (University of Toronto) reports several recent publications: “Psychotherapeutic change in the Book of Job,” in *Psychology and the Bible: A New Way to Read the Scriptures, Volume Two: From Genesis to Apocalyptic Vision*. Edited by Harold Ellens and Wayne G. Rollins (NY: Greenwood-Praeger, 2004). “Psychology of Religion,” in *Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2005). *Psychoanalytic Approaches to Myth: Freud and the Freudians* (NY & London: Routledge, 2005).

Kirk Bingaman (Fordham University) has left San Francisco Theological Seminary and, beginning in September, will hold a new position as Assistant Professor of Pastoral Counseling in the Graduate School of Religion & Religious Education at Fordham University.

Peggy Kay (Chicago Theological Seminary) finished her dissertation and graduated in May. She describes her work as follows: “My dissertation is titled, *Toward a Psychological Theory of Spiritual Transformation*. It takes psychologist Carl Jung’s theory of individuation - individual ego and spiritual development across the life cycle - and sets it as a life course framework. Into that framework I then integrate (not assimilate) St. John of the Cross’ *Dark Night* (of the Soul) to elucidate the exact phenomenological, experiential process of spiritual transformation as episodes and passages in the course of the life cycle. I describe the spiritual, theological, personal, and experiential process in psychological context and terms, to facilitate psychological understanding of spirituality and spiritual process, and to facilitate pastoral understanding of psychic process of appropriation of religious and spiritual contents of the human psyche. All of this is done with a view toward psychological and spiritual healing and growth and evolution. I say “integrate (not assimilate)” because I preserve all of the facets of Jung’s individuation and of John’s dark night, and weave them together to yield a larger and more comprehensive understanding of the human process of spiritual transformation. They are not changed, they are added together. From the integrated theory I propose a future model for research and practice, and provide some conclusions, speculations, implications, and recommendations.”

Pamela Cooper-White (Lutheran Theological Seminary) will be on sabbatical this year working on two projects: “This summer and fall I am working on completing a book for Fortress Press with working title *Pastoral Psychotherapy: Theology and Therapy in a Postmodern, Relational- Psychoanalytic Perspective*. The purpose of this book is to provide an overview of pastoral psychotherapeutic theory and practice from a postmodern, relational-psychoanalytic perspective. As in my previous books, I will continue to integrate the relational paradigm with constructive work in pastoral/systematic theology. For the remainder of the year, I will be engaged in something very new and different: a qualitative research project on pastoral healing, theological aesthetics, and sacred space. The purpose of the project is to investigate the following research questions: How do “sacralized environments”—that is, environments that have been intentionally designated and used as sacred spaces, including built religious environments—function not only as spaces for worship and program activities, but as catalysts for *growth, psychological*

healing, and empowerment of individuals for transformation in their communities? In particular, *what are the experiences* of individuals and groups of such sacralized spaces in their own lives, and how have these spaces functioned to nurture and/or stimulate their own growth, healing, and empowerment? What does the data gained from a study of such individuals’ and groups’ experiences of growth, healing, and empowerment

suggest as *implications for future planning and design of places set apart as “sacred space”*? This research will involve travel to five major regions of North America representing geographical, cultural and ethnic diversity. I am initially limiting my research to Christian churches that have recently undergone some renovation or major aesthetic change. If you know of such sites, particularly where there has been controversy, or interesting group dynamics focused on the church’s space, I would be interested to visit! Email me at pcooper@ltsp.edu. I look forward to hosting the Person, Culture & Religion Group here in Philadelphia in November!

Nancy Grace presented a workshop on “Exploring the Meaning of Dreams Through Group Projective Dreamwork” on July 27th at Harvard Medical School’s Center for Sleep and Cognition, as part of the monthly Neurophysiology Seminar Series.

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NEWS FROM PCR MEMBERS

NEWS FROM PCR MEMBERS

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John Shea (Boston College) passes along the news of his recently published book, *Finding God Again: Spirituality for Adults* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005). The book is prompted by the question: why are so many who are adults in most dimensions of their lives still living with a God far more appropriate for childhood and adolescence, a Superego God?

Hendrika Vande Kemp reports that "I've recently taught an 8-week Sunday School class on Dreams, the Bible, and Spirituality. Was delighted to find a wonderful internet source, Biblical Art on the WWW, at www.biblical-art.com/ The site offers many illustrations related to the dreams of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Nebuchadnezzar, and a few related to Job's scary visions. I'll be teaching another version of the class this fall, and hope to incorporate more Jungian symbolism into my PowerPoint show. I recently published the book chapter "Living With Authority in 'The Between'" in G. Yancy & S. Hadley (Eds.), *Narrative Identities: Psychologists Engaged in Constructing the Self* (pp. 172-190) (NY: Jessica Kingsley Press, 2005).

Chris Ross (Wilfred Laurier University) writes to say, "I just published "Dogmatism, Religion and Psychological Type" in *Pastoral Psychology*, 53, (1): 483-497, with Leslie Francis and Charlotte Craig, where we found higher dogmatism scores were related to a preference in terms of Jung's typology for sensing perception over intuition. Our suggestion is that variation in type preferences may account for the some of the conflicting findings of studies linking religion with close mindedness and prejudice. I am collecting data on the frequency of different Jungian types among the New Kadampa Tradition of Buddhism, which I'll present at the American Psychological Association under the title 'Jungian Tersonality Type Studies of Christian and Buddhist Groups'

on August 20th in Washington. I am completing an oral history of the New Kadampa Tradition with Chris Silver, part of Wilfrid Laurier's Department of Religion and Culture's first cohort of students in our new Ph.D in Religious Diversity in North America. Chris Silvers' dissertation is on Western Tibetan Buddhists in the South East USA."

Daniel Gaztambide (Rutgers University) is a new student member of the PCR group and a senior majoring in Psychology and Religion. He is working on a project with Dr. George E. Atwood ("Faces in a Cloud: Intersubjectivity in Personality Theory", 1993; "Shattered Worlds/Psychotic States: A Post-Cartesian View of the Experience of Personal Annihilation" (In *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, Vol 19, No 2, 2002). Daniel says, "The current working title is "Religion in Psychology and Psychotherapy: A Relational-Meaning Framework for the Integration of Patient's Beliefs in the Clinical Setting". It touches on the age-old conflicts and problems of treating religion and spirituality, as well as deeply religious/conservative patients, in psychotherapy. Based on the work of Viktor Frankl (*Man's search for meaning*, 1985) and Carl Gustav Jung (through Wayne G. Rollins wonderful interpretation of his work, in *Jung and the Bible*, 1983), a heuristic for the understanding of the role of religion in psychology is constructed. It understands man's nature as meaning-seeking, which is found within a matrix of relationships. Religion/spirituality is a meaning-providing entity, and also provides the coherence of those relationships: "This is who I am in relation to God, God's people, those outside the faith, and the world." A person's sense of self is built around these meaning-filled concepts of religion. I then seek to test this model in the research of Ana-Maria Rizzuto (*The Birth of the Living God*, 1979) and James W. Jones (*Religion and Psychology in Transition*, 1996).

ABOUT THAT RED SPOT

If you found a red dot on the address label on your copy of PCR NEWS, it means we have not received dues from you for several years. While we hate to drop anyone from our mailing list, it does cost us for duplication and mailing. Please consider sending in your dues!

PASSINGS

Howard John Clinebell, Jr. died peacefully on April 13, 2005. He was born in Springfield, Illinois in 1922, graduated from DePauw University in Indiana, Garrett Seminary in Illinois, and earned a doctorate from Columbia University in New York. He met Charlotte while both were in school; they were married in 1945. Howard was a Methodist minister for churches in Indiana, Illinois, New York and California. He then taught pastoral psychology and counseling for three decades at the School of Theology in Claremont, California. He was the Co-Director of the Pastoral Counseling and Training Center, now The Clinebell Institute. His former students, many of whom he worked and kept in touch with, are all over the United States and the world. He and Charlotte retired to Santa Barbara. Howard wrote, co-authored or edited over 20 books on various subjects in his field, and traveled to every state in the United States and to more than 60 countries of the world, teaching and speaking (as well as hiking and climbing mountains) throughout his professional life. He was a founding member, the first president, and a guiding light of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, and founder of the International Pastoral Care Network for Social Responsibility. He spoke out constantly and consistently on issues of justice, peace, and protection of the environment. Howard is survived by Charlotte, his spouse of nearly 60 years, his children John, Donald and Susan, their spouses Jomarie, Stephanie, and Reanon; grandchildren Jamie, Andrew, Brennan, Tessa, and Nevan; great-granddaughter Madisyn; his sister Miriam Clinebell, and his brother Paul Clinebell.

Edward Vincent “Ted” Stein died April 29, 2005 in his home at Villa Marin in San Rafael at the age of 84. He was born in Bellflower, California on November 30, 1920. Dr. Stein was the Tully Professor of Pastoral Psychology at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo and the

Howard Clinebell and Ted Stein, two long-time friends of the PCR community, passed away recently. The following obituaries were provided by Lewis Rambo:

Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley for 28 years before his retirement in 1987. A graduate of UCLA and Princeton Theological Seminary, he earned a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California. He also did advanced studies at the C. G. Jung Institute, Zurich, Switzerland. During his extensive career, Stein lectured and taught at numerous places, including Union Theological Seminary in Manila, Philippines. Dr. Stein, an ordained Presbyterian minister, was founding pastor of the College Park Community Presbyterian Church in San Diego (1948-53), where Stein Hall was named in his honor. He then became Director of Westminster House and chaplain to students at the University of California, Berkeley (1953–1960). Dr. Stein is well known in the field of Psychology and Religion. His books included *The Stranger Inside You* (1965), *Guilt: Theory and Therapy* (1968), *Beyond Guilt* (1972), and *Fathering: Fact or Fable?* (1977). Several of his books have been translated into German and Spanish. In addition to being a founding faculty member of the Graduate Theological Union and the co-founder of the Lloyd Center Pastoral Counseling Service in San Anselmo, he was the co-founder of the Marin Violence Prevention Forum in 1999. Beloved by his family, students, friends, and colleagues, Ted Stein was known for his profound faith, lively sense of humor, compassion for human suffering, energetic exploration of new ideas, profound empathy for the human predicament, and a cosmopolitan point of view. A vigorous supporter of civil rights, he participated in the 1965 march in Selma, Alabama with Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Stein is survived by his beloved wife of sixty years, Ruth, their children Larry Stein of Santa Barbara, Karl Stein of Arlee, Montana; Laurel Stein of Paradise, CA, and Paula Kelleher of Petaluma, and five grandchildren: Erin Casagram-Stein; Simone, Nichole, and Sara Schoaf; and Kai Stein. He is also survived by his sister Helen LaCour and sisters-in-law Lois Brainard and Elizabeth Brainard, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Person, Culture, and Religion in a Musical: Reflections of an Amateur Actor

Greg Schneider
Pacific Union College

In May of this year I played “Tevye,” the male lead in “Fiddler on the Roof.” In an ambitious move for a small college theater troop, we performed in the newly remodeled Lincoln Theater, on the grounds of the veterans hospital in Yountville, California. It is the largest and perhaps most expensive performing arts venue in Napa county. We sold almost 4000 tickets in five performances and finished the production in the black. With each curtain call we brought the audience to its feet. It was one of the most demanding and satisfying things I’ve done. Kelly has asked if I have some reflections on the experience from the perspectives of Person, Culture, and/or Religion.

Starting with culture, or subculture in my case, I am Seventh-day Adventist by birth and nurture. Seventh-day Adventism is one of those American originals, a denominations that emerged out of antebellum America’s ferment of religious freedom in what came to be called the “burned-over district” of hinterland New England and western New York state—“Burned-over” because of the persistent waves of Protestant revivalistic fervor for which it was known. Seventh-day Adventism in my upbringing retained much of its ascetic rejection of the worldly habits and pleasures and its zeal for holy work that would win people to its sectarian gospel before the imminent advent of Jesus Christ. It also set itself apart from nearly all other Christian groups by its insistence that the only legitimate day of worship was the seventh day, a sabbath to be observed from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Thus I began my life among a “peculiar people”—we used the phrase as a badge of honor when I was a child—a people deliberately on the margin in human eyes, but uniquely precious in God’s eyes.

Sabbath-keeping was and is a major part of my religious and cultural identity. One of the best ways to evoke an intimate conversation among people reared as Seventh-day Adventists is to ask them how their family welcomed the Sabbath on Friday night. Every family has different traditions, but nearly every family has given their children something to remember, and mostly the memories are warm and nourishing. In general, however, the mode of

observing Sabbath day was derived from the Puritans, not the Jews. Sabbath was the day to refrain from doing your own pleasure; to restrain the body for the sake of the soul, a weekly reinforcement of the subculture’s pervasive inner-worldly asceticism .

One powerfully expressive bodily activity that the subculture not only allowed but nurtured, however, was singing. Congregational hymns, vocal solos for “special music,” and especially choirs in church and church schools were staples of my growing up. I have come to appreciate more and more Erikson’s brief but repeated mentions of music and singing in the story of young Luther’s epochal Protestant identity formation. I am a child of Luther at least in that sense. Singing has long been a passion for me, congregational hymns my favorite part of Sabbath worship, and singing in choirs my chief form of artistic expression. Indeed, if I had had the talent and the confidence, I think I might have made music my profession.

Ever reminding me that I had neither the talent, nor any foundation for the confidence, however, has been the defining tale of little Reggie the first grader, coming home breathless with excitement and pleasure with himself, to tell Momma that he was a “WHISPERER!” It was a tale told enough times by my parents, and occasionally my siblings, to make clear to me 1) how musically “challenged” I was and continued to be as I grew up and 2) how ridiculously inflated and out of touch was my 6-year-old grandiose self. Early in my first year at church-sponsored elementary school, the music teacher discovered that I was one of those few who could not carry a tune. In accord with longstanding pedagogical custom, we the tone-deaf were

instructed to sit on the first row of the music classroom and whisper the songs, while those in the tiers rising behind us sang out. The hope, apparently, was that we would pick up the tune from the flood of

sound flowing around us. Concerned for our young self-esteem, the music teacher staged a conversation with the school principal to the effect that we who had been shushed should not take it to heart, that there was yet hope for us.

PCR COMMENTARY

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The only fragment of this dialogue that I “got” was the part where the two women told us that some members of the “Treble Choir,” the school’s elite touring singing group staffed by imposing, eminently idealizable seventh and eighth graders, had been whisperers in their early days. Oblivious, at the time, to the shame of wearing the equivalent of the

dancing, in my upbringing, happened only on the Devil’s territory, the land of illicit and inarticulate erotic enticement that would lure me to destruction

musical dunce cap, I concluded that being a whisperer put me on the fast track to stardom, and that perception is what fueled my grand announcement to Mom that day.

Eventually I did learn to sing, even to the point of membership in the Treble Choir and solos in my seventh and eighth grade years, including a syrupy romantic piece rendered in high soprano for my sister’s wedding shower. There were, and are, distinct limits to my musical prowess, however. Although I sang in choirs from third grade on, I did not catch on to reading music from a vocal score until sometime in my first year of college. I got by entirely by memorizing the musical lines I heard from other singers or from the piano. I can’t count to save my life, again relying on memory and a kind of felt intuition about rhythms, rather than on any firm knowledge of the theory of time signatures and note values. I am pitch challenged, often confusing pitch with timbre and having to recalibrate my sense of intervals depending on what register of my voice I am using. Sometimes I’m sharp, sometimes I’m flat, and sometimes I can’t tell which. I learned not to thrust myself into the limelight in musical groups, for fear my meager resources would fail me at a time of maximum exposure.

I warned Mei Ann Teo, director of our production, that getting pitches and making the music work would be a challenge for me, but she chose me over the other guy auditioning for Tevye, a professional music teacher and performer with several major roles in community musical theater to his credit. My voice in auditions for Fiddler sounded thin next to his, it seemed to me, but nothing to be

ashamed of. I have a decent voice, actually, and that, plus my readiness to be a good “heads-up” team-player, seems to have kept me in demand as a choral singer despite my other limitations. So I have kept singing, kept looking for my expressive space and place in the one kind of music I can make. I guess I wanted this role in part because I hoped that maybe the late-blooming, slow-learning fifty-something singer, himself a father of adult children, could claim the artistic place in the sun that the grandiose six-year-old had imagined would be his.

There were other reasons. There was and is this obscure push to confront and overcome anxieties, to surmount self-consciousness, find a zone where the message matters so much more than I do that I can lose myself in it. But one must find the self before one can creatively lose it. I’ve just talked about finding my voice, a major component of the self. I also had to find my body, and that was a lot harder.

“Question: ‘Why don’t Seventh-day Adventists make love standing up?’ Answer: ‘It might lead to dancing.’” An old joke, I know, and used by a lot of groups other than Adventists. Nevertheless, dancing, in my upbringing, happened only on the Devil’s territory, the land of illicit and inarticulate erotic enticement that would lure me to destruction. Curiously, I find in myself a deep connection between dancing’s threat to self-cohesion and that posed by athletics. Team sports were always a locus of dread, for me, as much as attraction, a place where the jocks excelled and I was always uncertain of both my skill and my manhood. In fact, though not particularly gifted, I was often better than I

thought I was on the softball or football fields or the basketball court. Athletics demand confidence, however, so I was consistently an underachiever. Nor did I ever understand or accept the

phallic banter and self-promotion that seemed an inevitable part of ball-field discourse, a ticket into the community of players. I never wanted in, that much, but I dreaded the derision that came when either I stayed out or tried ineffectually to act like I was in. The connection between dancing and team sports, it seems to me, has something to do with the impermissibly proud presentation of the body. But why impermissible? Because pride of “the flesh” is immoral, unspiritual, or maybe just because pride goes before a (the?) Fall, the unbearable shame of making a cosmic fool of myself?

Along comes “If I Were a Rich Man,” the longest solo in the musical and the moment when Tevye first appears all by himself to convey his inner life to the audience and win them over to his story. It’s a life story that demands to be danced,

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PCR COMMENTARY **Reflections of an Amateur Actor**

Greg Schneider

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not just sung. But I can't dance! The quiet but firm message from director Mei Ann and choreographer Casey Dacanay, moreover, was that the basic ideas for movement were going to have come from me; they weren't going to tell me what to do. That created an unbridgeable gap, because I did not know what to do. Indeed, standing on the rehearsal stage and singing, "Daidle deedle daidle digguh digguh deedle daidle dum," I did not know what I was doing. They told me that Tevye, all alone in that scene, would be necessarily the focus of the audience's attention, and that I did not really have to move "that much." What did "that much" mean? What I knew was that there was a buzz of expectation in the wider college community, and that every other person who talked to me casually about the role said something like, "Oh yeah, 'If I were a rich man!' Are you gonna do the dance?!" Some of them even fell into poor pale caricatures of the dance from the movie, arms high and flailing, hips gyrating, making pathetic and ridiculous what Topol (lead actor in the film) had made funny and glorious. I cringed inside, thinking, "Oh God! That's what I'm going to look like." But I also knew that our audiences would be looking for me to move, not just sing and talk.

So it was not moral scruples or residual sexual guilt that made "Rich Man" such a huge mountain to climb. It was the threat of shame, the deep narcissistic wound of putting the body and spirit on display in an all out effort to win the hearts and minds of cast and crew, first, and then of our audience only to earn their derision, contempt, or mere boredom instead. That lurking dread became particularly intense at the first all-day rehearsal we did in Lincoln Theater. The space, populated by 1200 elegant, empty purple seats, was intimidating enough just in itself. I dropped lots of lines and, sure enough, missed lots of pitches, as I struggled to control my distraction. Early in the first act, as I delivered the monologue leading up to "Rich Man," I felt a dull persistent pain in the back of my consciousness, a weight dragging me down, sapping my energy, making its presence most emphatically felt at the moment I began to sing. I have come to personify that dull pain as a kind of demon child who, confronted with a demand to perform, runs screaming into a corner and curls up in a sobbing resentful fetal ball. There were private moments following that grueling day when I was literally in tears.

My little demon brat might well have got the better of me had not our choral director and vocal coach, Genevieve Kibble, given me a hand up. I had sung in her choirs for several years, and she had told me last summer that "Fiddler"

was coming up, making a point of asking me to audition. When I admitted to her that I was at a loss about what to do for movement during the refrains in "Rich Man," she turned our vocal coaching session into an impromptu dance class.

I felt a dull persistent pain in the back of my consciousness, a weight dragging me down, sapping my energy, making its presence most emphatically felt at the moment I began to sing.

She worked out a basic grammar of steps that over the next few weeks I was able to elaborate into something Casey and Mei Ann could work with. It was wonderful when, after a run-through of what I'd worked out, Mei Ann exclaimed that this was so much better than before. "That's because I didn't know what I was doing before," I replied. Then Casey smiled, "Well you do now!" Coming from our choreographer, whose every move was grace and beauty, whether walking down the hall or walking our 32-member cast through an ensemble dance number, that remark was magical. In the end, I never found the spontaneity and joy in movement, still less the precision, that I think Gennie, Casey, and Mei Ann had hoped for, but I didn't embarrass anybody either. (Except, perhaps, my children, the younger of whom said watching me was, "Weird!") The most common

compliment I got about my dancing was that it "looked natural." Given where I'd come from, that was plenty good enough.

PCR COMMENTARY Reflections of an Amateur Actor

Greg Schneider

What really made the personal struggles worth it was a great story and the quality of the community that formed around the project of telling it. "Fiddler on the Roof" is a major moment in Anglophone culture in which a story of Jewry becomes a universal story. A key point in opening up the story, it seems to me, is the quiet but tremendous change at the end of the play when Tevye includes his estranged daughter, Chava, and her gentile husband, Fyedka, in his prayer of "God be with you." In Sholem Aleichem's *Tevye, The Dairyman*, the book that inspired the play, Chava is accepted back into the family only on elder daughter Tzeitel's desperate demand and only after she leaves her gentile husband and returns to Tevye's house to join her family in exile. In the original story; the gentile husband has no name and, finally, no place in the family. This change in Fiddler makes Tevye's story accessible to all of us who have tried to

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love and protect our children and give them a home in a community and tradition even while we recognize that leaving home is inevitable and that tradition exists to serve love, not vice versa.

Stories of Jewry and Judaism have been equipment for living my gentile life during all my adult years. The film version of “Fiddler” has been part of my imagination since it appeared in the 1970s. Before that, finding Chaim Potok’s *The Promise* during my first year of graduate school was a major help in making sense of the cultural shift I was under-

I wonder if this difficulty in getting beyond anger and grief also reflects our current age of terror, revenge, mirrored ideological rigidities...

going by choosing to go to Chicago and transcend my Seventh-day Adventist ghetto upbringing. That was also the year I found *I and Thou*, Martin Buber’s lofty mystical classic that half-converted, half-confirmed me in the truth that “all real living is meeting.”

As a parent seeking to reconstruct a tradition for my children after having deconstructed it for myself, I found the practice of having *challah*, the braided Jewish Sabbath bread, a useful ritual, one that my children loved and that became a center of hospitality for them and their friends. More recently the officers of our campus chapter of Amnesty International, for which I am faculty sponsor, have identified Friday nights at Schneiders with *challah* as one of the indispensable perks of student leadership. *Challah* also became my gift to the cast and crew of *Fiddler* during the extra-long rehearsal and performance days when we did pot-luck to keep us all fed and functioning. I think the bread got reviews at least as good as my singing and acting, and certainly better than my dancing.

Elie Wiesel’s *The Trial of God*, a potent exercise in theodicy via reader’s theater, became another point of identification with Jewry and Judaism when Mei Ann directed it as a readers’ theater performance five years ago and cast me as Berish. Berish is the rage-and-sorrow-filled tavern keeper who in the year or two prior to the action of the play has watched his daughter’s wedding day broken up by a local

pogrom in which the rabbi and the groom and most of the guests were murdered and his daughter gang-raped, all while he was forced to watch. The trial of God is one he demands of a traveling troupe of Jewish players who stumble upon his bleak inn during Purim, hoping to earn some money by entertaining the local Jewish community. Berish plays prosecutor, while a shadowy stranger in the tavern is the only one who can be recruited to defend God. The stranger reveals himself as Satan at the end of the play, just as he invites in the Russian rabble to finish the pogrom they had only interrupted earlier.

One of the significant challenges of learning the role of Tevye was to get it into my mind and body that Tevye is NOT Berish. As late as the last dress rehearsal, Mei Ann was coaching me on “If I Were a Rich Man” to play the rubato coda, “Lord who made the lion and the lamb/ You decreed I should be what I am . . .” as less angry and more pleading. I learned that sorrow and rage are pretty easy for me. Tevye’s way of being with God—a special blend of joking/complaining/pleading submissiveness, all within an uncanny familiarity—was something evolving for me all the way through the performances.

Perhaps this fact merely reveals my individual character, but I wonder if this difficulty in getting beyond anger and grief also reflects our current age of terror, revenge, mirrored ideological rigidities, and the horror and shame I feel at being party to my nation-state’s blind, stumbling violence in Iraq and elsewhere. My more deliberate response to the war was to help found my college’s chapter of Amnesty International. Even though “Fiddler” competed with the local chapter for my time, I felt that doing the play expressed motives akin to those that keep me going in the work of human rights advocacy.

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Identifying with the Jewish experience in the sense of being the Other, pariah people, eternal outsiders, worked well for me years ago as sectarian conservative Protestant making his way into what I took to be a bastion of liberalism and unbelief, the University of Chicago. It worked also for the incurably inhibited nerd amongst the “big men” on my high school and college campuses. It worked just as well in a kind of perverse/reverse as I returned to the Adventist ghetto (western edition) of Pacific Union College, Angwin, CA, city set on a hill, and found that my education and credentials from “worldly” Chicago made me “Other” to the ordained ministers who made the majority of PUC’s Religion Faculty, especially after the “young turks” of my first years at PUC were purged in the aftermath of the heresy scandals that erupted in my denomination and centered at my

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campus during the first five years of my career. All these peripheral positions made imagining myself a Jew in time of pogroms all too easy, easier than it should be, given the real horrors of pogroms and the merely metaphorical use I've made of the stories.

There was further paradox in all these feelings of identity with the marginal. In the play I was not marginal; I was the lead, the man whose role, and eventually whose person, was essential to the production—marginal everywhere except among the people playing the marginalized people. I got sick about three weeks before we opened, and the director told me not to show up to rehearsals for a couple of days. When I came back, the response of the diminutive young woman who played Bielke, one of Tevye's not-yet-marriageable daughters, condensed a widely felt response among the cast:

"I'm so glad you're back!" she exclaimed. "Everyone's been kind of depressed and kinda dead without you here; you energize the whole show."

It was a remark meant to be complimentary, but I knew enough of Durkheim and social systems to tell myself not to take it this observation too personally. The lead actor in most plays, and especially this one, serves as symbol of the whole, as "totem" for the social bonds and moral energy of the group. The cast would have felt "down" regardless of who was supposed to be there as Tevye but was sick instead. Nevertheless, the cast and crew of young, talented, and dedicated musicians and actors were consistently supportive and affirming of me and each other during the weeks and months of rehearsal we shared together. One of our gatherings on stage for "notes" at the end a dress rehearsal became a ritual of community with something of the feel of the old revivalistic meetings for testimony and prayer that I knew from growing up Adventist, and from studying Methodists as an academic. So much of the positive energy focused on "Tevye" that maintaining psychic balance and

resisting the rush to grandiosity and inflation was a challenge. The whole experience was an especially intense version of the precarious balancing act we all perform through our lives: how to learn who we are and what we can promise to the world and how to claim the space and attention we need in order to serve justly those who count on us to make good our promises.

As I suggested at the start, the performances went well, and I delivered on my promises to cast, crew, and wider community. I still meet people who go out of their way to tell me they enjoyed the play and my part in it. I have a file

on my computer in which I have collected notes on such encounters, and in an entry dated two weeks after the close of our production I find the following: "I really did do something good.

Not enough people in the world are lucky enough to be able to say that sentence with so little qualification as I am able to right now."

That was then. Despite my best efforts to keep from getting carried away, coming down off the high of performance made finishing the school year and pulling myself together in order to plan for what comes next a good deal harder than usual. And what comes next is not quite the same this year. Entirely unexpected, but very welcome, has been a year-long appointment to an endowed position that will relieve me of most of my normal teaching load and set me up to renew a research and writing agenda that, candidly, I really thought was dead. Next Spring, about a year after my stint as Tevye, I must deliver a lecture to the campus and a report to the board of the endowment, telling them what I have done with the extra time and money they have invested in me. It is a bit scary. I don't know for sure that I have anything further to say, academically, that really needs to be heard. But I do have a day job—I am a teacher, a curious calling that combines knowledge and performance. I've recently had a good experience on the performance side. So now I return to the deep play that undergirds the knowledge side.

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Reflections of an Amateur Actor

Greg Schneider



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