

1. **Presenter:** Theophus “Thee” Smith is a native Atlantan, an associate professor in the Religion Department of Emory University, author of *Conjuring Culture: Biblical Formations of Black America* (Oxford, 1994), and coeditor of *Curing Violence* (Polebridge, 1994). Since the 1990s Thee Smith has facilitated forums and workshops on diversity and reconciliation issues at Emory and throughout the nation. Since 2003 he has served as a co-founding director of Southern Truth and Reconciliation—STAR (www.southerntruth.org), a regional nonprofit that consults with local communities seeking truth-and-reconciliation approaches to U.S. racial violence. Raised Baptist in the (U.S.) Black Church tradition, Thee is also a priest associate at the Cathedral of St. Philip in the Episcopal diocese of Atlanta. For additional information see: faculty profile at www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/RELIGION/faculty/smith.html

and sermon archive at
www.stphilipscathedral.org/Sermons/default.asp

2. Illustration: 3 superimposed images composed of (a) green background image from <http://themgv.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/interfaith1.jpg> accessed by author on 6/25/2010; (b) center circular image from www.OneSpiritInterfaithSeminary.org accessed 9/15/2004; and (c) additional image called *Gye Nyame*, “Except for God,” the classic religious Adinkra symbol of West Africa (Ghana etc.), accessed at www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/gyen.htm on 7/1/1010.

Rescuing Our Faith from Sacred Violence

Interfaith Resources for Courses & Group Work

[PART I: Introduction to Sacred Violence]

PART I
PUBLISHED
SEPARATEL

PART II: Interfaith & Humanist Typologies

II: 3-17

PART III: Sample Practicum /Workshop

III: 19-37

PART IV: Conclusion & Bibliography

IV: 39-41

Appendices

A. Interfaith Symbolism

IV:42-43

B. Restorative Justice /RTJ

IV:44-46

C. Axial Age Axioms

IV:47-48

D. Contact Information & Re-Use License

IV: 49-50

10/20/2010

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2

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A Typology

Cobb's typology of interfaith relationships:

- 1) Exclusivism: validates or biases one tradition only
- 2) Inclusivism: approximates others to one as norm
- 3) Pluralism: validates 'all' traditions comparably
- 4) Transformationism: correlates other traditions as—
 - valuable resources for transforming one's own in the direction of its own ideals, thereby rendering them
 - capable of integrating needed aspects of others without abandoning each one's own identity and norms.

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Derived from **John Cobb, "Being a Transformationist in a Pluralistic World,"** *Christian Century*, Aug. 10-17, 1994, pp. 748-51.

The weaknesses of each type may also be noted, as follows:

- 1) Exclusivism rejects and forfeits the diversity of other self/world realities; their being, their value, their promise;
- 2) Inclusivism reduces the truth and reality of other traditions to aspects of its own, more privileged teachings, beliefs, and practices;
- 3) Pluralism risks runaway relativism in which anything is true or valid from any viewpoint, thus denying or subverting the (inequitable) uniqueness claims of many traditions—'Our's is not an equally viable path to the same mountaintop but leads to the top of a different mountain!'
- 4) Transformationism privileges or advantages some traditions over others by their (formal or intrinsic) aptitude for incorporating aspects of others—for example in this schema Islam may appear to be disadvantaged or disesteemed in this regard vis-à-vis the other world religions.



‘Axial Age’ Proposal¹

- *By hypothesis*: every religious and humanist tradition conveys distinctive resources for nonviolence.
- However, none has demonstrated sufficient proficiency to protect adherents from practicing sacred violence.
-

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1.Karl Jaspers’ Hypothesis of an "Axial Age“ The era 600-400 BCE was called “axial” by German philosopher Karl Jaspers. Radiating out from 600-400 BCE and extending more gradually from 800 to 200 BCE, key religious traditions in multiple parts of the world developed more enlightened, benign, and pro-human versions of their originating beliefs and traditions. Here I extend Jaspers hypothesis to argue that two and a half millennia ago our species embarked on conceptually and incipiently nonviolent approaches to human relationships and interactions ; a legacy we endeavor to complete in our time.

Synopsis [source cited below]: “In his influential work, *Origin and Goal of History* (1953; *Vom Ursprung und Zeit der Geschichte*,1949) Jaspers attempted a universal or global history that located at its center or ‘axis’ the fundamental conceptual developments that undergird the world’s formative religions and civilizations.

The most extraordinary events are concentrated in this period. Confucius and Lao-tse were living in China, all the schools of Chinese philosophy came into being, including those of Mo-ti, Chuang-tse, Lieh-tsu and a host of others; India produced the Upanishads and Buddha and, like China, ran the whole gamut of philosophical possibilities down to skepticism, to materialism, sophism and nihilism; in Iran Zarathustra taught a challenging view of the world as a struggle between good and evil; in Palestine the prophets made their appearance, from Elijah, by way of Isaiah and .



‘Axial Age’ Proposal¹

- *By hypothesis*: every religious and humanist tradition conveys distinctive resources for nonviolence.
- However, none has demonstrated sufficient proficiency to protect adherents from practicing sacred violence.
- Thus a heuristic (seek-&-find) strategy is called for: each needs other(s’) resources to supplement its own.

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[Note 1(b)]

. . . Jeremiah to Deutero-Isaiah. Greece witnessed the appearance of Homer, of the Philosophers—Parmenides, Heraclitus and Plato—of the tragedians, Thucydides and Archimedes. Everything implied by these names developed during these few centuries almost simultaneously in China, India, and the West, without any one of these regions knowing of the others.” Karl Jaspers, *Origin and Goal of History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), p. 2.

A synchronicity of the developments highlighted by Jaspers is evident in the following schema:

Axial Age Highlights 800-400 BCE

Israel: Isaiah (770-700), the "Age of the Prophets" (650-500)

Iran (Persia): Zoroaster / Zarathustra (ca. 600)

India: Buddha (563-483), Jainism (6th century), Upanishad texts ca. 550

China: Lao-tse (605-530), Confucius (551-479)

Greece: Thales (d. ca. 546), Pythagoras (d. ca. 507), Socrates (469-399), Plato (427-347), Aristotle (384-322)

Source: John F. Haught, *What is Religion?: An Introduction* (Paulist Press, 1990), pp. 35f., 68f.

2. See also my “Axial Age Axioms” in Appendix C below.

Indigenous Religions I

Primal traditions of expertise in *pharmacopeia* of—

- the *pharmakos*: scapegoat, sacrificial victim, ritual target;
- the *pharmakon*: potion; medicine/poison; ritual prescription;
- the *pharmakeus*: sorcerer, wizard, magician, ritual expert;
- the *pharmacosm*: the world as ‘ritual cosmos:’ store-house/lab/workshop of pharmacopoeic and ritual transformations (cf. Appendix: RTJ)

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1. Evan M. Zuesse, *Ritual Cosmos: The Sanctification of Life in African Religions*. Ohio Univ. Press, 1985.
2. Cf. magical systems as social constructions of reality in Theophus H. Smith, *Conjuring Culture: Biblical Formations of Black America* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), pp. 3, 37, 115, *et passim*.

Indigenous Religions II

1. “Engaging in indigenous or religious rituals may be more valuable in promoting reconciliation than victims voicing their traumas, or perpetrators making confession.”

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1. Lyn Graybill, “The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC): A Case Study in Political,” Review published on H-S Africa (September, 2005); accessed by author on 7/7/2010: www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=10873
2. Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective: Working Outline; August, 2007. Chapter 4: Creating a New Story: Ritual, Ceremony and Conflict Transformation between Indigenous and Settler Peoples, by Dr. Polly Walker; accessed by author on 7/7/2010 at: www.brandeis.edu/coexistence/linked%20documents/anthology%20outline%208-07.pdf
3. For the small but growing literature on ritual and conflict resolution see Mohammed Abu-Nimer, et al., “Contributions of Religious and Spiritual Aspects to the Process of Reconciliation,” “Local or Indigenous Cultures as Rich Sources of Reconciliation Processes,” “Rituals and Symbols as Tools and Concepts in the Field of Peacebuilding,” in Mohammed Abu-Nimer, ed., *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence: Theory and Practice* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), pp. 342-344. See also storytelling as “a form of ritual testimony that has healing powers” in Joseph V. Montville, “Justice and the Burdens of History,” Abu-Nimer, ed., *Reconciliation*, p. 134 and Lisa Schirch on “Ritual Reconciliation,” ch. 8 in Abu-Nimer, ed., *Reconciliation*.

Indigenous Religions II

1. “Engaging in indigenous or religious rituals may be more valuable in promoting reconciliation than victims voicing their traumas, or perpetrators making confession.”
2. “Indigenous rituals and cosmologies, once outlawed by the institutions of settler peoples, offer resources for healing & reconciliation between members of indigenous communities and descendants of settlers.”

Cf. indigenous cultures, world religions, & rituals of reconciliation in Abu-Nimer, Gopin, Hayner, et al. in n.3-6 below.

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3. On rituals of mourning as conflict resolution see Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 171-174; on ritual and “Abrahamic family reconciliation” see Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), pp. 198-200.
4. See also George Irani and Nathan C. Funk, “*Rituals of Reconciliation: Arab-Islamic Perspectives.*” Kroc Institute Occasional Paper #19:OP:2. Notre Dame, Indiana: Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies (University of Notre Dame, 2000).
5. Also Priscilla Hayner, in her magisterial treatment of truth commissions in *Unspeakable Truths: Facing the Challenge of Truth Commissions* (Routledge, 2002), describes Mozambique’s alternative to truth and reconciliation commissions in the form of “traditional healing mechanisms that remain deeply rooted throughout the country . . . traditional healers to help repair their wounds . . . [and] ‘Neotraditional healing mechanisms’ . . . [that] have played a powerful role in reintegrating soldiers into their communities.” (pp. 192-193).

Hinduism / Vedanta

- “Thou art That” = *Atman* is *Brahman*: the innermost soul of each living entity is convergent with the all-pervading soul of the universe; ‘coinherent’ with that ultimate reality that grounds us all.
- On the Vedic fire-altar I am the sacrificer (*pharmakeus*) offering myself as the sacrificed (*pharmakos*) in a non-dual¹ ritual (cf. *pharmakon*) that deconstructs sacrifice (cf. the renunciation of all rites in the *Samnyasa Upanishads* re: Appendix: RTJ).

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1. Cf. this excerpt from a *sutra* that deconstructs the self/other dualism operating in all acts of violence or “harm.”

To do harm to others is to do harm to oneself.

“You are the one whom you intend to kill!

You are the one you intend to tyrannize over!”

We corrupt ourselves as soon as we intend to corrupt others.

We kill ourselves as soon as we intend to kill others.

--*Acaranga Sutra* I.5.5

Quoted by Christopher Key Chapple, “Jainism and Nonviolence,” in Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, 1998), p. 15.

2. Related sources:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%80tman_\(Hinduism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%80tman_(Hinduism)) and www.answers.com/topic/world-soul; accessed by this author on 7/1/2010. Cf. Charles Williams on “coinherence” [supply citation]

Buddhism

- *Enlightenment*: the ‘middle way’ need not wholly sacrifice one’s embodied humanity /relationships to attain liberation from suffering and illusion
- *Aware Compassion*: "However innumerable all beings are, I vow to save them all."
- *Bodhisattva*: It is salutary to defer ultimate enlightenment/prefer the liberation of others (cf. socially engaged Buddhism re: Appendix: RTJ)

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1. On *bodhisattva* traditions in Buddhism cf. Geshe Sonam Rinchen, *The Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas* (Snow Lion Publications, 1997).
2. On “socially engaged Buddhism” in the traditions of the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Nancy Chodorow et al. see John Powers and Deane Curtin, “Mothering: Moral Cultivation in Buddhist and Feminist Ethics,” *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Jan., 1994), pp. 1-18.

Judaism

Torah: ‘the way’ of righteousness=fidelity to revelation of a transcendent God (Abrahamic)

Nevi'im: prophetic monotheism (Torah plus prophets) is revolutionary vis-à-vis ‘the powers that be’

Ketuvim: The TaNaCh chronicles *tikkun olam*: divine imperatives to “repair the world,” i.e.,
 (1) restore creation from all histories of domination;
 and
 (2) reverse our internalized suffering as a counterfeit ‘voice of God’ (cf. Appendix: RTJ)

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Cf. Jewish Renewal: “Jewish Renewal is a new movement within Judaism. It is a kind of neo-Hasidism, in that it seeks the spiritual renewal of Judaism, but ‘neo’ because it insists on full equality for women and a creative return to the process of transforming Hallakhah (Jewish law) so that it continues to be a living path to connection to God.

“The philosophy of Jewish Renewal is articulated best in the theological writings of Abraham Joshua Heschel (see particularly *The Prophets* and *God In Search of Man* and *Man Is Not Alone*) and Zalman Schachter Shalomi (*Paradigm Shift*), Arthur Waskow (*Down To Earth Judaism, GodWrestling*) and Michael Lerner (*Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation*).

“Judaism is a distinctive blending of spirituality and a liberatory political vision. But when Judaism abandoned its liberatory message, the Judaism that survived was unable to command the respect and adherence of many Jews. Those who sought spiritual vitality often found themselves attracted to other traditions. Others became disillusioned with all forms of spirituality, assuming that it would necessarily be associated with patriarchal and repressive social realities.

“So Jewish Renewal seeks a revolutionary transformation of the world . . .” Accessed by this author on 7/5/2010
www.tikkun.org/article.php/renewal

Islam I

Once after battle Muhammad said, "We have returned from the **lesser jihad** (*al-jihad al-asghar*) to the **greater jihad** (*al-jihad al-akbar*)."

When asked, "What is the greater jihad?," he replied, "It is the struggle against oneself."¹

- Jihad: the *struggle* for total allegiance to the will of Allah (cf. "Abandonment to Divine Providence")
- Greater jihad: *struggle* waged within oneself to abandon wholly to the will of Allah

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12

1. 'Ali ibn 'Uthman al-Hujwiri, *The "Kashf al-Mahjub," the Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism by al-Hujwiri*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Luzac, 1911), pp. 200-201.
2. Quoted by Douglas E. Streusand, "What Does Jihad Mean?" in *Middle East Quarterly* 5 (September 1997), and accessed by author on 11/30/2006 at www.meforum.org/article/357. Streusand elaborates:

Warfare is only one interpretation of the concept of jihad. The root meaning of "effort" never disappeared. Jihad may be an inward struggle (directed against evil in oneself) or an outward one (against injustice). A *hadith* defines this understanding of the term. It recounts how Muhammad, after a battle, said, "We have returned from the lesser jihad (*al-jihad al-asghar*) to the greater jihad (*al-jihad al-akbar*)." When asked, "What is the greater jihad?," he replied, "It is the struggle against oneself." Although this *hadith* does not appear in any of the authoritative collections, it has had enormous influence in Islamic mysticism (Sufism).
3. Cf. Paul Tillich: "Ultimate concern is the abstract translation of the great commandment: 'The Lord, our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'" [Shema—Deut. 6.4-5; *Great Commandment* part 1—Mark 12.29-30]. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol.1 (Univ. Chicago, 1951), pp. 11,14. Cf. also Jean-Pierre de Caussade (d. 1751), *Abandonment to Divine Providence* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1921), Friedrich Schleiermacher, "feeling of absolute dependence," *The Christian Faith* [1820-21] (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976; p. 132), and Paul Ricoeur on religion as 'abyssal submission' in *The Symbolism of Evil* (Beacon Press, 1986).

Islam II

“I am going to give you such a weapon . . . the weapon of the Prophet . . . [that] no power on earth can stand against it.”

“[Our nonviolence] is not a new creed. It was followed 1400 years ago by the Prophet all the time he was in Mecca.” -Khan Ghaffar Khan¹

“The Medina message is not the fundamental, universal, eternal message of Islam. That founding message is from Mecca . . . [and] will result in the total conciliation between Islamic law and the modern development of human rights and civil liberties.”²

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13

1.[All internet sources on this page accessed by author 8/14/2010.] "I am going to give you such a weapon that the police and the army will not be able to stand against it. It is the weapon of the Prophet, but you are not aware of it. That weapon is patience and righteousness. No power on earth can stand against it."

Nonviolent Soldier of Islam: Badshah Khan, A Man to Match His Mountains (by Easwaran Eknath; Tomales, CA: Nigiri Press, 1984/1999)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khan_Abdul_Ghaffar_Khan . Khan also said,

“There is nothing surprising in a Muslim or a Pathan like me subscribing to the creed of nonviolence. It is not a new creed. It was followed fourteen hundred years ago by the Prophet all the time he was in Mecca”

http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Khan_Abdul_Ghaffar_Khan Given the title,

“Badshah” Khan (cf. the title, “Mahatma” Gandhi), Khan is known as the ‘Frontier Gandhi’ for organizing ‘history’s first nonviolent army’ of 100,000 Pathans in Pakistan’s notorious Northwest Frontier Province.

[www.mepeace.org/forum/topics/abdul-ghaffar-khan-gandhi-](http://www.mepeace.org/forum/topics/abdul-ghaffar-khan-gandhi-and?xg_source=activity)

[and?xg_source=activity](http://www.mepeace.org/forum/topics/abdul-ghaffar-khan-gandhi-and?xg_source=activity) Cf. “B. Khan’s Hundred-year-old Message Of Peace,”

<http://indianmuslims.in/badshah-khans-hundred-year-old-message-of-peace/>

2. “The Medina message is not the fundamental, universal, eternal message of Islam. That founding message is from Mecca . . . [and] will result in the total conciliation between Islamic law and the modern development of human rights and civil liberties.”

Abdullahi An-Na’im, "The Islamic Counter-Reformation,"

www.digitalnpq.org/archive/2002_winter/an_naim.html Cf. *The Second Message*

of Islam, by Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, ed. & trans. Abdullahi An-Na'Im

(Syracuse, 1996).

Christianity

- Renunciation of scapegoating *is* Jesus' 'way, truth, and life;' i.e. non-victimizing love neither scapegoats-out (targets others) nor scapegoats-in (targets self; cf. Humanism below)
- Gospel (Gk. *kerygma*) "good news:" cross-&-resurrection proclaim: 'no more victims!'

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1. "In the concrete circumstances of humanity, what the new unity of humanity looks like is the beginnings of the gathering of penitent persecutors around the body of the self-giving victim [Christ], whose forgiveness made their new perception possible, and the creating of acts of worship of the victim, both in celebration and in acts of fraternal service. James Alison, "The Joy of Being Wrong," unpub. Dissertation [**chk** citation]
2. "That is to say, as humans come to perceive the reality of God as victim and of humans as victimizers (which can only be a practical intelligence of *my* complicity in the structures of violence which form me and which I pass on), so we are impelled to the construction of a different form of social other, one built *from* the self-giving victim, rather than one built *by exclusion of* the victim." James Alison, *Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin through Easter Eyes* (NY: Crossroad, 1998), p. 84.

Christianity

- Renunciation of scapegoating *is* Jesus' 'way, truth, and life;' i.e. non-victimizing love neither scapegoats-out (targets others) nor scapegoats-in (targets self; cf. Humanism below)
- Gospel (Gk. *kerygma*) "good news:" cross-&-resurrection proclaim: 'no more victims!'
- 'We found it!' (cf. *eureka!* / heuristic): the way to "beloved community" (cf. M.L. King) is perpetual atonement/reconciliation (cf. Royce & New Testament, n.3 below and Appendix: RTJ)

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[Notes cont'd] 3. "The only resolution of this dilemma is found in *experiencing . . . myself . . . as victim behind my victimizing . . . recognizing ourselves as victimizing victims in our day-to-day living . . . whence we punish the other . . .*" "Emphatically to get past the person who is victimizing one to the victim within is the essence of the Christ life, into which Gandhi had much insight." Sebastian Moore, "Why Did God Kill Jesus?" *The Downside Review* 112:386 (January 1994):24-25.

4. Cf. New Testament, 2 Corinthians 5.19: "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us." The trajectory of this key scripture on reconciliation converges with American philosopher, Josiah Royce's, articulation of perpetual atonement:

"No baseness or cruelty of treason so deep or so tragic shall enter our human world, but that loyal love shall be able in due time to oppose to just that deed of treason its fitting deed of atonement."

"The world, as transformed by this creative deed, is better than it would have been had all else remained the same, but had that deed of treason not been done at all." Josiah Royce, *Problem of Christianity* (Catholic U. of America, 2001 [1913]) p.186. Also in Parker, Kelly A., "Josiah Royce", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2004), E.N.Zalta (ed.), accessed 9/15/2009 at <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2004/entries/royce/>

Secular Humanism I

ethic against targeting-in

“Every single human being, when the entire situation is taken into account has always, at every moment of the past, done the very best that he or she could do, and so deserves neither blame nor reproach from anyone, including self.

“This, in particular, is true of you.”

(Cf. similar humanist psychologies; and Appendix: RTJ)

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Harvey Jackins (d. 1999), founder and chief theorist of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, headquartered in Seattle, Washington. Accessed on 7/10/2010 by this author at: www.co-counselling.org.uk/resources/manual-pyves.html#xtocid1515523 For more details on Re-evaluation Counseling see the note following.

Also at this site:

“How shall the humans of the future live?
Without distress, in love and zest and peace?
Of course they will, but mystical good-will
Is not enough. We have a lot to learn
Of practical details. We must divide
The work between us in rewarding ways,
Allow, encourage growth in everyone,
Yet know the wishful fancy from the fact
Not won to yet. No one shall be oppressed
Nor be imposed on, yet shall all contribute,
And workability shall bring accomplishment.
The techniques of community we fashion
May guide the great Community to come.”

—Harvey Jackins

Secular Humanism II

ethic against targeting-out

“We are completely powerful, lovable, admirable, intelligent, capable. We are in charge. Societies are transitory and always collapse of their own contradictions . . . Life is filled with meaning . . . We are the leading edge of the upward trend in the universe.

“We are free, each moment, to begin a completely new future, untrammelled and uninfluenced by any of the distresses of the past . . . The future, arriving at the present, presents us with an endless series of such fresh opportunities to make completely fresh starts on completely rational futures.” (Cf. similar humanist manifestos; and Appendix: RTJ)

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1. Harvey Jackins, “Possessors of Vast Treasures,” *Present Time* (Seattle, WA: Rational Island Publishers / The International Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, 1983), Vol. 53, p. 35-42. Accessed by this author on 7/10/2010 at: www.rc.org/publications/present_time/pt53/pt53_35_hj.html Significantly this particular humanist tradition is not confined to individual or personal development but correlates self-transformation with theories and practices of social transformation. Cf. this twofold declaration: “The re-emergence from distress patterns which we co-counsel to achieve is the dependably long-range channel for achieving the liberation of humans from all oppressions.” Harvey Jackins, *The Human Situation* (Seattle: Rational Island Publishers, 1991), p. 108. Cf. also: Harvey Jackins, *The Human Side of Human Beings: The Theory of Re-evaluation Counseling* (Seattle: Rational Island Publishers, 1994), and *A Better World* (Seattle: Rational Island Publishers, 1992). On Re-evaluation Counseling as ‘cathartic’ and ‘abreactive’ see T.J. Scheff, *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Drama*, (Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 1979), pp. x-xiii, 26-79; and the brief treatment in Jerome D. Frank and Julia B. Frank, *Persuasion and Healing: A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy*, Revised ed. (NY: Schocken, 1974), pp. 257-261. Again, see Katie Kauffman, Caroline New, *Co-Counselling: The Theory and Practice of Re-Evaluation Counselling* (Series on Advancing Theory in Therapy; Routledge, 2004).

Rescuing Our Faith from Sacred Violence

Interfaith Resources for Courses & Group Work

PART III
excerpt for
shorter presentations

Appendix A: Notes on
Interfaith Symbolism²

10/20/2010

1. **Presenter:** Theophus “Thee” Smith is a native Atlantan, an associate professor in the Religion Department of Emory University, author of *Conjuring Culture: Biblical Formations of Black America* (Oxford, 1994), and coeditor of *Curing Violence* (Polebridge, 1994). Since the 1990s Thee Smith has facilitated forums and workshops on diversity and reconciliation issues at Emory and throughout the nation. Since 2003 he has served as a co-founding director of Southern Truth and Reconciliation—STAR (www.southerntruth.org), a regional nonprofit that consults with local communities seeking truth-and-reconciliation approaches to U.S. racial violence. Raised Baptist in the (U.S.) Black Church tradition, Thee is also a priest associate at the Cathedral of St. Philip in the Episcopal diocese of Atlanta. For additional information see: faculty profile at www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/RELIGION/faculty/smith.html

and sermon archive at

www.stphilipscathedral.org/Sermons/default.asp

2. Illustration: 3 superimposed images composed of (a) green background image from <http://themgv.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/interfaith1.jpg> accessed by author on 6/25/2010; (b) center circular image from www.OneSpiritInterfaithSeminary.org accessed 9/15/2004; and (c) additional image called *Gye Nyame*, “Except for God,” the classic religious Adinkra symbol of West Africa (Ghana etc.), accessed at www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/gyen.htm on 7/1/1010.

Eucharistic Non-Targeting 'Sacramental' Workshops

5 Step Practicum¹

- Eucharist or Holy Communion provides a sacramental point of departure for this practicum.⁴

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1. This practicum is adapted from Cherie R. Brown & George J. Mazza, *Healing Into Action: Leadership Guide for Creating Diverse Communities* (Washington, DC: National Coalition Building Institute, 1998), p. 49f. Contact: NCBI International, 1120 Conn. Ave. Suite 450, Washington, D.C. 20036 USA; 202-785-9400; www.ncbi.org; fax 202-785-3385.
2. On the convergence here of religious and cultural practices cf. Paul Tillich: "Religion as ultimate concern is the meaning-giving substance of culture, and culture is the totality of forms in which the basic concern of religion expresses itself. In abbreviation: *religion is the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion*. [This] prevents . . . a dualism of religion and culture. Every religious act, not only in organized religion, but also in the most intimate movement of the soul, is culturally formed. . . . On the other hand, there is no cultural creation without an ultimate concern expressed in it." Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 42-43.
3. Contrasted here are '**eucharistic circles**' vs. '**scapegoat circles.**' The defining practice of Christians is the formation of such eucharistic circles (not necessarily in liturgies but) everywhere, counteracting all the everyday and routine ways we target each other for victimization. Cf. again: "the new unity of humanity looks like . . . the beginnings of the gathering of penitent persecutors around the body of the self-giving victim" (Alison, unpub. Diss. [chk])

Eucharistic Non-Targeting 'Sacramental' Workshops

5 Step Practicum¹

- Eucharist or Holy Communion provides a sacramental point of departure for this practicum.⁴
- These sacramental practices are trajectories or models—not limited to ritual or liturgy, nor to Christian or other religious contexts, but

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[Note 3(b)] The transformative power of eucharistic practices (again, not limited to the sacrament) delivers us from being actors in the one kind of ritual circle, and reorients us toward becoming enactors of this new kind of ritual circle. Thus humanity is renewed wherever people are saved from, rather than handed over to, being victims and victimizers of each other.

4. A sacramental warrant for such practices, and this practicum, is provided by Catholic theologian Emmanuel Charles McCarthy in his monograph, "The Nonviolent Eucharist."

It is possible today, as it has been possible for 1700 years, for a normal person to spend a lifetime listening to the Eucharistic Prayers of all of the mainline Christian churches and never apprehend that what is being remembered is a Person--who . . . rejected violence, forgave everyone, prayed for persecutors, returned good for evil.

. . . In most Christian churches, the *anamnesis* has become an agency for amnesia . . . Yet this is precisely what most Christian churches have been doing in their Eucharistic Prayer since Constantine first employed the cross as an ensign to lead people into the enmity and homicide called war.

In this connection McCarthy issues a call for churches to . . .

Eucharistic Non-Targeting *'Sacramental' Workshops*

5 Step Practicum

- Eucharist or Holy Communion provides a sacramental point of departure for this practicum.⁴
- These sacramental practices are trajectories or models—not limited to ritual or liturgy, nor to Christian or other religious contexts, but
- seeking (cf. heuristic) application across all traditions, outside religious contexts, and throughout culture. (Cf. Tillich on “ultimate concern” in religion & culture: n.2 plus notes 3-5 below.)

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[Note 4(b)]

“ . . . “compose new eucharistic prayers which vividly call to mind the New Commandment, and the actual details of the historic confrontation between homicidal violence and Jesus' nonviolent love of friends and enemies that took place at the moment being remembered. This is not one among many things the churches can do for peace and unity—it is what they must do. The present meagerness of scriptural and historical memory, while it does not render the Eucharistic Prayers false, does make them operationally deceptive by omission. Source: The Rev. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, “The Nonviolent Eucharist (Ctr for Christian Nonviolence: 167 Fairhill, Wilmington, DE 19808; Phone: 302.235.2925; fax: 302-235-2926; jjcarmody@comcast.net; n.d.), p. 5-6. See also www.centerforchristiannonviolence.org/the-nonviolent-eucharist accessed by this author on 7/30/2010.

5. Consider as well this related critique:

Around the end of the first millennium of Christianity, in response to an increasingly diverse membership and in phase with the development of scientific explanations, there grew a set of eucharistic devotions and an attendant rationale . . . [for] the development of eucharistic theology and practice quite separable from the Mass itself. . . . For many centuries and . . .

Eucharistic Non-Targeting 'Sacramental' Workshops

5 Step Practicum

Preview queries:

1. What would a similar or entirely different practicum look like based on other religions /humanisms?
2. How would similar or different practices expose and treat the sacred lies*/sacred violence involved? *slide 6, n.2

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[Note 4(c)] . . . for multitudes of people they were cultivated *instead of* the Mass, which for various reasons was commonly unavailable. Hunger will find ways . . . of assuagement; sustenance by whatever name is nourishment. (Anthony J. Gittins, *Bread for the Journey: The Mission of Transformation and the Transformation of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993), pp. 78-9. Cf. Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy: The Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*; Liturgical Press, 1982.)

Cf. these related, trenchant criticisms by Gittins:

The memorial (*anamnesis*) of Christ's sacrifice (a gift, a meal, and a lesson about love and loyalty, justice and joyousness), the eucharistic feast has become for many a famine and a scandal. The preeminent sign of nourishment and unity for Christians and to the world, the eucharist is currently the focus of embarrassment, division, and dissension as much as it is a beacon of light and a standard-bearer of justice . . . The eucharistic life of myriad communities is a scandal, and it is pastorally indefensible to deprive such communities of honest celebrations of the Paschal mystery . . . Somehow the kernel or the core--the deep structures--of the eucharist and the faith must be rediscovered and transformed into living and life-giving liturgies and lifestyles in a thousand cultures and ten thousand communities" (p. 26ff.).

Question 1

Ground rules: *Participants agree to civility +to: take turns, keep confidence, speak only for self, 'trust process' /facilitator & allow for discomfort /change*

/fun 😊 😞 ☀️

When was a time that you or your group or community followed Jesus' model of

- **rejecting violence?** 'put back your sword' (Mt. 26.52)
- **forgiving enemies/enmity?** 'pray for your persecutors' (Mt. 5.44)
- **returning good for evil?** 'don't resist an evildoer but turn the other cheek, give your other coat, go the 2nd mile' (Mt.5.39); don't repay evil with evil (St. Paul: Rom.12.17). Cf. note 4 below re: Gandhi/Tutu/Bonhoeffer caveats on nonviolent resistance.

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1. In New Testament teachings the biblical warrant for such practices (and for this practicum) include Jesus' injunctions to:

reject violence ('put back your sword'; Mt. 26.52); 'do not resist an evildoer' (Mt.5.39), nor repay evil with evil (St. Paul: Rom.12.17)

but rather 'turn the other cheek,' 'give your coat also,' 'go the second mile,' 'give to beggars and loan to borrowers' (Mt. 5.39-42); and

'love your enemies . . . pray for your persecutors' (Mt.5.44).

These texts corroborate and expand McCarthy's summary of Jesus' nonviolent injunctions from the Sermon on the Mount (New Testament: Matthew 5). In holy Eucharist, McCarthy summarizes (noted above): "what is being remembered [*anamnesis* vs. *amnesia*] is a Person—who . . . rejected violence, forgave everyone, prayed for persecutors, returned good for evil."

2. The example of Amish forgiveness story is described in detail and excerpted below by this author on 7/31/2010 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amish_school_shooting Bart Township, Lancaster Co., Pennsylvania; October 2, 2006

[Excerpt] Amish community response

On the day of the shooting, a grandfather of one of the murdered Amish girls was heard warning some young relatives not to hate the killer, saying, "We must not think evil of this man." Another Amish father noted, "He had a mother and a wife and a soul and now he's standing before a just God."

Jack Meyer, a member of the Brethren community living near the Amish in Lancaster County, explained: "I don't think there's anybody here that wants to do anything but forgive and not only reach out to those who have suffered a loss in that way but to reach out to the family of the man who committed these acts."

Question 1

Ground rules: *Participants agree to civility +to: take turns, keep confidence, speak only for self, 'trust process' /facilitator & allow for discomfort /change*

/fun ☺ ☹ ☀

Example 1: Funeral reconciliation of the Bart Township Amish with the Charles Roberts family after his Oct. 2006 suicide killing of their five schoolgirls²

Affect: *Apostolic euphoria, elation or honor re: imitatio dei (imitation of God; cf. mimesis; cf. imitatio Christi Christ likeness). Celebrate!*

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When was a time that you or your group or community followed Jesus' model of

- rejecting violence?
- forgiving enemies/enmity?
- returning good for evil?

[Note 2(b)] A Roberts family spokesman said an Amish neighbor comforted the Roberts family hours after the shooting and

extended forgiveness to them. Amish community members visited and comforted Roberts' widow, parents, and parents-in-law. One Amish man held Roberts' sobbing father in his arms, reportedly for as long as an hour, to comfort him. The Amish have also set up a charitable fund for the family of the shooter. About 30 members of the Amish community attended Roberts' funeral, and Marie Roberts, the widow of the killer, was one of the few outsiders invited to the funeral of one of the victims. Marie Roberts wrote an open letter to her Amish neighbors thanking them for their forgiveness, grace, and mercy. She wrote, "Your love for our family has helped to provide the healing we so desperately need. Gifts you've given have touched our hearts in a way no words can describe. Your compassion has reached beyond our family, beyond our community, and is changing our world, and for this we sincerely thank you."

. . . Some commentators criticized the swift and complete forgiveness with which the Amish responded, arguing that forgiveness is inappropriate when no remorse has been expressed, and that such an attitude runs the risk of denying the existence of evil . . . scholars of Amish life noted that "letting go of grudges" is a deeply-rooted value in Amish culture, which remembers forgiving martyrs including Dirk Willems [noted below] and Jesus himself. They explained that the Amish willingness to forgo vengeance does not undo the tragedy or pardon the wrong, but rather constitutes a first step toward a future that is more hopeful.

3. Invoked above, the **Dirk Willems** model (cf. mimesis) is perhaps second only to "Jesus himself" for the Amish, Brethren, Mennonite, and other spiritual descendents of the 'radical reformation' who adhere still today to the Anabaptist legacy. "Dirk Willems (died 16 May 1569) was a martyred Anabaptist who is most famous for, after his escape from prison, turning around to rescue his pursuer, who had fallen through thin ice while chasing him" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dirk_Willems accessed by author 8/2/2010).

Question 2

When was a time that you or your community failed to do so, instead

—**targeting** some person or group for accusation

/blame /shame? or

—**abandoning** them or neglecting to intervene? or

—**perpetrating** /participating in their mistreatment or in misinformation about them?

(Cf. jokes, remarks, slurs)

Example 2: A recent USDA official's acknowledgment of under-serving a white farmer whose farm was at risk after he spoke to her in "superior" tone (Shirley Sherrod story).

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Shirley Sherrod was the African American director for rural development in Georgia under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). A charge of racism against her—or reverse racism—was based on a 2 minute clip of her 40 minute speech to the NAACP in March of this year (2010). In the clip she seemed to be boasting that she could have helped a white farmer save his farm, but that all she did was refer him to a white lawyer instead, particularly because the farmer spoke to her with a superior attitude.

However as the week unfolded the full speech was viewed by hundreds of people all over the country. (For an initial timeline of events see <http://mediamatters.org/research/201007220004> accessed by this author on 7/23/2010.) Then it became clear that the 2 minute clip was taken out of context. In the full version of her speech Ms. Sherrod acknowledges some bias against whites because, tragically, during her childhood her father had been murdered by a white farmer in a hate crime for which he was never punished.

But then, remarkably, she goes on confess before her audience that it became clear to her that her prejudice was not acceptable; not professionally, morally or spiritually. As a public official she admits that it was wrong of her to under-serve the white farmer and that, as a person of faith, God revealed this to her through subsequent events. In subsequent events she discovered that the white lawyer was failing to provide the legal aid that the farmer needed. So she felt obligated to intervene and insure that the family got to keep their farm. For that intervention she earned the enduring gratitude of the farmer, Roger Spooner, and the farmer's wife, 82 year-old Eloise Spooner who told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that in fact Sherrod did save their farm and "kept us out of bankruptcy." (Read more at: www.newser.com/story/96019/farmers-wife-fired-usda-official-saved-us.html#ixzz0uVn6wuze accessed by author 7/23/2010.)

Question 2

When was a time that
you or your
community failed to
do so, instead

—targeting? or

—abandoning? or

—perpetrating?

/participating?

(cf. jokes, remarks, slurs)

Example 2: A recent USDA official's acknowledgment of under-serving a white farmer whose farm was at risk after he spoke to her in "superior" tone (Shirley Sherrod story).

Affect: *Defy embarrassment or defensiveness to express actual feelings at the time as experienced.*

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[Note cont'd.] By the end of the week numerous apologies had been offered to Shirley Sherrod, from media reporters, to the NAACP, and even from President Obama in a carefully arranged phone call. Indeed the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture offered to reinstate her, albeit in a different job. And other commentators have noted that having so many people view the full video of Sherrod's speech is a good outcome of the story.

In that connection columnist Peggy Noonan, writing in Friday's *Wall Street Journal*, described Sherrod's story as demonstrating "the power of grace and the possibility of redemption." Noonan even suggests that the video be assigned as "required viewing in the nation's high schools" when students return to campus this fall.

The rest of us can also learn from Sherrod's story, she observed; for example that "we're too quick to judge" and we're "not skeptical enough of what new media [sic.] can cook up in its little devil's den." But Noonan seems especially eager to reach our nation's youth, perhaps in part because the video itself features Sherrod appealing to young people to go beyond the racism of their elders. More substantively, however, Noonan calls this story a lesson in 'grace and redemption' because it teaches all of us that "Individuals can change," she writes, "just like nations. They can get better, if they want to be . . . [This] can be a teachable moment," she concludes. (Read more at: <http://www.newser.com/story/96300/lets-teach-sherrods-speech-in-schools.html#ixzz0uW13jYNo> and at: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703467304575383731552735178.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop#printMode accessed by this author on 7/23/2010.) For more recent updates see www.newser.com/taggrid/53924/shirley-sherrod.html

Question 3

Ground rules: *Participants agree to civility +to: take turns, keep confidence, speak only for self, 'trust process'/facilitator & allow for discomfort/change /fun ☺ ☹ ☀*

Example 3: Shirley Sherrod family terrorized & father murdered by a white farmer in a hate crime for which he was never punished.

Affect: *Express vigorously what would you like to have said or done in that situation, venting freely; cf. practice 'healing of memories.'*

When was a time *early* in life *or* group history that you or your community were the target of such outcomes

—**targeted** for 'surplus' accusation /blame /shame?

—**neglected** or abandoned by others failing to intervene on your behalf?

—**perpetrated against** by misinformation/ mistreatment?

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See the Shirley Sherrod story outlined in the preceding slide.

Question 4 How does **Q. 2** relate to **Q. 3**?
That is, what is similar between

- you or your group targeting or neglecting to intervene on behalf of others (Q.2), and
- your own / your group’s experience of being targeted or abandoned (Q.3)?

Example 4: Shirley Sherrod’s feelings of ‘terror and rage’ following her father’s murder by a white farmer relate to her initial treatment of farmer Roger Spooner as her client.

Insight: *Realizing how targeting others connects to being targeted ourselves releases us from ‘doing unto others what was done unto us.’ (Cf. mimesis as repetition of trauma in notes 1- 2 below.)*

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1. A key feature of this practicum is its inducement of “time expansion,” a term coined by psychologist Vamik Volkan to contrast with its converse, “time collapse.” For Volkan, time collapse is a psycho-social “reactivation” in which memories, stories, feelings, and perceptions about a past event become intertwined with actions and emotions pertaining to the current conflict. This exaggerates the images of the current enemy and blurs the distinction between what is real and what is fantasized in the current conflict.

In turn, maladaptive group behavior and irrational decision-making can emerge, and the potential for violence and desire for revenge or retaliation against the enemy, both real and fantasized, increase.

The passage above is available via *Coexist International Magazine* at: www.coexistmag.com/2001/p103-08d.html, accessed by the author on 6/23/05. The term is also lucidly introduced in *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997, pp. 34-35. In this excerpt the author applies his theory of “time collapse” to explain the dynamics involved in a series of Arab-Israel meetings sponsored and studied by the American Psychiatric Association during six-years of dialogues.

Elsewhere Volkan elaborates further:

When chosen traumas and their derivatives are reactivated, the emotions and perceptions pertaining to them are felt as if the trauma occurred recently—they become fused with emotions and perceptions pertaining to the present and are even projected into the future. What is remembered from the past, felt now, and expected for the future come together in a time collapse. Understandably, this time collapse complicates attempts to resolve the conflicts at hand. To counteract this phenomenon . . .

Question 4

How does **Q. 2** relate to **Q. 3**? That is, what is similar between

—you or your group targeting or neglecting others (Q.2), and

—your own / your group's experience of being targeted or abandoned (Q.3)?

Example 4: Shirley Sherrod's feelings of 'terror and rage' following her father's murder by a white farmer relate to her initial treatment of farmer Roger Spooner as her client.

Response: *Share insights and optionally respond to others' comments & queries.*

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[Note 1(b)] “. . . and to encourage a time expansion, facilitators must allow discussions to take place concerning the chosen trauma itself and participants' personal traumas pertaining to the large-group conflict. If feelings and issues about the past can be distanced and separated from present problems, then today's problems can be more realistically discussed.”

Vamik Volkan, “The tree model: a comprehensive psychopolitical approach to unofficial diplomacy and the reduction of ethnic tension,” *Mind and Human Interaction* (1999) 10: 142-206. ‘To cite particular passages or pages, please contact us for a hard copy of the orig. published version.’ (email: mind@virginia.edu, phone: 434-924-2844). The passage is available online at various sites including the location accessed by the author on 8/3/2010 at www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/csmhi/vol103Volkan.cfm

2. In this connection see also the theory of ‘repetition compulsion’ resulting from childhood trauma in the sometimes controversial works of psychologist Alice Miller: *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, (1978; rev. 1995), *Prisoners of Childhood* (1981), *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence* (1983; full text available free online at www.nospank.net/fyog.htm), *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child* (1984), *Banished Knowledge: Facing Childhood Injuries* (n.d.), *The Untouched Key: Tracing Childhood Trauma in Creativity and Destructiveness* (n.d.), *Breaking Down the Wall of Silence: The Liberating Experience of Facing Painful Truth* (n.d.), *The Truth Will Set You Free: Overcoming Emotional Blindness* (2001), *The Body Never Lies: The Lingering Effects of Cruel Parenting* (2005), *Free From Lies: Discovering Your True Needs* (2009). This bibliography accessed at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_Miller_\(psychologist\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_Miller_(psychologist)) by this author on 7/31/2010.

Question 5

How would you re-play or role play item 2 ‘as if’ item 3 were addressed /resolved /healed?

- How do you feel about how you handled item 2; how would you like to have?
- How can you respond in future without ‘acting-out’ item 3? (cf. ‘repetition trauma’)
- What would enable ‘table fellowship’ with others today? (cf. Eucharistic com-unity)

Example 5: Discovering that the Spooner farm was at imminent risk, Sherrod felt morally & professionally obliged to intervene & ‘save the farm;’ a lesson in ‘grace & redemption’ (Q2 n. above).

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1. In *eucharist* (Mass, Holy Communion, or Lord’s Supper; from Greek *eu-charis*, good grace = thanks-giving) we re-experience the hilarity of the apostles on those first occasions of table fellowship with the risen Jesus, when they realized that he was forgiving them for betraying him to his death (thank goodness!).

[Source cited below]

Before even the risen Jesus can be preached to the city which has killed him, he must return to those closest to him (those whose task it will be to preach his good news) and show them *their* part in his death. . . . They must learn the truth of their collusion with the violence which destroyed Jesus, learn that before they can preach to others they must themselves repent and turn--acknowledge their identity of failure before they can again be apostles, missionaries. They must experience the juxtaposition of God’s unconditional grace in the face of their own violations of God, self and others.

This juxtaposition is built into every Christian celebration of the Eucharist. The narrative of the institution is introduced with a reminder that the sacrament of Jesus self-gift originates in the same night that he was betrayed. Those who eat at Jesus table are his betrayers, then as now; yet from the death and hell to which our betrayal condemns him, he returns to break his bread with us as before. The Eucharist is never a simple fellowship meal, not even . . . with Jesus. Its imagery always and necessarily operates between the two poles of Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday, between Gethsemane and Emmaus, between the Upper Room before the crucifixion and the Upper Room to which the risen Jesus comes. All meals with Jesus after Calvary speak of the *restoration* of a fellowship broken by human infidelity: the wounded body and the shed blood are inescapably present.

Question 5

Ground rules: *Participants agree to civility +to: take turns, keep confidence, speak only for self, 'trust process' / facilitator & allow for discomfort /change*
/fun ☺ ☹ ☀

Example 5: Discovering that the Spooner farm was at imminent risk, Sherrod felt morally & professionally obliged to intervene & 'save the farm;' a lesson in 'grace & redemption' (Q2 n. above).

Affect: *Exult in the freedom that 'breaks the spell' of our targeted past! (cf. kvell – Yiddish: gush, swell, glow; brag)*

How would you re-play or role play item 2 'as if' item 3 were addressed /resolved /healed?

- handle item 2 differently?
- respond without 'acting-out' item 3?
- What would enable (or hinder) 'table fellowship'?

Cf. personal examples below

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[Note 1(b)] “We do not eucharistically remember a distant meal in Jerusalem, nor even a distant death: we are made present to ourselves [cf. remember = make present; Greek: *anamnesis* vs. ‘amnesia’] as people complicit in the betrayal and death of Jesus and yet still called and accepted, still companions of Christ in the strict sense--those who break bread with him. The Eucharist recapitulates the Supper, the betrayal and the cross, but it does so as an *Easter* feast.” Rowan Williams, *Resurrection: Interpreting the Easter Gospel* (Pilgrim, 1984), pp. 38; 40-41

2. Similarly in this workshop we reclaim that joy of apostolic restoration with reference to those whom we (our society or group) abandon or betray in our own day. By-passing denial or blame, the five-step practicum invites participants to review some of the specific ways that we support policies or practices that victimize or violate others.

3. In this self-examination, however, complicity is transfigured beyond guilt or shame, echoing the apostolic euphoria experienced at those 1st century eucharistic tables. (Cf. James Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin through Easter Eyes*). Indeed at that table we are empowered to intervene on behalf of victims by becoming ourselves, like Christ (Christ-like), ‘broken bread (nourishment) and poured-out wine (euphoria) for the life of the world.’

4. On ‘acting-out’ and ‘repetition trauma’ see note 2 in slide 37 above, re: Alice Miller on “repetition compulsion” etc.

Eucharistic Non-Targeting 'Sacramental' Workshops Personal Examples

- **Example 1:** I was taught to value my people often 'returning good for evil' despite being targeted by slavery and racism.
- **Example 2:** As teenagers my brother & I, racially threatened by a white construction worker, shot him in the head with a BB rifle.
- **Example 3:** As a younger boy I had a golf club swung at my head by two white men driving by in a pickup truck.
- **Example 4:** My terror and rage at being nearly hit in the head during a racist attack relates to my willingness to risk injuring someone else. Since then I've been mortified by what we did.
- **Example 5:** I imagine bringing the construction worker a glass of cold water and trying to share with him how he frightened us.

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Personal Example No. 2 At a related workshop I was also asked to provide a personal example; similar to Question 2 in this 5 Step Practicum: *Recall an early time in your life when you yourself were the target of some mistreatment or violence. Express any indignation or anger, grief or hurt (as much feeling as circumstances allow).* My response was a more elaborate depiction of Example 2 offered above.

As an African American I grew up in the deep South and learned by direct experience that I had to 'watch my back' at all times. One day, at the age of ten, while riding my bike on a major thoroughfare two white men drove up behind me in a pickup truck. One of them leaned out of the window, yelled out the N-word, "You Nig!" and swung at my head with a golf club. He actually missed hitting me but I can still feel the anticipated impact on the back part of my head where the club would have hurt me. And even though I was not actually hit I can always tell that story as if I had been, because ever since then I am always on guard in public places and watching around me to see if I am safe. . . . If I could speak-out now from the perspective of that young boy I would rage against the vicious attack of those men who contaminated my world that day, and taught me as a young man to be terrified for myself in the wider world. "How dare you poison the world for a young person like that! Don't you know we're your hope for a better world?"

See "Four Step Practicum" in "Eucharistic Social Change: Concise Theology & Practice" accessed 8/7/2010 at www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/smith/euchsoc2.html.

Eucharistic Non-Targeting 'Sacramental' Workshops Applications

1. Brainstorm instances where this 5 Step practicum could be applied—in whole or in part—from inter-personal to intergroup conflicts (e.g. Volkan in note).

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The process and skills that this practicum presents are applicable to larger scale issues and multiple cases, including international and geopolitical contexts. Consider these examples from the work of Vamik Volkan. Both cases feature Volkan's theory of violence rooted in the phenomena of "time collapse." Volkan has addressed this theory in the context of several conflict resolution conferences (cf. Appendix B on 'conferencing' as a practice of restorative justice). Note that the conferences share aspects of "time expansion" featured in the 5 Step Practicum introduced in this presentation (see definitions in the notes attached to Question 4 above).

Case I: Alawi and Sunni Muslims in Turkey, 1993

[Background] An example of a time collapse occurred in 1993 among the Alawis, a significant subgroup of Muslims living in Turkey.

In 1993, an Alawi festival in Sivas honoring an important figure in Alawi history ended in disaster when twenty-four people perished in a hotel fire started by a mob of Sunnis (the majority Muslim group in Turkey).

This event revived images of past tragedies important to the Alawis, such as one in the 7th Century when the son of Caliph Ali, along with his family and followers, were killed upon the desert plain of Kerbala. In written accounts of the Sivas event, one can easily see how the instigators and victims of the current disaster were identified with those of former ones.⁵

Thus, a time collapse occurred, and the mental images of the Alawis' centuries old past grievances became condensed with their current victimization. In the process, the Alawi identity in Turkey was strengthened and enhanced . . .⁴

[Treatment] The diagnosis of a co-existence problem by a "neutral" third party team should explore group members' shared mental images of past history and dissect the mechanism of time collapse in a given situation.

Eucharistic Non-Targeting 'Sacramental' Workshops Applications

1. Brainstorm instances where this 5 Step practicum could be applied—in whole or in part—from inter-personal to intergroup conflicts (e.g. Volkan in note).
2. Consider conflict resolution, violence prevention, victim-offender, and mediation programs for which this practicum could be adapted—in whole or in part.

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[Note cont'd] It should also examine the nature and meanings of the “rituals” that exist in the relationship between the antagonist groups. These rituals may range from assigning major importance to seemingly minor differences between the two groups, to attempts at “purifying” one group’s identity from any contamination with the neighbor’s identity. [Cf. Girard on mimetic rivalry]

Rituals between large groups are usually in the service of enhancing various elements of large-group identity and tend to be governed by two general principles:

- Opposing groups need to maintain their identities as distinct from each other (principle of “non-sameness”);
- Opposing groups need to maintain an unambiguous psychological border between them.

Emphasizing differences, even minor ones, between two groups in conflict can be seen as shoring up the border between the identities of the two groups. This helps lessen each group’s anxiety, since, with the border in place, a clear distinction between the two groups is maintained, diminishing the fear that one group’s identity will become diluted or lost in the other’s. Vamik Volkan, quoted by *Coexist International Magazine* at: www.coexistmag.com/2001/p103-08d.html, accessed by the author on 8/2/10; emphasis and bracketed references mine.

Case II: Greeks and Turks in Cyprus, 1988-90

[*Background*] The Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960 with an unworkable constitution that allowed both Greeks and Turks to share power. Within three years, Cypriot Greeks drove Cypriot Turks from the 35% of the island that they had inhabited into enclaves occupying only 3% of it. The Cypriot Turks remained in these enclaves from 1963 until 1974. The period of 1963-1968 was especially traumatic for them. In 1974, the Turkish Army came to Cyprus from the mainland and divided the island into northern Turkish and southern Greek sections. To this day, no political settlement has yet been reached.

Eucharistic Non-Targeting 'Sacramental' Workshops Applications

1. Brainstorm instances where this 5 Step practicum could be applied—in whole or in part—from inter-personal to intergroup conflicts (e.g. Volkan in note).
2. Consider conflict resolution, violence prevention, victim-offender, and mediation programs for which this practicum could be adapted—in whole or in part.
3. What would a similar or entirely different practicum look like based on other religions /humanisms?

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[Note cont'd] Although the intent of these 1988-90 dialogues was to determine what could be done now and in the future, exchanges dwelled on incidents of the past. The participants of Turkish descent continually referred to the 1963 events, which drove so many Turkish Cypriots from their homes. In turn, those of Greek origin repeatedly relished accounts of the Turkish military's intervention in Cyprus in 1974. In such exchanges, there is little realistic integration of what "they" did to us, what "we" did to them, what "we" did for them, etc. If left unchecked, both sides will continue to list their chosen traumas and glories, back and forth, in an endless and victorless competition. [Cf. Girard on mimetic rivalry]

However frustrating such exchanges may be, they are necessary to the process itself, because they serve to strengthen participants' hold on their ethnic identities. If participants do not feel secure in their ethnic identities, they will have great difficulty negotiating more realistically with the "other" when the time comes.

[Treatment]

During listings of grievances, the task of the facilitating team is to absorb the outpouring of the parties' emotions through active listening, to avoid taking sides, and thus to become a model of empathic listening. When eventually the opposing groups begin to

Eucharistic Non-Targeting 'Sacramental' Workshops Applications

1. Brainstorm instances where this 5 Step practicum could be applied—in whole or in part—from inter-personal to intergroup conflicts (e.g. Volkan in note).
2. Consider conflict resolution, violence prevention, victim-offender, and mediation programs for which this practicum could be adapted—in whole or in part.
3. What would a similar or entirely different practicum look like based on other religions /humanisms?
4. How would similar or different practices expose and treat the sacred lies*/sacred violence involved? *def. above

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[Note cont'd]

. . . “hear” each other, more realistic discussions can ensue. Mutual recognition of one another’s suffering creates a favorable atmosphere for progress in negotiation because underneath there is a mutual verification of each other’s group identity. Thus the listing of chosen traumas early in the dialogues serves to fortify participants’ ethnic identities.

From Vamik Volkan, “The tree model: a comprehensive psychopolitical approach to unofficial diplomacy and the reduction of ethnic tension,” *Mind and Human Interaction* (1999) 10: 142-206. ‘To cite particular passages or pages, please contact us for a hard copy of the orig. published version.’ (email: mind@virginia.edu, phone: 434-924-2844). The passage is available online at various sites including www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/csmhi/vol103Volkan.cfm accessed by the author on 8/3/2010; emphasis and bracketed references mine.

Eucharistic Non-Targeting 'Sacramental' Workshops Invitation & Challenge

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EVALUATION form in notes

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2. EVALUATION

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We appreciate your participation in this workshop! Please complete the following survey and help us maintain the highest standards as we continue to provide these workshops. *Thank you!*

Please rate the following on a scale from 1 to 5 || 1=poor, 2=below average, 3=average, 4=good, 5=excellent

Circle one:

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Overall satisfaction with the workshop | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Overall performance of facilitator/s | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3. The most meaningful activity of the day was:

Circle one:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| a) Introduction of theory | b) Question 1 | c) Question 2 |
| d) Question 3 | e) Question 5 | f) Application & follow-up discussion |

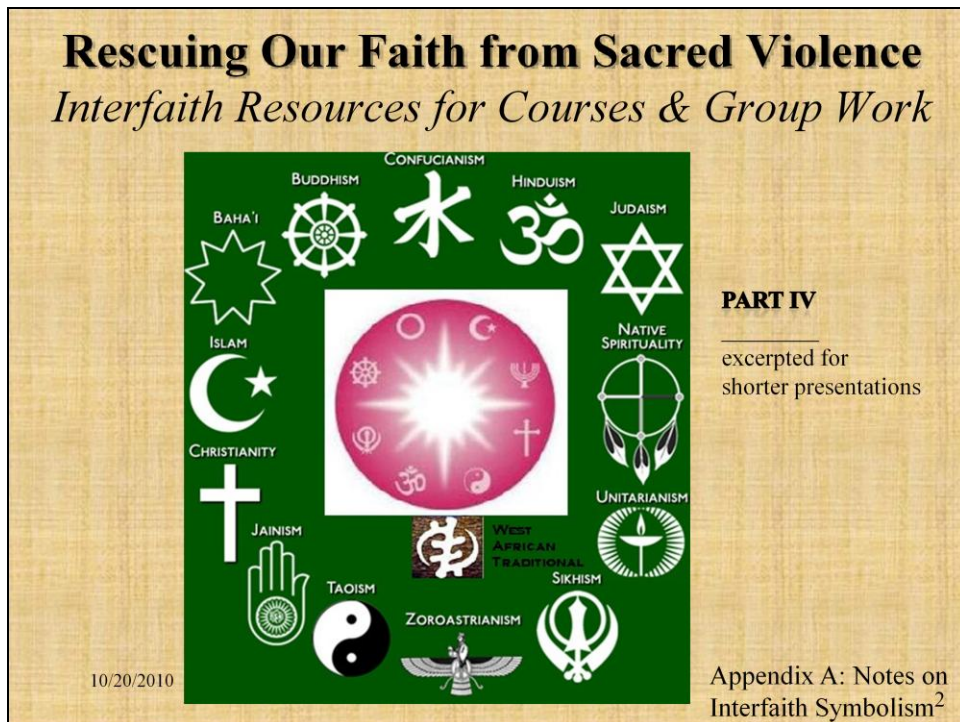
4. Please share a specific highlight or key learning for you.
-

5. In what ways could we improve the workshop?

6. Would you be interested in participating in related group work, or trainings to lead this work? Please circle one: Yes No

Additional Comments (here &/or back of page):

If you would like to be on our e-mail list, please give us your contact information. *hanks for your participation!*



1. **Presenter:** Theophus “Thee” Smith is a native Atlantan, an associate professor in the Religion Department of Emory University, author of *Conjuring Culture: Biblical Formations of Black America* (Oxford, 1994), and coeditor of *Curing Violence* (Polebridge, 1994). Since the 1990s Thee Smith has facilitated forums and workshops on diversity and reconciliation issues at Emory and throughout the nation. Since 2003 he has served as a co-founding director of Southern Truth and Reconciliation—STAR (www.southerntruth.org), a regional nonprofit that consults with local communities seeking truth-and-reconciliation approaches to U.S. racial violence. Raised Baptist in the (U.S.) Black Church tradition, Thee is also a priest associate at the Cathedral of St. Philip in the Episcopal diocese of Atlanta. For additional information see: faculty profile at www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/RELIGION/faculty/smith.html and sermon archive at www.stphilipscathedral.org/Sermons/default.asp
2. Illustration: 3 superimposed images composed of (a) green background image from <http://themgv.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/interfaith1.jpg> accessed by author on 6/25/2010; (b) center circular image from www.OneSpiritInterfaithSeminary.org accessed 9/15/2004; and (c) additional image called *Gye Nyame*, “Except for God,” the classic religious Adinkra symbol of West Africa (Ghana etc.), accessed at www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/gyen.htm on 7/1/1010.



Conclusion: Our Collective Wisdom Traditions

“If we take the world's religions at their best, we find the distilled wisdom of the human race.” —Huston Smith

“We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of nonviolence.” —Gandhi

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1. Huston Smith, *The Religions of Mankind* (?) [chk]

2. M. K. Gandhi, *Harijan* journal 1935-55, & J. Bondurant, ed. Vol.8 (8/25/1940): 260, Garland Lib. of War & Peace (NY:1973). Cf. this related credo by M. L. King, Jr.: “I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.” Martin Luther King, Jr., “Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech,” *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, edited by James M. Washington (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), pp. 225-226.

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Interfaith Resources for Courses & Group Work

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Appendix A

Notes on Interfaith Symbolism I

A. What is covert here?



B. What is covert/missing here?



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1. **Covert in image A:** (A1) Temple symbol (?) for Greco-Roman religions as an ancient type of world religion (?) followed by (A2) the cruciform Greek letters *chi* and *rho* for *Christos* or Christ. Note too the other contemporary world religions with the addition of Taoism: (A3) Buddhist prayer wheel; (A4) Hinduism; (A5) yin-yang of the Tao; (A6) Jewish ‘Star of David;’ and (A7) Muslim ‘Star and Crescent.’

2. **Covert in image B:** the center-most upper left quadrant features an empty ring or vacant circle symbolic of no-religious traditions (cf. ‘null set’). **Missing in image B:** African Traditional Religions (ATR), e.g., the center lower image added to image B in slide one above—*Gye Nyame*, “Except for God,” the Adinkra symbol of West Africa (Ghana etc.).

3. Sources: (a) generic black and white image composed of internet clip art circa 2001; (b) green background image from <http://themgv.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/interfaith1.jpg> accessed by this author on 6/25/2010 and altered with (c) a superimposed center image accessed 9/15/2004 at www.OneSpiritInterfaithSeminary.org

Appendix A

Notes on Interfaith Symbolism II

West African Traditional Symbol



Gye Nyame
“Except God”



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1. *Gye Nyame*, “Except God” or “Except for God,” the classic religious Adinkra symbol of West Africa (Ghana etc.), accessed at www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/gyen.htm on 7/1/1010.
2. Other sources: (a) green background image accessed by author on 6/25/2010 from <http://themgv.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/interfaith1.jpg> and adapted with
(b) a superimposed center image accessed 9/15/2004 at www.OneSpiritInterfaithSeminary.org

APPENDIX B

RTJ Restorative & Therapeutic**Justice:** *Unified Theory in Ethics & Psychology, Law & Religion*

- “In recent years, an alternative approach to law, a worldwide movement, has been building momentum. This movement has two vectors, restorative justice and therapeutic jurisprudence . . .
- Perhaps a welding together of the two models into one, **RTJ**, would make the movement more effective.”

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[Source cited below]

“RTJ has the potential to resolve many kinds of conflict and reduce inequities in the legal system. Compared to the traditional legal model of justice, courts, judges, lawyers and prisons, restorative justice and therapeutic jurisprudence are quite similar. The difference between the two is mostly conceptual. As a frame within which to criticize and modify legal justice, therapeutic jurisprudence offers a strikingly different model, the mode of therapy as it is used in medical and psychological treatment. Although close inspection reveals that the therapeutic model is quite diverse, and therefore somewhat ambiguous, it does offer a framework to contrast with the legal model. Although restorative justice is the larger movement of the two, it suffers from the lack of such a model. Without a model, restorative justice offers piecemeal changes to correct the present legal system, one step again. Perhaps a welding together of the two models into one, RTJ, would make the movement more effective.” Thomas J. Scheff, "Community Conferences: Shame and Anger in Therapeutic Jurisprudence," *Revista Juridica de la Universidad de Puerto Rico* (University of Puerto Rico [U.P.R.], Rio Piedras Campus, School of Law) 59:1 (1990; 1-23):1-2.

APPENDIX B

RTJ Restorative & Therapeutic**Justice:** *Unified Theory in Ethics & Psychology, Law & Religion*

- Restorative / therapeutic justice (**RTJ**) benefits from the application of human psychology and counseling expertise to the goals of criminal law and social justice.
- The purposes to which **RTJ** applies therapeutic jurisprudence include the following . . .

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A key feature in this connection is what Scheff calls "reintegrative shaming," borrowing the expression from John Braithwaite in his book on *Crime, Shame and Reintegration*. For reintegration of an offender to occur following conviction and sentencing, Braithwaite determines, the process must achieve the following balance: enough shaming for the seriousness of the offense to be made clear, but not so much that the level of humiliation plunges the offender into hopelessness, bitterness and spitefulness towards rejoining the community. Cf. John Braithwaite, *Crime, Shame and Reintegration* (1989). Cf. John Braithwaite and Stephen Mugford, "Conditions of Successful Reintegration Ceremonies: Dealing with Juvenile Offenders," *The British Journal of Criminology* 34:2 (Spring 1994):139-171.

The offender must be ashamed of what he did, and this shame must be visible to the [victim/community]. It is this shame—along with other emotions, such as grief—that allows a preliminary bond to be formed between offender and victim, because the offender's visible expression of emotion allows the victim to see the offender as a human being. Scheff, "Community Conferences," p. 11.

APPENDIX B

RTJ Restorative & Therapeutic**Justice:** *Unified Theory in Ethics & Psychology, Law & Religion*

- (1) repairing the social fabric torn by crimes and systemic injustices, and (2) reinstating or recovering the shared humanity of all the parties involved, thus (3) addressing not only the victims and the perpetrators of any given crime or conflict but also (4) the community-at-large as the most adequate site for **RTJ** processes and issues.

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A community skilled in restorative and therapeutic justice (RTJ), Scheff suggests, is able effectively to manage victim-offender shame and the moral indignation of victim parties and of the observing community.

The crucial point about moral indignation is that when it is repetitive and out of control, it is a defensive movement. It involves two steps: denial of one's own shame, followed by projection of blame onto the offender (I am not dishonorable in any way, whereas the offender is entirely dishonorable). For the participants to identify with the offender, they must see themselves as alike rather than unlike (there but for the grace of God go I). . . Thus, uncontrolled, repetitive moral indignation is the most important impediment to symbolic reparation and reintegration. On the other hand, to the extent that it is rechanneled, moral indignation can be instrumental in triggering the core sequence of reparation. (Scheff, "Community Conferences," p.15)

To admit the co-humanity that Scheff invokes above is not to exonerate offenders' crimes or misdeeds, but rather to mediate the process by which they may be induced to offer "symbolic reparation." In Scheff's terms such reparation involves dialogical expressions of respect and courtesy, regret or remorse, apology and forgiveness. In this regard it often precedes and enables offenders to agree to *material* reparation. Thus acknowledging offenders' co-humanity can establish an ethic of reciprocity; a moral basis for acknowledging and symbolically restoring the violated humanity of their victims. Cf. T.J. Scheff, *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Drama*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979; and Thomas J. Scheff and Suzanne M. Retzinger, *Emotions and Violence: Shame and Rage in Destructive Conflicts*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1991.



Appendix C

Axial Age Axiom I¹

“What is required is an internal regeneration of the individual. The spiritual *habitus* of man himself will have to change. . . A new culture can only grow up in the soil of a purged humanity . . . [of a] *katharsis* . . . which liberates from the violent passions of life and leads the soul to peace.

“For the spiritual clarification which our time needs, a new *askesis* will be necessary.”

—Johan Huizinga, *In the Shadow of Tomorrow* (1936)²

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1. Cf. **Karl Jaspers’ Hypothesis of an "Axial Age"** introduced above in my ‘Axial Age’ Proposal, slide 23, where I explain:
The era 600-400 BCE was called “axial” by German philosopher Karl Jaspers. Radiating out from 600-400 BCE and extending more gradually from 800 to 200 BCE, key religious traditions in multiple parts of the world developed more enlightened, benign, and pro-human versions of their originating beliefs and traditions. For more detailed description see above.

2. Johan Huizinga, *In the Shadow of Tomorrow* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1936), pp. 231,233-35. Huizinga (1872-1945), also the author of *Homo Ludens* and *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, was a Dutch historian and philologist with training in Indian literature.

In his brief three-sentence preface to *Shadow*, Huizinga was concerned that his negations of conventional forms of social and historical transformation—the “organs of society” such as “nations, churches, schools or parties” (p. 231) would “lead many to think of me as a pessimist. I have but this to answer: I am an optimist.”

In this connection consider Gandhian activism as a 20th century asceticism of nonviolence in re: *Askesis* (Greek): a renunciatory discipline, exercise, practice.



Appendix C

Axial Age Axiom II

- Our goals require informed ‘middle practices’—*mesoterica*
- to mediate effectively the nonviolent orientations that are espoused, but then subverted, by our most valued traditions and institutions—*esoterica*
- so that they find decisive realization in ordinary behavior and normative beliefs and practices—*exoterica*.

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In this schema *mesoterica* are required to mediate effectively the *terra incognita* (unknown terrain) between *esoterica* and most people’s ordinary experiences of *exoterica*. However consider this theorist’s caveat:

The emancipatory *intent* of a subjective practice cannot guarantee that its own activity in the service of liberation will be free from domination. This practice cannot escape its embeddedness in the historical context of domination. There is no external vantage-point from which a subjective practice could claim an immunity to the influences of the oppressive society against which it itself is directed.

A practice of subjectivity cannot assume that the effects of institutionalized imbalances in economic and social power, education and general welfare will disappear at its “borders.” Indeed the positing of such an ideal for a practice of subjectivity reveals a basic misconception about the dynamics of oppression in today’s society. A practice of subjectivity thus faces a permanent risk of being “contaminated” with the toxins of domination. The danger of the degeneration of such a practice is a permanent danger, intrinsic to the very nature of oppression in a mass society.

The recognition of this fact must go hand in hand with a commitment to counter the continuing effects as well as the causes of this degeneration. An emancipatory subjective practice would thus have to struggle continuously against its own reification, against the incremental sedimentation of liberatory processes into fossilized procedures, against the distortions of domination which ingress into all attempts at liberation. It could only do so if its own praxis nourished and encouraged in individuals a critical intelligence and a sense of self-worth *in the context of a developing solidarity* [with others]. Erica Sherover Marcuse, *Emancipation and Consciousness* (Blackwell, 1986) p. 141.

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