

27

MAY

WEDNESDAY



WHAT CONSTITUTES OTHERNESS?

A CENTRE FOR RELIGION AND POLITICAL CULTURE SEMINAR
[HTTP://RELIGIONANDPOLITICALCULTURE.COM](http://religionandpoliticalculture.com)

WHERE?

SAMUEL ALEXANDER, WG13

SCHEDULE

9-9.20 COFFEE & CROISSANT RECEPTION

9.20-9.40 RUTH HADLEY

9.40-10 KATJA STUERZENHOFECKER

10-10.20 THEODROS TEKLU

10.20-10.40 QI ZHENG

10.40-11 BREAK

11-11.20 CLARE GREER

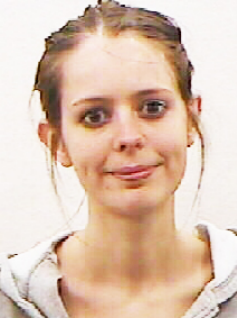
11.20-11.40 ANCHU TEE

11.40-12 FIONA WILSON

12-12.20 ANDY CROME



Ruth Hadley



Dostoyevsky's Demons

My paper explores the concept of “otherness,” expressed in the novel *Demons*, by the Russian novelist and philosopher Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Dostoyevsky uses characters and fictional narratives to express certain philosophical ideas and controversies. *Demons* focuses on a group of revolutionaries in nineteenth century Russia. The central narrative relates how the leaders of this group attempt to bond its members together and ensure they remain answerable to their authority. My paper examines the famous quotation spoken by the apparently “mad” character in the novel, Krillov. I propose that his statement “whoever conquers pain and fear, he himself will be God” - rather than expressing the ramblings of a mad-man - in fact presents a fundamental insight into the nature of “otherness.” I also argue that the novel succinctly highlights the power of the concept of “otherness” in relation to individual psychology and group dynamics. Dostoyevsky, I propose, ultimately conceives of “otherness” as a necessity to human existence, rather than a dilemma, which ought to be overcome. In this sense, I argue further, he presents a refreshing take on a concept which tends to be viewed today, as something overwhelmingly problematic.

Katja Stuerzenhofecker



Otherness and Effective Action Research

This is very much work in progress on research methods in/for practical theology for your scrutiny. My take on the seminar question is rather ungrammatical “Otherness constitutes what?” I would like to (begin to) explore in what ways effective action research (as a form of Theology-in-Action) presupposes and requires multiple dimensions of “otherness” in order to construct knowledge from experience while at the same time transforming participants and initiating wider social change. Initially, this suggests “otherness” to be a superficial divide between subject-insider and researcher-outsider which is particularly pertinent for feminist research. I would like to flag up further and deeper dimensions of “otherness” that I think also play key roles in the action research process, e.g. eschatological and pedagogical dimensions. This exploration brings together feminist theological works by Elaine Graham (“making the difference”), Mary McClintock-Fulkerson (“graf(ph)ting the difference”), and Kwok Pui-lan (“Jesus-Christ as hybrid”) with reflections on action research by practitioners in a range of fields. I am hoping to bring Kierkegaard's understanding of effective indirect communication into the mix for good measure. My aim is to discuss whether and how “otherness” can be a vital ingredient rather than an obstacle.

Theodros Assefa Teklu



Myth-Making as the Boundary-Defining Mechanism and the Politics of Memory

The inside/outside, self/other, us/them boundaries are often said to be characteristic features of nationalist sentiments and “national identity.” Recently, there is a growing interest in the study of “myths” in the formation of boundaries. However, discussions on national identity and myth-making often fail to notice an important element, namely, “memory.” Anthony Smith (1999) is one among a few who have sought to link the two; nevertheless, his view on “myths and memories” suffers some problems due to his cultural-primordialist and functionalist position. It is the purpose of this paper to show these deficits and propose an alternative way of understanding myths and memories. I do this, first, by briefly explaining the importance of linking the concepts of boundary and myth-making. I then put forward Smith’s views, particularly those about the necessity of myths for social cohesion and memories of the ethnic past to “antiquity,” which I will attempt to challenge. Finally, I conclude the discussion with a concise discussion of memory and politics. This part will raise other set of questions that can lead to a different perspective on understanding myths and memories.



Qi Zheng

Friend and Enemy Distinction: Carl Schmitt and Mao Tse-tung

This presentation discusses the similarities and differences between Carl Schmitt and Mao Tse-tung’s political theories of friend and enemy distinction. Friend and enemy distinction is the most important academic issue in both Carl Schmitt and Mao Tse-tung’s political philosophy. The political as the distinction between friend and enemy is probably Carl Schmitt’s most famous formulation. Furthermore, Mao Tse-tung did not only develop his own friend and enemy distinction theory, but also put it into practice in Chinese history. He was praised by Schmitt as a master of friend and enemy distinction. Both of them defined friend and enemy distinction as inevitable and crucial. However, there are at least three significant differences between Schmitt and Mao’s theories. The first is the criteria for the friend and enemy distinction. The second difference lies in the nature of enmity. And the final difference is about the subject who should make the friend and enemy distinction.



Clare Greer

The Monstrosity of Milbank's Hegel

I would like to answer the question “what constitutes otherness?” with reference to John Milbank’s most recent work, *The Monstrosity of Christ* (2009), in which he engages with the Hegelian notion that *desire* is the driving force behind the dialectic between the subject and the world or other. This work represents his most extended examination of Hegel, in which he begins to read Hegel’s thought through the lens of twentieth century postwar Francophone Hegel scholarship (in the tradition of Kojève and Hyppolite, through to Lacan). I am particularly interested in the way in which he reads Hegel after this tradition, as exemplifying the *failure* of desire and its futility and therefore the impossibility of knowledge of the other through Hegelian means, certainly not as something for which we might have any ethical regard. I would like to compare this sort of reading of Hegel with Gillian Rose’s understanding of Hegelian desire. Milbank reads Rose as advocating a similar kind of postmodern Hegel, in which she admits that desire is based in failure, but maintains that such failure is somehow productive. I take issue with this understanding of Rose, because I want to show, with reference to her biography *Love’s Work*, that Rose’s Hegel is really the opposite of the postmodern Hegel, because of the aspect of *work* which she attaches to desire. In Rose we see desire as risk taking and building, which is not the same as Milbank’s postmodern caricature of Hegelian desire as lack or destructive nihilism, and my thesis is that it goes beyond postmodern nihilism in its understanding of otherness.



Anchu Tee

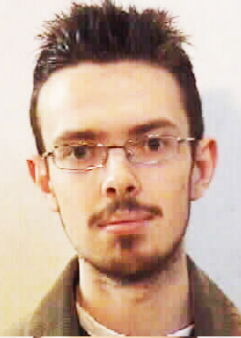
Classifying Others and Naming the Self

Bishop Ting has designated that there is a very specific form of “Chinese Christianity.” By declaring that there is Christianity unique to China, this, automatically, insinuates a variety of facts about this religion. First, because it is Chinese, it is immediately differentiated from the West and, consequently, Western philosophy. Secondly, as this Christianity is unique to China, it is, arguably, a Christianity that is compatible with Communism. This factor is particularly significant when one recalls the fact that Communism is not specifically against religion, but aims for a heaven on earth, so to speak. Finally, playing off the second factor, this Chinese Christianity may, due to political and sociological forces, only really have any validity within a Chinese environment. Due to these factors, and by its very nature, the designation “Chinese Christianity” immediately posits and identifies itself as significantly “other.” This “otherness” is in fact absolutely necessary, perhaps in order to distinguish itself from differing visions of Christianity. In particular, this

Chinese Christianity is distinguishing itself from the religious imperialism that has been consummate with the establishment of both English and American empires.



Fiona Wilson - TBC



Andy Crome - TBC

CRPC CURRENT STUDENTS SHORT BIOGRAPHIES



Richard Benda is a doctoral student in Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester studying under Dr. Michael Hoelzl. The working title of his thesis is "Weighed and Tested: Christian and Muslim Communities and the Rwandan Genocide." His research will address key questions in relation to religious authority and the role of faith in response to the complexity of African identity-based conflicts, of which the Rwandan genocide is an extreme case. This research is designed to be an invaluable academic contribution to the process of peace building and reconciliation for the people of Rwanda. In the context of the increasing visibility of religion in the public arena and in international politics especially, the project will assess the political potential of Christianity and Islam in Rwanda both as agents of conflict and actors in peacemaking. Before arriving in Manchester Richard was half-way through his first year of Law School when the Rwandan Genocide happened and life as he knew it ceased to exist. It took him three years to realize that despite personal abyssal loss, national moral collapse and a future without dreams, life had to go on for those who survived! So he returned to Law School and graduated with a Masters Degree. He then went on to study for a BA and Ma in Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester which has led him to his current doctoral work. He can be contacted at: richard.benda@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk



Andy Crome is currently a third year PhD student in Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester, working under Professor Graham Ward. His thesis title is "The Jews and the Literal Sense: Hermeneutical Approaches in the Apocalyptic Commentaries of Thomas Brightman (1562-1607)." His research is focused on seventeenth century millennialism and hermeneutics. He is particularly interested in the effect of millennial speculation on Christian views of the Jews in the early modern period. His other major research interest is the development of contemporary Christian Zionism and dispensational theology. Currently, he is a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the department and has spoken at a number of conferences on early modern history and has published a number of book reviews. He can be contacted at: andy.crome@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

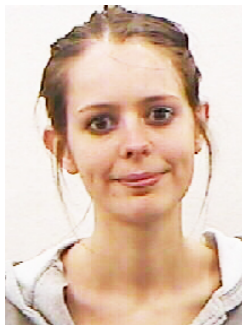


Kyle Gingerich-Hiebert is currently a first year PhD student working under the supervision of Professor Graham Ward in the School of Arts, Histories, and Cultures at the University of Manchester. Broadly conceived, his doctoral work is an inquiry into the extent to which contemporary debates in political theology end up compromising the harmonious blending of differences rightly sought by employing a rhetorical violence that reduces non-Christian others to the wastebasket of nihilism. He

holds a M.A. (by Research) in Philosophical Theology (Distinction) from the University of Nottingham, a H.B.A. in Philosophy (High Distinction) from the University of Toronto and a B.Th. in Theology and Ethics from Canadian Mennonite Bible College. His research is supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the University of Manchester. He can be contacted at: kyle.gingerichhiebert@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk



Clare Greer is currently a third year PhD candidate, under the supervision of Professor Graham Ward in the School of Arts, Histories, and Cultures at the University of Manchester. Her doctoral work explores the significance of the Hegelian philosophy of Gillian Rose (1947-1995) for contemporary orthodox political theology, particularly her interaction with John Milbank. She holds an MA in Religion, Culture and Society (Distinction) and BA in Religions and Theology (First Class) both from the University of Manchester. Her research is supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. She can be contact at: clare.a.greer@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk



Ruth Hadley's undergraduate degree was conducted in Religious Studies at Lancaster University. Since then, she has returned to her native city of Manchester to pursue her particular interest in the contemporary interrelation between religion and politics at the Centre for Religion and Political Culture for both her MA and now PhD degrees. She is studying under Dr. Michael Hoelzl, and her research focuses on the concept of tolerance under the working title, "The Intolerance of Tolerance." It challenges the validity of the contemporary promotion of tolerance as *the* long term solution to the "dilemma of difference;" the question of how people with different and even opposing value-belief systems might peacefully co-exist. The research undertakes a genealogical survey of tolerance from its Latin origins in the term "tolerare" to "tolerance" as promoted in the 1995, UNESCO sponsored, "Year of Tolerance." It also examines the contemporary academic arguments for and against a public political policy of tolerance. The aim is to situate tolerance firmly within the historical process; expressive of particular historical values and particular historical interests. The question is ultimately addressed whether alternative solutions to the 'dilemma of difference' ought perhaps to be upheld and what, if necessary, abandoning the current policy of tolerance might entail? She can be contacted at: ruth.hadley@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk.



Katja Stuerzenhofecker is a first year doctoral student in the Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology programme supervised by Professor Elaine Graham in the Manchester Centre for Public Theology (a partner centre of the CRPC). Her dissertation title is: "A Critical and Comparative Evaluation of Christian Campaigning in the UK on Sex Trafficking of Women and Children: A Case Study in Practical Theology as Action-Research." This research interest has grown out of her work experience, study and teaching of feminist inquiry in theology, international political economy, and the sociology and

geography of work and employment. She has been “around” Manchester's Religions and Theology Subject Area since 1997 (after a year at Sheffield's Biblical Studies) as a student (MA with David Law on Kierkegaard), friend and part-time tutor (Elaine Graham's 'Religion, Culture and Gender' module). Later she studied in Manchester for an MA (Econ) in Labour Studies after working in a worker's cooperative for several years. She also worked as finance manager in a FE college serving women from disadvantaged backgrounds. Currently, she is commissioned to investigate what “Education for Sustainable Development” means to theologians and their teaching in Higher Education. Although she admits to having no previous explicit grounding in theology and politics, she has started to read Soelle, Bonhoeffer and everything else she can get her hands on at the moment! She hails from a German Lutheran background with four years' study of protestant theology at Heidelberg University. She can be contacted at: katja.stuerzenhofecker@manchester.ac.uk



Anchu Tee's is a third year doctoral student supervised by Dr. Michael Hoelzl. Before arriving in Manchester, she studied for an undergraduate degree in Chinese literature, which she followed up with a Master's degree in Western Philosophy. Her current thesis is based on the development of Christianity, and the Christian movement, in China. This particular topic has arisen from a number of factors, but the predominant pair relate to her own personal life. Firstly, her grandparents were born and raised in China, so the country has a personal resonance in her life, and work. Secondly, she have been a Christian for a number of years, now, and the rise of a significant world religion in a rising global force is significant for her. More specifically, her work focuses upon Bishop K. H. Ting, as he has proven to be the most significant Christian in what some term "new China." She also has interests within the interplay of Marxism and religion, as her Master's thesis was based on the philosophy of Marx. As China becomes more overtly involved with the global economy, the development of religion and religious movements within China is of global interest. Furthermore, the development of Chinese religion within a pseudo-Marxist framework will be of significant impact to global philosophy and theology in particular. She can be contacted at: an.tee@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk



Theodros Assefa Teklu is a first year doctoral student in Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester studying under Professor Graham Ward. Before coming to Manchester he completed two postgraduate programmes: MA in Biblical and Theological Studies (2003-2005) and PGDip in HIV and AIDS in Relation to Theological Studies (2006) at the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST). Before that, he received a BSc in Biology (1991) from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. He served as a Registrar and HIV Course Leader (August 2007-January 2009) at EGST. Prior to that, he has had experience as a school-teacher, church minister (at different capacities mainly teaching and administration/leadership) and also as a Documentation Officer for a Faith-based Organisation (FBO) working on Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) programme.

The topic of his PhD research is "Towards a Theology of Ethnic Justice: The Case of Ethiopia." He can be contacted at: theodros.teklu@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk



Fiona Wilson's doctoral research concerns an evaluation of key ecumenical differences yielded by the theological hermeneutic of analogy, which is employed to interpret the divine relation to the world. She is on a part-time doctoral programme with Professor Graham Ward, and due to submit her thesis in summer 2011. She studied theology and religious studies for her undergraduate MA at the University of Glasgow and Trinity College, Dublin. After researching ecclesiological and Christological interpretations within Bonhoeffer scholarship for her undergraduate dissertation, her ambition when arriving at Manchester was to locate an unexplored lens to critically assess his ontology. Her early research concentrated on the ontological implications of Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of analogy, and the subsequent interpretations provided by Duns Scotus and scholastic Thomism. Aquinas' existential insight of a rational distinction of essence and existence in God and, analogously, of their real differentiation within man's being, is a cornerstone of the *analogia entis* set out by Bonhoeffer's Catholic contemporary, Erich Przywara. Przywara's discriminate appropriation of metaphysics and speculative theology will place him as the major conversation-partner for Bonhoeffer's *analogia relationis* in her work. She is particularly concerned to examine the coherence of Bonhoeffer's correlation of the natural and fallen reason and conscience. To date, his Christology and ontology of relationality have not been examined through the hermeneutical centre of analogy. On the other hand, Przywara's *analogia entis* has not been engaged from the standpoint of Bonhoeffer's brief, but insightful critique. She can be contacted at: fiona.wilson@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk



Qi Zheng is a third year doctoral student supervised by Dr. Michael Hoelzl. Her research topic is "Carl Schmitt and Chinese Constitutionalism." In her dissertation, she explores two basic but important questions: 1) why has Carl Schmitt's political theory gained so much attention among Chinese scholars since the beginning of the twentieth century? and, 2) what is the link between Carl Schmitt's political theory and the modernization of Chinese constitutionalism? She can be contacted at: qi.zheng@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk