

RE-ENCHANTING THE ACADEMY

25-27 September 2015

VENUE: CANTERBURY, UK

CALL FOR PAPERS

INTRODUCTION

"Enchantment is as necessary for the health and complete functioning of the Human as is sunlight for physical life."
(Tolkien, 2005: 101; in Curry, 2012: 82)

Over a century ago the sociologist Max Weber described and lamented the disenchantment of modernity; within the education system we can see how this has developed into the commodification of knowledge, where learning is subjected to quantifiable outcomes and employability criteria.

A narrow rationalism has left little space for wonder, awe, and the poetics of the imagination as ways of knowing and learning.

To enchant is to 'sing into being', to ensoul, to infuse with an indefinable quality of mystery and magic which enhances our relationships with ourselves, others, our communities and the world.

Furthermore, enchantment points to 'other than human,' liminal domains as alternative realities which require imaginal (i.e. narrative, poetic, somatic, experiential) methods of cognition and re-cognition (Voss, 2013).



"Enchantment is always and necessarily both 'material' and 'spiritual'" writes Patrick Curry, "that is, precisely circumstantial – embodied and embedded – and simultaneously deeply mysterious, undelimitable and unmasterable" (Curry, 2012: 2). Relational, perspectival and participatory, these lived moments of non-ordinary insight ignite and fuel our desire to learn.

The discourse of enchantment also evokes images of the 'sacred'. In recent religious studies scholarship, Jeff Kripal (2005, 2007, 2010) has posited the idea of a 'gnostic' classroom, an approach to studying and researching which transcends yet also incorporates the divergent epistemologies of critical reason and the many different ways of knowing exemplified in altered states of consciousness, spirituality and the arts. This 'third way' enables researchers and teachers to embed their own reflexivity and practice within sound scholarly enquiry.

In this way they begin to shift paradigms in thinking about the nature of psyche, paranormal and religious experience, and the cognitive potential of the imagination. Kripal points out that "we cannot, as a species, 'outgrow' the sense of the sacred and become purely secular, and this for one simple reason; we are that sense of the sacred." (Kripal, 2010: 255)



This conference addresses how (or indeed why) modern universities might reclaim this sense of universal value through cultivating imagination and intuition as modes of practice, learning, and enchantment. Can we create a poetics of learning that touches human souls, in both sciences and arts? Can we understand studying and learning as sacred activities, which allow individuals to reflect on meanings in their lives? Does such a quest step beyond the personal and entail a social and cultural critique?

To what extent can we re-envision the learning process to include affective, somatic, intuitive and experiential modes which may provide access to insights unavailable to the rational mind? Are existing models, especially those of transpersonal and archetypal psychology, adequate to this task? What relationships might we engender with other educational discourses exploring transformative learning within higher education?

We now invite submissions on this theme of 're-enchantment' in the contemporary academy. The following are suggested topics, but are by no means exclusive:

- Educational theory: transformative learning, imagination and spirit
- Western esotericism and wisdom traditions in education: the question of gnostic knowledge
- Creativity and practice as learning (experiential workshops welcome)
- Re-enchanting education
- Approaches to studying religious and paranormal experience
- Symbolic and divinatory paradigms
- The arts and the power of symbol and metaphor
- Modern science and consciousness studies

REFERENCES

- Curry, P. (2012) 'Enchantment and Modernity', PAN: Philosophy, Activism, Nature, Issue 12, 76-89.
- Kripal, J. J. (2001) *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom*, Chicago University Press.
- Kripal, J. J. (2008) *The Serpent's Gift: Gnostic Reflections on the Study of Religion*, Chicago University Press.
- Kripal, J. J. (2010) *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred*, Chicago University Press.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. (2005) *Smith of Wootton Major* ed. V. Flieger, London: HarperCollins.
- Voss, A. (2013) 'Making Sense of the Paranormal: A Platonic Context for Research Methods' in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Paranormal Cultures* eds O. Jenzen & S. Munt, Farnham: Ashgate, 139-48.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



PATRICK CURRY

Patrick Curry is a writer and scholar living in London. He is the author of several books including *Defending Middle-Earth: Tolkien, Myth and Modernity* (Houghton Mifflin, 2004) and *Ecological Ethics: An*

Introduction, rev. ed (Polity Press, 2006).

He holds a PhD in the History and Philosophy of Science from University College London and has been a lecturer at the University of Kent and Bath Spa University. He is presently writing a book on enchantment. More information and most of his papers can be found at:

www.patrickcurry.co.uk

He is also the Associate Director of the Center for Theory and Research at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California—a think tank dedicated to the exploration of the nature of mind and human potential in the sciences and the humanities and creative long-term projects around interfaith dialogue, conscious business practices, citizen diplomacy, and environmental sustainability. Jeff is the author of seven books, including *Comparing Religions: Coming to Terms* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), *Mutants and Mystics: Science Fiction, Superhero Comics, and the Paranormal* (Chicago, 2011), and *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred* (Chicago, 2010).

He specializes in the comparative study and analysis of extreme religious states from the ancient world to today. His full body of work can be seen at:

<http://kripal.rice.edu>



JEFFREY KRIPAL

Jeffrey J. Kripal holds the J. Newton Rayzor Chair in Philosophy and Religious Thought at Rice University, where he chaired the Department of Religion for eight years and helped

create the GEM Program, a doctoral concentration in the study of Gnosticism, Esotericism, and Mysticism that is the largest program of its kind in the world.



ELIZABETH TISEDELL

Dr. Elizabeth Tisdell, is a Professor of Adult Education at Penn State University – Harrisburg and is the Coordinator of the Adult Education Doctoral Program. She received

her: Ed.D. in Adult Education from the University of Georgia, in 1992, an M.A. in Religion from Fordham University in 1979, and a B.A. in Mathematics from the University of Maine in 1977.

Her current research interests include spirituality and culture in adult development; spiritual pilgrimage, the role of wisdom in adult learning; and creativity and embodied learning. She has also done prior research in critical media literacy in teaching for diversity in adult education, in medical education and in financial literacy.

Her scholarly work has appeared in numerous journals, books and edited books. Dr. Tisdell is the author of *Exploring Spirituality and Culture in Adult and Higher Education* (Jossey-Bass, 2003), the co-author (with Sharan Merriam) of *Qualitative Research: A guide to Design and Implementation* (4th edition) currently in press, and is the co-editor and contributing chapter author of the *Adult Education and the Pursuit of Wisdom* (2011). She served as the co-editor of the *Adult Education Quarterly* from 2006-2011.

Prior to joining the faculty at Penn State, Dr. Tisdell was Associate Professor of Adult and Continuing Education at National-Louis University in Chicago, and on the faculty at Antioch University, Seattle. She worked as a campus minister for the Catholic Church from 1979-1989 at both Central Michigan University and Loyola University—New Orleans. She regularly does presentations and workshops related to spirituality and culture, wisdom and adult learning, and spiritual pilgrimage as transformative learning.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Deadline for submission of abstracts for papers and proposals for posters and workshops:



Papers should be 30 mins, including time for questions.

Abstracts (WORD format) should have no more than 500 words, Times New Roman, 12 points. The title of the abstract should be clear. Your name, institutional affiliation, phone and email should NOT be included in the abstract, but be on a separate page. All author/s named must agree with the abstract submission and the submitting author must check for accuracy.

Please submit all abstracts for papers or other suggested presentations to gill.harrison@canterbury.ac.uk

Proposals will be blind reviewed; acceptance will be announced by:



Successful presenters will then be asked to register by:



You do not have to submit your conference paper until after the event when we shall invite contributions for publication.

If you wish to attend the conference, but do not wish to present a paper, poster or workshop session, please register by



The language for the conference will be English.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Registration is now open. Places are limited so early registration is recommended to secure your place.

It is essential for all delegates to register online. At the point of registration there are two stages to the process.

1. Firstly you need to register as a 'customer' on the CCCU system.
2. Once you have registered on the CCCU system you can then proceed with your registration and payment for the conference. (essentially it's similar to any online purchase with items going into a basket etc)

Registration fee: **Full conference fee:** **£285**

Student fee: **£199**

The fee includes refreshments and lunch for the duration of the conference, a gala dinner on the evening of 26th September 2015 and conference materials.

CANCELLATION

In the event of a cancellation, please inform Gill Harrison gill.harrison@canterbury.ac.uk no later than Monday 14th September 2015.

ACCOMMODATION

Delegates will need to make their own accommodation arrangements.

A comprehensive list of accommodation in the City and close to the our main campus can be found in the links on the next page.

For any enquiries about this
conference please email:
gill.harrison@canterbury.ac.uk

LINKS

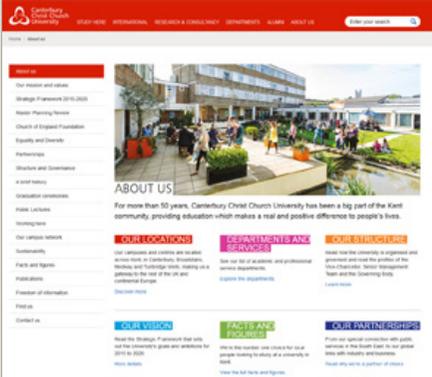
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