

# difficult dialogues

FALL 2007 SYMPOSIUM

## Religion and Tolerance

Much of the violence in the world has arisen in the name of religion. Why do religious conviction and intolerance so often occur in tandem? Is dialogue between those of differing faiths and cultures possible? These questions and many others will be raised by Diana Eck, Anne Fadiman, religious leaders from the Worcester community, Clark faculty and others during this symposium.

### why dialogue why now

*The most important aspect of freedom of speech is freedom to learn.*

*All education is a continuous dialogue – questions and answers that pursue every problem on the horizon.*

*That is the essence of academic freedom.*

William O. Douglas

*Believe in the power of dialogue among yourselves...*

*It requires courage, patience and determination.*

*It requires mutual respect.*

*The way of dialogue is the most mature, human way –*

*the most effective way for producing solutions.*

Bishop Carolos Filipe Ximines Belo



#### JESUS CAMP

Film Screening and Conversation Cafe

In our society, there are widely diverse and divergent religious experiences among young Americans. *Jesus Camp*, the Academy Award nominated documentary directed by Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady, follows a group of young children to Pastor Becky Fisher's "Kids on Fire Summer Camp" – an intense training ground that recruits born-again Christian children to become an active part of America's political future.

Wednesday, September 12 @ 7 pm  
Razzo Hall, Traina Center for the Arts

#### FAITH & TOLERANCE IN A MULTI-CULTURAL WORLD

An Interfaith Dialogue

How should different religious faiths relate to one another in today's shrinking world? Professor **Paul Ropp** will moderate a panel discussion with four religious leaders representing the Christian, Buddhist, Islamic and Judaic traditions. Panel participants include **Tom McKibbens**, Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church; **Melissa Blacker**, teacher (sensei) at Boundless Way Zen, a multi-lineage Zen Buddhist community; **Mohamed Lazzouni**, Visiting Scholar of Islamic Studies at the department of Arts and Humanities at Boston College; and **David Coyne**, Director of Hillel at Clark. The audience will be invited to contribute to the dialogue.

Thursday, September 20 @ 7:30 pm  
Tilton Hall, Higgins University Center

*Cosponsored by the Andrea B. and Peter D. Klein Professorship*

#### DAY OF LISTENING

*The Day of Listening* highlights the process of listening as an essential element of effective dialogue. The entire Clark community is invited to attend; questions about religion and tolerance will be raised.

Wednesday, September 26  
one-hour sessions @ 12, 1, 3 & 4 pm  
Dana Commons, second floor lounge

#### THE SPIRIT CATCHES YOU AND YOU FALL DOWN

Author **Anne Fadiman** will talk about the experience of writing her first book, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (1997), which chronicles the trials of an epileptic Hmong child and her family living in Merced, California. Fadiman's sensitive, incisive treatment of the gulf between the Hmong and American cultures and medical systems won her a 1997 National Book Critics Circle Award. Her talk deals with the cross cultural challenge she faced and the lessons she learned as to how American health care providers can provide more sensitive and effective care for patients from other cultures.

Monday, October 1 @ 7:30 pm  
Atwood Hall

#### QUESTIONS OF FAITH

A Spoken-Word Chorus

The words of Clark students on issues of faith on campus are woven into a spoken-word chorus, performed by other Clark students, and based on interviews with current students. Getting beyond the basics of simple denominational differences, the program investigates the hard questions, surprising discoveries, new perspectives, and lasting challenges that our encounters with both organized religion and personal faith have brought while at Clark. A conversation cafe will follow the performance.

October 10 @ 7 pm  
Razzo Hall, Traina Center for the Arts

*Students interested in participating by being interviewed or performing should contact the organizer, Professor Meredith Neuman, at meneuman@clarku.edu.*

#### CAN RELIGIONS BE TOLERANT? IS PLURALISM POSSIBLE?

Voices and Perspectives from South Asia

The strength and certainty of religious voices in our time and the turbulence generated by religious movements makes us wonder if, perhaps, religion is one place where tolerance and dialogue are in short supply. **Diana Eck** raises these questions:

Can religious people really be tolerant of differing religious views? Can religious people engage deeply with those of other faiths? Does the notion of pluralism threaten religious certainties? South Asia has long experience in living with religious differences, so perhaps we can learn more about the difficulties and promise of dialogue from that experience. And now South Asians have brought their Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Jain traditions to the U.S. How do South Asian Americans weigh in on the religious controversies of the U.S.? Diana Eck of Harvard University is Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies, Fredric Wertham Professor of Law and Psychiatry in Society, Master of Lowell House, and Director of The Pluralism Project.

Tuesday October 16 @ 7:30 pm  
Atwood Hall

*Cosponsored by The South Asian Studies Forum*

#### culture of dialogue event

#### SOUND AND SPIRIT

An improvisational dialogue and listening journey with members of the Sacred Singing Group, **BoneSong**. Inspired by a variety of indigenous musical traditions, early polyphonic sacred song, sounds of nature and their Earth-based spiritual paths, BoneSong weaves improvisational soundscapes with voice, drum and simple instruments.

Wednesday, October 24 @ 7 pm  
Razzo Hall, Traina Center for the Arts



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FALL 2007 SYMPOSIUM

OCTOBER 29 – DECEMBER 11 2007

## Power

The question of power lies at the heart of dialogue. Where does power lie in our culture, in both its outer and inner dimensions, and how does that shape the possibilities for dialogue? How do we, through dialogue, find access to the power of the collective? When do we choose to remain silent? What is the power of silence, and of listening? These and other questions will be explored in a range of talks, panels and events during this symposium.



### DD arts event

#### WAR OF THE WALLS

Rebellion and Graphic Art in Oaxaca, Mexico

When dialogue fails, people struggling for empowerment seek other ways to have their voices heard. In Oaxaca, Mexico, some are speaking out through the Mexican tradition of political wall art. It is this continuity with popular tradition that photographer **Aaron Tukey** hopes to convey in this photographic series.

September 18 through December 11  
Dana Commons, second floor lounge

*Exhibition Opening Night: Friday, October 5th from 4 to 6*

#### A Discussion of the power relationships behind political street art of Oaxaca

Building on the photographs of Oaxaca's public protest art taken by photo-journalist **Aaron Tukey**, a panel of observers and activists, including members of the group **Witness For Peace**, will share their experiences of the larger ongoing struggle in Oaxaca between the citizens and their government – especially since June of 2006 when simmering tensions erupted during an aggressive police raid on striking teachers. They will also point toward signs of hope as they envision Oaxaca's journey toward meaningful dialogue and a more just sharing of community power.

Thursday November 15 @ 7 pm  
Dana Commons, second floor lounge

#### DON'T JUST TALK AT SOMEONE – SIT THERE!

Toward Dialogue and Engagement on Global Warming

To address climate change at all levels of society requires that people become engaged in a conversation about possible solutions, needed support, and different trajectories of our future.

**Susi Moser** invites us into dialogue about global warming, its implications and ways to address it, and about what future we would like to create for ourselves and our children. Moser is a Research Scientist in the Institute for the Study of Society and Environment (ISSE) at NCAR; Visiting Professor at Marsh Institute (AY2007-08), and the editor of *Creating a Climate for Change* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Monday, October 29 @ 7:30 pm  
Dana Commons, second floor lounge

#### BRIDGING THE IMPOSSIBLE?

Confronting Barriers to Dialogue between Germans/Jews/Palestinians

The trauma of the Holocaust and the ever-present Palestinian-Israeli conflict make dialogue between Jews and Germans and between Jews and Palestinians extremely difficult, if not impossible. Is it yet possible to bridge 'the impossible'? **Julia Chaitin**, Senior Lecturer, Sapir Academic College, Hof Ashkelon, Israel, will look at the barriers that often confound dialogue – such as opposing narratives of the past and present in the Jewish-Palestinian case, and the boundaries of 'perpetrators' and 'victims' that rigidify relations between Jews and Germans. She will then explore techniques that can open up dialogue for deeper understanding of self, and of the other, creating a new way of relating to one's 'enemies.' Following the talk, **Thomas Kühne**, Strassler Professor in Holocaust History at the Strassler Family Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies will moderate a panel including **Deborah Dwork**, Rose Professor of Holocaust History and Director, Strassler Family Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies; **Rebecca Phillips**, Doctoral Student, Department of Psychology; **Srinivasan Sitaraman**, Assistant Professor, Department of Government; and **Pamela Steiner**, Project Director, Inter-Communal Violence and Reconciliation Project, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative.

Thursday, November 1 @ 7 pm  
Dana Commons, second floor lounge

*Cosponsored by the Strassler Family Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies*

#### POWER, ETHICS, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AT THE DAWN OF THE NUCLEAR AGE

A Reading and Conversation

**Les Blatt**, Professor of Physics, and **Gino Dilorio**, Associate Professor of Theater, will present excerpts from Michael Frayn's controversial play *Copenhagen*, a multi-faceted musing on the enigmatic 1941 meeting of peacetime research colleagues but bitter wartime opponents Werner Heisenberg and Neils Bohr. Between readings, the audience will be invited to comment on dilemmas posed by the play, either from historical or contemporary perspectives – or both.

Tuesday, November 13 at 7:30 pm  
Razzo Hall, Traina Center for the Arts

#### A LIFE IN TWO GENDERS

Women's Voices: Past and Present, *part one*

**Jennifer Finney Boylan** is the author of *She's Not There*, the first bestselling book by a transgendered American. By turns hilarious and deeply moving, Boylan's book examines the territory that lies between male and female, as she will do in her talk. A three-time guest of the Oprah Winfrey Show, Jenny has also appeared on Larry King Live, the Today Show, and been the subject of a documentary on CBS News' 48 Hours. In March of 2007, she played herself on several episodes of ABC's All My Children. Jennifer Boylan is Professor of English at Colby College in Maine, where she teaches American literature, cultural studies, and fiction writing.

Tuesday November 6 @ 7:30 pm  
Atwood Hall

*Sponsored by the Office of Intercultural Affairs*

#### REGENERATING HISTORY

Women's Voices: Past and Present, *part two*

**Lisa Kasmer**, Assistant Professor of English, explores eighteenth-and nineteenth-century women's history writing, which she argues was one of the greatest intellectual achievements of the time-period. During a time we usually view as particularly bereft of women's political engagement, women's histories and historical fiction extended the political and generic possibilities of history writing, or "regendered" history, and, in doing so, attempted to legitimize women's participation in the public sphere. This writing, then, interrogates both our understanding of gender and of women's writing in the past. Following the talk, a panel of Clark faculty who research the topic of gender, including Professor **Amy Richter** (History), Professor **Kristen Williams**, Professor **Valerie Sperling** and Professor **Srinivasan Sitaraman** (all Government) will continue the conversation.

Wednesday, November 7 @ 7:30 pm  
Dana Commons, second floor lounge

#### ENCOUNTER POINT

Screening and Conversation Case

What kinds of power are available to those who have borne the brunt of war and loss? *Encounter Point* is an award-winning feature documentary that follows a former Israeli settler, a Palestinian ex-prisoner, a bereaved Israeli mother and a wounded Palestinian bereaved brother who risk their lives and public standing to promote a nonviolent end to the conflict. The film explores what drives them and thousands of other like-minded civilians to overcome anger and grief to work for grassroots solutions.

Tuesday November 27 @ 7:30 pm  
Razzo Hall, Traina Center for the Arts

#### TALKING ABOUT THE SUBTLETIES OF POWER WITHOUT THE PARANOIA: Some Feminist Clues

Feminists have done much to make visible the myriad forms that power can take – and the surprising, even intimate, sites where power is wielded. Becoming alert to all the forms and places where power might be wielded can make one see it everywhere, and that in turn can, of course, create barriers to trust. **Cynthia Enloe**, Research Professor in IDCE and Women's Studies, will lead us in exploring that conundrum, and its relationship to our ability to create and participate in dialogue.

Wednesday, December 5 @ 7:30 pm  
Jefferson 320

### culture of dialogue event

#### INTO GREAT SILENCE

Screening

The power of listening, of suspending pre-conceptions, and of communicating from a state of conscious awareness, are at the heart of the practice of dialogue. *Into Great Silence* is a transcendent, closely observed film that seeks to embody a monastery, rather than simply depict one. More meditation than documentary, it's a rare, transformative theatrical experience for all, and a respite from the rigors of reading period.

Tuesday, December 11 @ 7:00 pm  
Razzo Hall, Traina Center for the Arts