



HARVARD
UNIVERSITY



**Institute for Religion
& Critical Inquiry**



ACU
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



The Enigma of Suffering
3-6 January 2017

IRCI Rome Campus Seminars

2017

The Enigma of Suffering (3-6 January 2017)

2016

IRCI Biblical and Early Christian Studies Series

The Rise of the Christian Intellectual in the Second Century
(27-29 July 2016)

IRCI Philosophy, Religion and Culture Series

Atheism and Christianity: Moving Past Polemic (20-22
September 2016)

IRCI-CCS Series

2016

Conceiving Change in the Church: An Exploration of the
Hermeneutics of Catholic Tradition (13-16 September 2016)

2015

Laudato Si': The Greening of the Church? (22-24 September
2015)

Front page image:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sir_Charles_Bell,_The_anatomy_and_philosophy_Wellcome_L0031756.jpg accessed 20/12/16

The Enigma of Suffering

ACU, Boston College, Harvard University

3-6 January 2017

**Held at the Rome Campus of
Australian Catholic University/Catholic University of
America
Via Garibaldi, 28, 00153 Roma, Italy**

**Convenors
Jeffrey Hanson
Jeffrey Bloechl**

Welcome

On behalf of my colleagues in the Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry I welcome you to the ACU/CUA Rome Campus for the seminar entitled '*The Enigma of Suffering*.' I am especially pleased to be able to welcome you to this seminar as a collaboration between ACU, Boston College and Harvard University.

The Rome seminar series provides an opportunity for the Institute to bring together leading scholars to address and explore key issues in their respective fields of study. They are a practical expression of our ongoing commitment to innovative, high quality, international research collaboration in the disciplines of philosophy and theology. This is the fifth seminar in the series that commenced in September 2014. This particular seminar had its origins in a research project that Jeff Hanson developed during his time at ACU in consultation with Jeff Bloechl and it has since expanded to include direct input from colleagues at Harvard University. As such, I extend my particular thanks to Jeff Hanson and Jeff Bloechl for all their work as convenors of this seminar and I also acknowledge the important support of Tyler Vanderweele. My thanks also to Wayne McKenna, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) at ACU, for his ongoing support and sponsorship of the IRCI Rome Campus seminars.

Over the next three days I trust this seminar will provide the opportunity to establish new connections and to enrich existing ones. My best wishes for lively and engaging discussions and deliberations as you explore issues pertinent to the question of suffering as part of human experience.

Professor James McLaren

Director,

Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry, ACU

January 2017

Time	Tuesday 3 January
9:30-11:00	Eric Cassell (Cornell University) <i>The Suffering Person and the Nature of Suffering</i>
11:00-11:30	Morning Coffee
11:30am– 1:30pm	<p>Panel: <i>Suffering in Health Care and Empirical Research</i></p> <p>Richard Schulz (University of Pittsburgh), <i>Health Effects of Exposure to Suffering in Close Family Relationships</i></p> <p>Joan Monin (Yale University), <i>Emotional Reactions to Family Members' Suffering: Implications for Caregivers' Health</i></p> <p>Alicia Krikorian (Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Medellin, Bolivia), <i>An Integrative View of Suffering from the Health Sciences Perspective</i></p> <p>Moderator Tyler Vanderweele (Harvard University)</p>
1:30-3:00pm	Lunch
3:00-4:30pm	Kevin Hart (University of Virginia), <i>The Problem of Evil, and the Enigma of Suffering</i>
5:00-6:30pm	Daniel Dahlstrom (Boston University), <i>Phenomenology and the Experience of Pain</i>
6:30-7:30	Drinks Reception Followed by dinner at the conference centre

Time	Wednesday 4 January
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9:30-11:00am	Emmanuel Falque (Institut Catholique de Paris), <i>Incarnate Suffering</i>
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11:00-11:30	Morning coffee
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11:30am- 1:00pm	Panel: <i>Suffering between Philosophy and Theology</i>
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Jeffrey Bloechl (Boston College), *Homo Patiens. Scheler, Levinas and Suffering without Justification*

Edward Alam (University of Notre Dame – Louaize),
Suffering, Theodicy, and the Theology of the Body: Reflections on Eschatology

Brian Robinette (Boston College), *Looking Into the Abyss Through Easter Eyes: Engaging Johann Baptist Metz*

Moderator: Jeffrey Hanson (Harvard University)

1:00-3:00	Lunch
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Afternoon and evening are free for exploration of Rome

Time

Thursday 5 January

9:30-11:00am Herman Westerink (Radboud University), *Concerns about the Religious Self. A Foucauldian Approach to a Late 16th Century Case of Religious Depression*

11:00-11:30am **Morning coffee**

11:30am-1:00pm Claudia Welz (University of Copenhagen), *Human and Divine Suffering: The Wound of Negativity in Post-Holocaust Theology*

1:00-2:30pm **Lunch**

2:30-4:00pm Karen Kilby (Durham University), *The Darkness of Suffering and the Darkness of God*

4:30-6:30pm Roundtable on suffering, health care and empirical research (Cassell, Monin, Schulz, Krikorian)

Moderator: Tyler Vanderweele

7:30pm Conference Dinner (off site at Emma Pizzeria)

Time	Friday 6 January
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10:00-12:00	Roundtable on: Philosophy and Theology of Suffering (Dahlstrom, Falque, Hart, Westerink, Welz, Kilby)
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Moderators J. Bloechl and J. Hanson

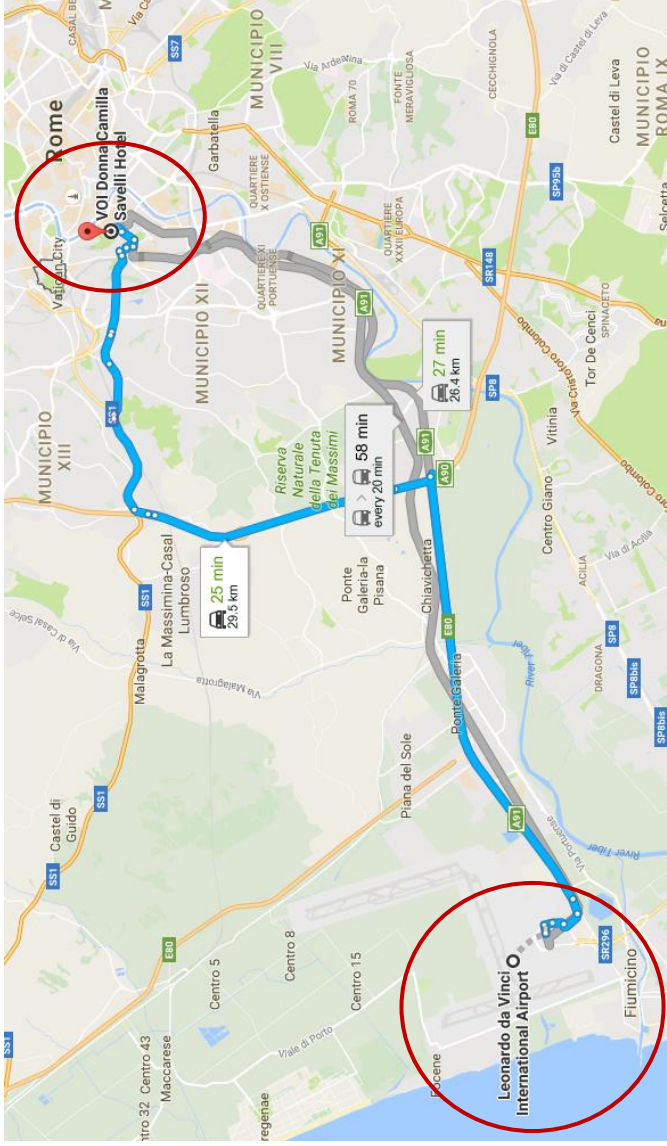
12:00	Lunch
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The Enigma of Suffering

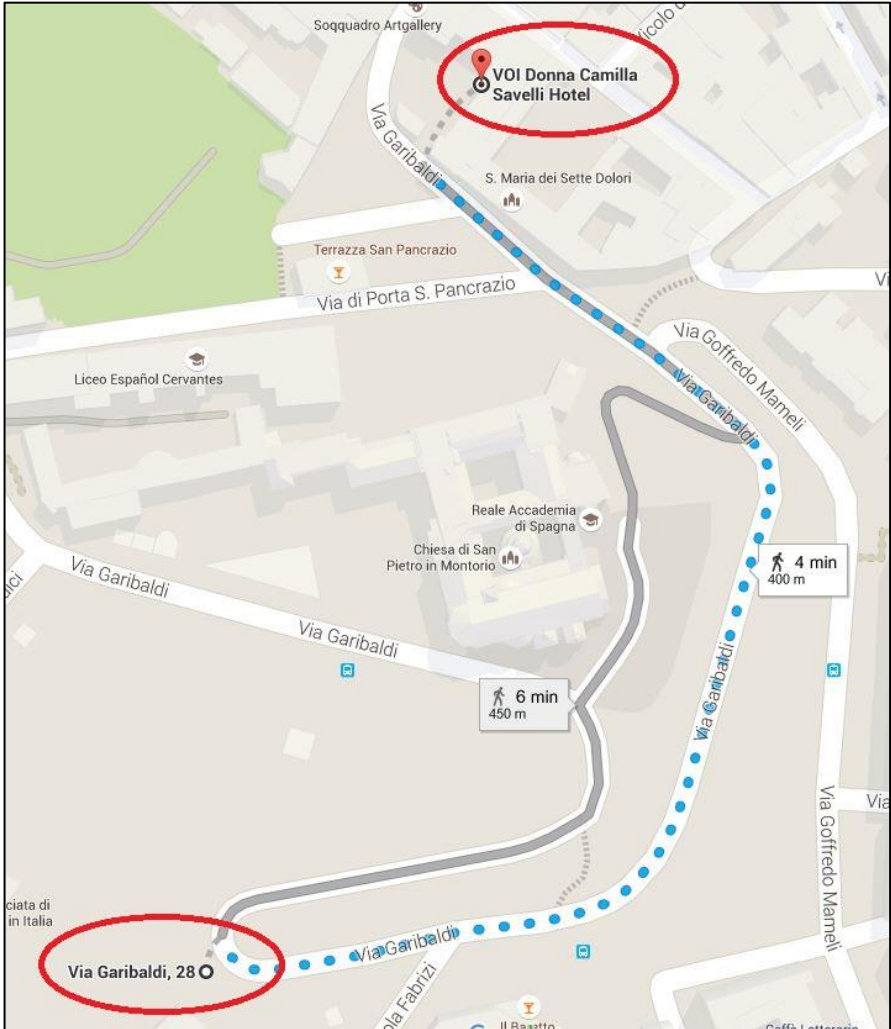
An Interdisciplinary Conference Organized by the Australian Catholic University,
Boston College and Harvard University

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Daniel Dahlstrom	Boston University	dahlstro@bu.edu
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Herman Westerink	Radboud University	h.westerink@ftr.ru.nl
Also in attendance:		
James McLaren	Australian Catholic University	james.mclaren@acu.edu.au

Leonardo Da Vinci International Airport to voi Donna Camilla Savelli Hotel - Rome



VOI Donna Camilla Savelli Hotel to ACU Rome Centre



Practical Matters

Hotel address: Via Garibaldi, 27, 00153 Roma

Campus address: Via Garibaldi, 28, 00153 Roma

Please note that the walk from the hotel to the Campus is uphill, approximately a quarter of the way up the Janiculum Hill. Although a relatively short distance the walk does involve a climb, part of which is at a steady incline. There is also no designated footpath on the side of the road.

Some nearby places of interest

- Fontana dell'Acqua Paola
- Museo della repubblica Romana e della memoria Garibaldina
- Piazza Garibaldi (including the Vittoriano Monument)
- Orto Botanico
- San Pietro in Montorio (including Tempietto del Bramante)
- Villa Pamphili
- Santa Maria in Trastevere

Some suggestions for food in Trastevere:

- Cave Canem (Piazza di. S. Calisto, 11).
- Da Enzo (Via dei Vascellari, 29).
- Fatamorgana (Via Roma Libera, 11) for gelato.
- La Boccaccia (Via di Santa Dorotea, 2) for when on the run (pizza by the slice).

Also worth considering:

Emma Pizzeria (Via del Monte della Farina, 28). It is across the Tiber River, about a 15 minutes walk from the hotel.

The Location

The Rome Campus lies within the Aurelian walls, approximately one-third of the way up the Janiculum Hill. Although the Janiculum is particularly well known as the place where Garibaldi and his supporters fought to defend the newly established Republic of Rome in 1849 the site of the Campus also has some notable points of interest. Gió Ponti was involved in the design of the current building, which was built for the Sisters of Notre Dame de Sion in 1962-63. Within the confines of the previous structures and largely thanks to the work of Mother Marie Augustine and Mother Maria Agnesa the site was a place of refuge for Jews during WWII. Whole families were accommodated within the convent from October 1943 until the liberation of Rome in June 1944 (source: Notre Dame de Sion archives).

In the gardens is one other notable feature, which most likely dates from the first century CE. It is a funerary relief of a man and a woman and an inscription. Dr Alan Cadwallader of ACU has recently identified the relief and epitaph as *CIL* 6.16019, an item recorded in the seventeenth century but subsequently thought to be lost as the Janiculum Hill area was urbanised. Their apparent 'loss' was attested as recently as 1993, by Valentin Kockel in his work on Roman gravesites from the turn of the era. According to Dr Cadwallader, the relief and inscription belong together, making them quite unusual. It is likely that the original setting was a nearby grave structure, possibly situated in the vicinity of the Via Aurelia. The inscription suggests an interesting social history: they have Greek names (Anteros and Apollonia); they were ex-slaves who had belonged to different households and subsequently established their own household (source: A. Cadwallader, "A Note on *CIL* 6.16019 in Light of its Rediscovery," *forthcoming*).

Notes

The Enigma of Suffering

Speakers, titles and abstracts

Medicine and Health Science

Eric Cassell (emeritus, Cornell University, United States)

Title and Abstract

The suffering person and the nature of suffering

Redefining sickness helps in understanding suffering. For about two hundred years a person has been considered sick if the person has a disease. Doctors are trained to start with the disease and think in terms of what the disease is or has been doing to the sick person's body. Patients know they are sick, however, because of impairments of function—things (one or many) that keep sick persons from accomplishing their goals and purposes. Impairments of function, in sickness, may occur at any level from the subcellular to the spiritual. It may be the disease that causes those functional losses—the inability to get out of bed, walk, talk, interact with the family, go to work, have sex, think, read or write—but is the impairments of function themselves that make patients know they are sick. The awful distress that is suffering does its damage because of how it takes over the sick person, further injuring the person's ability to function and changing goals and undermining purpose. I will review what makes suffering the unique form of distress that it is. It is an understanding of the nature of persons, however, that is crucial to comprehending suffering. This background helps in understanding causes of suffering other than sickness. Several examples of suffering patients clarify the concept.

Alicia Krikorian (Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Medellin, Bolivia)

Title and Abstract

An integrative view of suffering from the health sciences perspective.

Suffering is a pervasive experience in the gravely ill. Particularly as death becomes closer, suffering becomes more severe and defying for the patient, the family and the health team. Advance illnesses are commonly accompanied by multiple symptoms, emotional distress, spiritual enquiries, and changes in social roles, among many other challenges that, together, contribute to suffering. Palliative care is an approach that seeks to improve quality of life and prevent and relief suffering. Thus, the understanding of suffering, its early detection and adequate intervention are crucial in this context.

The concept of suffering has been historically approached by different disciplines (mainly humanistic, artistic, philosophical), but only recently has it been systematically studied in the health care context. Definitions of this experience recognize its integrative nature as well as the affective and cognitive contributions. Also the scientific evidence derived mainly from the neurosciences, has increasingly enriched the understanding of the bio-physiological processes involved as well as how the different dimensions (psychological, social, spiritual, physical) interact to result in a unified experience.

However, theoretical models of suffering that integrate all these aspects are still under development and scientific scrutiny. Also, there are lines of knowledge that have been developed in parallel and, although they share many common bases, still need to come together. Particularly the concept of stress, normally understood as an integrated experience, has solid empirical evidence to support the theoretical models in which has been grounded.

Consequently, we developed a model of suffering that integrated the stress perspective. We defined suffering as multi-dimensional and dynamic experience of severe stress that occurs in response to a significant threat to the organism and where regulatory processes, that normally enable adaptation, become insufficient leading to exhaustion. It is important to note

that regulatory processes include physiological, emotional, spiritual and social resources. Consequently, suffering entails a whole-person experience comprising body-mind processes.

According to the model, internal or external events that affect the person (including physical, psychological, spiritual, and sociocultural dimensions) are perceived and mediated by emotion. At the same time, regulatory and coping processes in each dimension are triggered. When coping resources are insufficient and the person's integrity continues being threatened and eventually damaged, exhaustion occurs leading to suffering.

Subsequently, we conducted a study to test the model and provided evidence related to the predictors of suffering in advanced cancer patients. The results offered initial support to the proposed theoretical model and showed the important mediating effect of psychological and spiritual variables between physical symptoms and suffering. However, further evidence should be needed to test the model in other populations and using a greater spectrum of assessment strategies, beyond those using self-assessment.

Insights into the theoretical model will be discussed during the conference, as well as how it was tested. Finally, I hope to share some thoughts on further research needed to advance this line of knowledge.

Complementary Reading

A. Krikorian, et. al., "An Integrative View of Suffering in Palliative Care," in *Current Review* (print included on attachment to separate email entitled "Readings")

A. Krikorian, et.al., "Predictors of Suffering in Advanced Cancer," in *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine* (print included on attachment to separate email entitled "Readings")

A. Krikorian, et.al., "Suffering and Distress at the End-of-Life," in *Psycho-oncology* (print included on attachment to separate email entitled "Readings")

A. Krikorian, et.al., "Suffering Assessment. A Review of Available Instruments for Use in Palliative Care," in *Journal of Palliative Medicine* (print included on attachment to separate email entitled "Readings")

A. Krikorian, et.al., "Current Dilemmas in the Assessment of Suffering in Palliative Care," in *Palliative and Supportive Care* (print included on attachment to separate email entitled "Readings")

Joan Monin (Yale University)

Title and Abstract

Emotional Reactions to a Family Member's Suffering: Implications for Caregivers' Health

A large literature shows that providing care to a chronically ill family member has negative consequences for caregivers' health and well-being. Our research shows that an important mechanism for the negative health consequences of caregiving is exposure to a loved one's suffering. However, not all people respond to a partner's suffering in the same way. In this talk, I will first review studies showing that exposure to a loved one's suffering uniquely influences family members' health. Next, I will discuss how individual differences in caregivers' and care recipients' emotion regulation strategies in response to care recipient suffering can influence caregivers' health. In doing so, I will review empirical research findings that draw from three theories of emotion: Gross' process model of emotion regulation, attachment theory, and a functionalist perspective on emotion.

Complementary Reading

Monin, J. K., Schulz, R., Martire, L. M., Jennings, J. R., Lingler, J. H., & Greenberg, M. S. (2010). Spouses' cardiovascular reactivity to their partners' suffering. *Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 65B, 2, 195-201.

Monin, J. K. & Schulz, R. (2010). The effects of suffering in chronically ill older adults on the health and well-being of family members involved in their care: The role of emotion-related processes. *GeroPsych: The Journal of Gerontopsychology and Geriatric Psychiatry*, 23, 4, 207-213.

Richard Schulz (University of Pittsburgh)

Title and Abstract

Health Effects of Exposure to Suffering in Close Family Relationships

Millions of people worldwide are exposed to the suffering of someone close to them, sometimes for months and even years, because of chronic illness and disability of close relatives and friends. Witnessing the suffering of a chronically ill relative or friend can take an emotional toll on a person, increasing his or her risk for psychological and physical morbidity (Schulz, et al., 2000). Yet the effect of this exposure is not well understood. A model describing the role of suffering and compassion in the context of caregiving relationships is described. Data are presented reporting the impact of exposure to suffering on close family members and mechanisms through which suffering exerts adverse health effects on the observer.

Complementary Reading

Schulz, R., Hebert, R.S., Dew, M.A., Brown, S.L., Scheier, M.F., Beach, S.R., et al. (2007). "Care recipient suffering and caregiver compassion: New opportunities for research, practice, and policy." *The Gerontologist*, 47(1), 4-13.

Schulz, R., Monin, J.K., Czaja, S.J., Lingler, J., Beach, S.R., Martire, L.M., et al. (2010). "Measuring the experience and perception of suffering." *The Gerontologist*, 50(6), 774-784.

Philosophy

Daniel Dahlstrom (Boston University)

Title and Abstract

Phenomenology and the Experience of Pain

My paper explores the importance of phenomenology for coming to grips with the various experiences of pain *and vice versa*. The form of the exploration is part overview, part investigation of discussions in the phenomenological tradition insofar as they bear directly or indirectly on describing and understanding the experience of pain. Discussions by four major figures in 20th century phenomenology are examined. (1) The paper starts with the latest of the four versions of phenomenology by illustrating the illuminating role that consideration of this experience plays at crucial junctures in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*. (2) The focus then pivots back to the beginnings of phenomenology and, in particular, Husserl's treatment of the question of the intentional status of pain, as it emerges in the context of a debate among German psychologists over the proper classification of the phenomenon of pain (the treatment is centered in §15 of Husserl's *Fifth Logical Investigation*). (3) The third part of the paper turns – perhaps unexpectedly – to certain analyses in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Although Heidegger does not address the theme directly in his major work, *Being and Time*, his distinctive treatment of attunement, mood, and fear in the context of being-in-the-world and being-with-others provides a promising albeit limited platform for considering a wide array of experiences of pain. (4) The paper concludes with what might be considered phenomenologists' strong suit in understanding the experience of pain, namely, their concern with the irreducibly embodied character of experience. For this final segment, the paper shifts – again perhaps surprisingly – to a somewhat overlooked but auspicious analysis of

embodiment, namely, Sartre's discussion of the three ontological dimensions of the body and the bearing of the discussion on the experience of pain.

Complementary Reading

E. Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Investigation 5, §15: "Whether experiences of one and the same phenomenological kind (of the genus feeling in particular) can consist partly of acts and partly of non-acts" in *Logical Investigations*, Volume 2, tr. J. Findlay, ed. D. Moran (London/New York: Routledge, 2001), 106-112.

M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 29 (Attunement), § 30 (Fear), § 40 (Angst) in *Being and Time*, tr. J. Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 130-138, 178-184.

J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Part Three, Chapter Two: "The Body" in *Being and Nothingness*, tr. H. E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square, 1992), 401-470.

Emmanuel Falque (Institut Catholique de Paris, France)

Title and Abstract

Incarnate Suffering

An investigation of the limits of suffering between philosophy and theology, where the non-meaning / meaninglessness of suffering for the philosopher meets the theologian's attempt to give meaning to suffering.

Complementary Reading

E. Falque, *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb, Body, Eros and Eucharist*, Fordham University Press, 2016.

E. Falque, "Suffering Death," in John Behr and Conor Cunningham (eds.), *The Role of Death in Life*, Cascade Books, 2015, pp. 45-55.

Kevin Hart (University of Virginia, United States)

Title and Abstract

The Problem of Evil

Note: a more detailed abstract is coming shortly. An exploration of multiple responses to the problem of evil from philosophy into natural theology and revealed theology, with attention to the rise of theodicy and its dangers and proposal that of the forms of evil, suffering presents philosophy and theology with the greatest challenge.

Short paper panel (philosophy and theology)

Edward Alam (University of Notre Dame – Louaize, Lebanon)

Title and Abstract

Suffering, Theodicy, and the Theology of the Body: Reflections on Eschatology

Of the forty-five *Apostolic Letters* written by John Paul II in 1984, only one of them, *Salvifici Doloris*, has been officially translated and made available in a language other than Latin; in fact it has been translated into six other languages and is more widely read and commented upon than all of the other forty-four Letters put together. Upon even a cursory comparative perusal of these letters, it is not difficult to understand why: *Salvifici Doloris* or *On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering* could very well have been an encyclical loaded as it is with psychological, philosophical, and theological breadth and depth. My intent is not to summarize it; there are many excellent summaries readily available. What I attempt, rather, is a modest theological/eschatological reflection on the relation between

suffering and evil, in order to fan the flames of hope in my own life and in the lives of those around me. Though my approach is markedly philosophical, drawing as it does upon Leibniz's *Essays on Theodicy*, Kant's criticism of Leibniz, and finally Schelling 'rehabilitation' of Leibniz, it is primarily informed by direct and indirect references to John Paul's concept of the human person, his theology of the body and this monumental Apostolic Letter.

Complementary Reading

John Paul, *Apostolic Letter, Salvifici Doloris*, 1984

Adrian Reimers, "Human Suffering and John Paul II's Theology of the Body" in *Nova et Vetera*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Fall 2004. pp. 445–459

Jeffrey Bloechl (Boston College, United States)

Title and Abstract

Homo Patiens. Scheler, Levinas and Suffering without Justification

Working at the margins of the phenomenological tradition, both Max Scheler and Emmanuel Levinas propose that human suffering must be interpreted without recourse to theodicy. This paper will move from a claim that suffering has its own phenomenality toward the question of what properly defines the human being who undergoes it. Among the stakes between Scheler and Levinas is the difference between a conception of human being as person (Scheler) and as subject (Levinas).

Complementary Reading

E. Levinas, "Useless Suffering," in E. Levinas, *Entre Nous* (print included on attachment to separate email entitled "Readings")

M. Scheler, "The Meaning of Suffering," in M. Scheler, *Selected Philosophical Essays* (print included on attachment to separate email entitled "Readings")

Brian Robinette (Boston College, United States)

Title and Abstract

Looking Into the Abyss Through Easter Eyes: Engaging Johann Baptist Metz

“It is precisely because Christians believe in an eschatological meaning for history that they can risk historical consciousness: looking into the abyss.” This statement, made by German theologian Johann Baptist Metz, refers to the ongoing struggle for memories, and in particular the memories of incalculable, innocent suffering. Reflecting upon the theological task in the wake of Auschwitz, Metz maintains that God-talk in a “postidealist” age must be commemorative, practical, political, and apocalyptic. It must allow the “dangerous memories” of past suffering to disrupt the present order, just as it cries unto God with an urgent hope for their eschatological overcoming. This paper engages some of the central features that animate Metz’s account of suffering, particularly the theo-political significance of remembered suffering, and it raises a key, critical question in light of a major feature of Christian hope that remains underdeveloped by Metz, namely, the reconciliation of oppressed and oppressor.

Complementary Reading

J. B. Metz, “Theology as Theodicy,” in Metz, *A Passion for God*, pp. 54-71 (print included on attachment to separate email entitled “Readings”)

J. B. Metz, “The Future Seen from the Perspective of Suffering. On the Dialectic of Progress, in Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, pp. 97-113 (print included on attachment to separate email entitled “Readings”)

Theology

Karen Kilby (Durham University, United Kingdom)

Title and Abstract

The Darkness of Suffering and the Darkness of God

This paper will have three parts. In the first I will offer a broad exploration of the place of suffering in Christian theology. While often a focus of attention in pastoral or practical theology, suffering is rarely directly addressed as a theme in systematic/constructive theology. Nevertheless, I will try to show how differing instincts about the status of suffering lurk behind a number of lively debates in recent systematic theology. In the second part I will begin a systematic theological reflection on suffering by examining the thesis that meaninglessness is intrinsic to serious suffering, and reflect on how to understand “finding” or “making” meaning in suffering in light of this thesis. In the final part of the paper I will explore the relationship between what one might call the “darkness of suffering” and the “darkness of God,” trying to show both the temptation of and the danger in a conflation of the two.

Complementary Reading

Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*

Kenneth Surin, *Theology and the Problem of Evil*

Thomas Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*

Claudia Welz (University of Copenhagen, Denmark)

Title and Abstract

Human and Divine Suffering: The Wound of Negativity in Post-Holocaust Theology

How can theological reflections contribute to the difficult task of dealing with traumatic events? Concentrating on post-Holocaust theology, this lecture discusses different approaches to disaster that are prominent in contemporary Jewish thought. The first section investigates opposed ways of interpreting human suffering while losing or preserving faith in and after the Shoah (Rubenstein, Wiesel, and Rabbi Nissenbaum). The second section turns to the topic of divine suffering, be it described as a withdrawal from the world or as God's presence in the midst of it (Jonas and Raphael). The third section is dedicated to the question of how we can cope with suffering – can the *tikkun olam*, the 'repair' or 'restoration' of the world and the soothing of pain be achieved through commemoration (Margalit, Heschel, Wiesel)?

Complementary Reading

C. Welz, "Reasons for Having No Reason to Defend God – Kant, Kierkegaard, Levinas and their Alternatives to Theodicy" in: Hendrik M. Vroom (ed.), *Wrestling with God and with Evil: Philosophical Reflections* (Currents of Encounter 31), Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi Press 2007, 167-186 (print included on attachment to separate email entitled "Readings")

C. Welz, "Trauma, Memory, Testimony: Phenomenological, Psychological, and Ethical Perspectives" in: *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis* 7 (2016), 104-133, available in open access

at: <http://ojs.abo.fi/index.php/scripta/article/view/947>.

Herman Westerink (Radboud University, the Netherlands)

Title and Abstract

The Concern about the Religious Self. A Foucauldian approach to a Sixteenth-Century Case of Religious Despair

The various turns to the religious subject in the early modern era of confessionalization and in-depth Christianization processes, produce new models for self-knowledge and for what Michel Foucault names 'hermeneutics of the self'. In an era in which no longer God is the self-evident *subjectum* of an order of meaning, the religious subject becomes the locus of new experiences and articulations of the presence of the divine – experiences, and lacks thereof, that in the various confessional models take different shapes relative to the psychic components involved on the one hand and dogmatic positions on the other hand. In my lecture I will focus attention on a sixteenth-century case of religious despair in a protestant context, showing in what way in this paradigmatic case of spiritual struggle a form of suffering (despair) becomes associated with and constitutive for religious concern for the self, desire and faith.

The Enigma of Suffering

3-6 January 2017

ACU, Boston College, Harvard University Seminar

Australian Catholic University/Catholic University of America Rome Center Via
Garibaldi, 28, 00153 Roma, Italy

Convenors:

Jeffrey Bloechl

Jeffrey Hanson