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# ESSAYS

## **The Virtues of Apple Trees: Helping Communities Recover from Tragedy**



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## The Virtues of Apple Trees

“The Sandy Hook community will remember you forever!” exclaimed a young woman as she emotionally hugged several of my psychology students who had travelled to Newtown, Connecticut to participate in the community tree planting project. These touching and memorable words remain with me still today as our students and community members concluded a community service project that took place on Saturday, October 5, 2013 near the Sandy Hook Elementary School, located in Newtown, CT. The Sandy Hook community residents had just finished planting several varieties of 30 apple trees in the Newtown Victory Garden and the day long project was just beginning to wind down.

### *Why Plant Apple Trees?*



**Figure 1: Snow Sweet Apples**

Metropolitan State University is located in St. Paul, MN and serves a diverse population of over 7000 traditional and nontraditional students. Many of our current students include traditional high school graduates, but an increasing number of new students include retirees and older adults who have never previously attended any higher educational institution. Inver Hills Community College is a two year college located near Metropolitan State University in Inver Grove Heights, MN. Many graduates from Inver Hills Community College continue their education at Metropolitan State University, and both institutions have recently developed joint educational programs such as the schools of nursing and criminal justice. Additionally, both schools have created a community gardening partnership where students from both institutions work collaboratively in developing a fruit

tree orchard and community garden on the sprawling campus of Inver Hills Community College. The foods grown here are donated to food shelters located throughout the greater St. Paul, MN area. Both institutions share a distinct mission to serve both their students and the community and to help those who have been afflicted by poverty and oppression.

As a community psychology professor at Metropolitan State University, I am very much aware of the importance for communities to work together and help individuals and families who may have experienced tragedy and are in need of some type of assistance. I have had extensive experience in working with underrepresented and low-income families and have seen the positive effects and intrinsic value in the development and shared responsibility of community service projects. I believe that each of us has a unique gift to share within a community, and that this skill or gift is an important contribution that helps bind communities together in times of crisis or tragedy. Shortly after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, I decided to contact local officials at the Newtown Department of Parks and Recreation and see if there was some way Metropolitan State University and Inver Hills Community College students and faculty

could help in the recovery process from this terrible tragedy. My first suggestion to Ms. Amy Mangold, Newtown Dept. of Parks and Recreation Director, was to create a living memorial, such as a small fruit tree orchard. After some extended discussions (i.e., types of trees being planted, details about where the orchard would be located, etc.) with Metropolitan State University and Inver Hills Community College administrators, the Newtown Department of Parks and Recreation graciously accepted our offer to help develop a fruit tree orchard with members of the Newtown community.

Community members of Newtown, Connecticut and students from Metropolitan State University and Inver Hills Community College met on Saturday, October 5, 2013 with one goal in mind: We wanted to provide hope and honor the memories of the victims of the senseless shooting tragedy that had occurred on December 14, 2012. Planting trees has numerous therapeutic values and psychological benefits to people (Hadzigeorgiou, Prevezanou, Kabouropoulo & Konsolas, 2011). Trees not only help to beautify the environments in which we live in, but they also provide oxygen for us to breathe, and they protect us from the damaging effects of wind, sun and erosion. But perhaps most importantly I believe most individuals would agree that planting trees simply makes us *feel* better by the work that we are doing with other people.

While I was planting the trees I could see the facial expressions from each community member; I saw people with a variety of emotions. I could sense that the community members were grateful and happy to develop new relationships with our student participants, but I also saw they were sad and frustrated by what had occurred to them less than a year earlier. One community member commented to me during the tree planting activity that the newly planted trees would send a message of “hope and promise” for years to come to the people of Newtown, CT. The apple trees also offered a distinct form of what I would call “psychological nourishment,” or that which provides physical and spiritual help to those who have lost family and community members.

Community psychology is a branch of psychology that explores the dynamic relationships between individuals and the communities where they live. It provides methods of improving the overall quality of life by helping people to become better “connected” with their community and provides opportunities for individuals to demonstrate their skills and aptitudes with each other to form a close network. This close form of networking is more commonly referred to as *social capital* (Putnam, 2000). In my opinion, one of the more important general goals of psychology is to try to understand human nature in such a way that groups of individuals from different backgrounds can communicate and work with others in a more meaningful and authentic way that will enhance the development of social capital, cooperative and supportive behaviors. The term “community” itself refers to the Latin concept of “*communitas*” and is literally defined as “*with gift*.” In a world of rapidly emerging technology and social media, it is easy to forget the important value and benefits of interpersonal community service activities, such as planting a community garden or fruit tree orchard. For example, in a recent survey over half of undergraduate college students indicate a preference in using social media (i.e., “Facebook”) over interpersonal community service activities (King, 2011). One goal of this essay is to illustrate the important social and environmental positive influences of community service work activities and the evolutionary need for people to work collaboratively with each other, especially when they are recuperating from such a devastating loss as the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre.



There is a concept in psychology that refers to our ability to remember exactly what we were doing and where we were when something very important (unfortunately usually a negative event) has occurred. This interesting autobiographical memory capacity can span several years or even decades and is referred to as “episodic memory” (Tulving, 1984). For instance, those of us who are old enough may remember what we were doing on Friday, November 22, 1963 shortly after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy; more recently, we might remember where we were on the Tuesday morning of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Towers. On Friday, December 14, 2012 I had just finished grading and reviewing papers in my community psychology course. Quite ironically, the topic of the assignment was the relevance of community activities and how more individuals who feel more “connected” to their communities are actively engaged with a variety of activities designed to improve their neighborhoods, parks and school systems. As I continued grading I heard an announcement over the television that an “unprecedented attack” had occurred at a small elementary school near Newtown, Connecticut. The newscast reported a lone attacker had committed the second deadliest attack by a single person in U. S. history, murdering 26 individuals at the Sandy Hook Elementary School.

The impact of this devastating event still lingers in the minds of many individuals, including myself. After years of teaching and researching the topics of prosocial behaviors and community intervention, I felt a pressing need to find some way to help those individuals who were impacted during this tragic event. In short, I needed to find a way that allowed a community to heal itself in the wake of one of the most horrific and devastating events to occur in the United States. Before we could even begin to help the Newtown, CT community in the healing process, we first needed to gain their trust and acceptance and not appear as “intruders.” This trust was gradually achieved through the planning process with community members and the establishment of the Newtown Victory Garden where the trees would be planted. Newtown Victory Garden Director, Mr. Harvey Pessin, and Newtown Department of Parks and Recreation Director, Ms. Amy Mangold, helped in this process as, over the course of several months, we discussed the details of the tree planting project; we spoke about what types of trees would be planted and how the community members could participate in helping to plant each tree. Fliers were distributed throughout the small town of Newtown inviting the community members to help plant the new trees and the local newspaper (*The Newtown Bee*) helped to advertise the upcoming event.

However, with respect to this article and what we can learn from the experience at Newtown Victory Garden in particular and the impact of community service more generally, it is important to briefly address the sometimes controversial relationship between media and behavior. A very basic human response to any tragedy is to first try and understand what may have been the contributing factors to the event. Decades of historical research in psychology has shown the profound influences of media on behavior (Bandura, 1965; Anderson and colleagues, 2010). People (especially children) are more prone to emulate those behaviors they perceive as positive or desirable, even if those behaviors have catastrophic consequences (Huesmann & Taylor, 2003). Numerous studies and empirical research have shown strong correlations between the effects of media with prosocial behaviors (Greitemeyer, Osswald & Brauer, 2010) as well as community service work activities that reduce ethnocentrism (Hoffman, Espinoze-Parker, Wallach & Sanchez, 2009). While many psychologists and educational researchers support the idea that educational media can stimulate and enhance prosocial behaviors (i.e., cooperation)

among children, there is significantly less agreement addressing the relationship between antisocial behaviors and violent media. For example, some criticism exists about the methodology and internal validity (i.e., correlation versus causal influences among two variables), and on the relationship between violent media games and aggressive behaviors (Ferguson, 2013).

While the debate whether or not violent media games are actually *causally*-related or correlated with aggressive behaviors remains controversial (Ferguson, 2013), we do know that the shooters (names intentionally withheld in this essay) in both the Sandy Hook Elementary School (12/14/12) and Columbine High School (4/20/99) were in fact very much preoccupied with violent video games such as “*Moral Kombat*” and “*Doom*” (*New York Daily News*, 2/17/13; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbine\\_High\\_School\\_massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbine_High_School_massacre)). We also know they created websites which were made available to the public and contained explicit instructions in the development of destructive devices (<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/violent-games-provide-motive-newtown-massacre-article-1.1266643>). Detailed plans, journals, and “score sheets” were kept prior to the attacks at each school, and a blog created by one of the shooters in the Columbine massacre provided instructions about how to create pipe bombs and other weapons of mass destruction. The internet and various websites had provided each of the shooters with specific information on how to carry out each plan of massive destruction (Weber, Ritterfeld, & Mathiak, 2006; Thomas & Levant, 2012). More disturbing, however, is how relatively easy it is for people to access and download these detailed instructions of destruction, and that they still remain available to anyone (i.e., minors) who may have access to a computer. The focus of this article is not to ascribe or identify the motives of the shooters but rather to determine the factors that help us to better understand how community service work activities can help and promote growth among community members who are recovering from tragedy. Yet in order to fully understand the possible reach and breadth of community service work, we must also be mindful of the relationship between aggressive behavior and the media.

### *Methodology: Measuring the Effects of Tree Planting Activities*

My reasons in organizing a tree planting activity in the Newtown Victory Garden was simply to show the community members the psychological healing and therapeutic value in planting trees with other persons from different parts of the United States. Students from Metropolitan State University (n = 5) and Inver Hills Community College (n = 3) volunteered to participate in planting trees in the Newtown Victory Garden during the Fall 2013 academic semester. All students had completed community psychology course work and wanted to participate in the tree planting ceremony as a means of helping the Sandy Hook Community recover and heal from the recent (12/14/12) shooting tragedy. The trees used in the project were cultivars from the University of Minnesota (Honey Crisp®; Honey Gold®; and SnowSweet®) and were donated as a gift from one Midwestern community to a small community located in Newtown, CT (see Figure 1). The actual tree planting ceremony was conducted on Saturday, October 5, 2013 in the morning (11:00 am), and over 80 community members (including teachers and family members who were at the Sandy Hook Elementary School that fateful day) came to volunteer to plant the trees. Our student volunteers from Metropolitan State University and Inver Hills Community College paired up with several different community members and began planting trees in about a one acre site.

A short (20 minute) seminar in tree planting instructions (i.e., depth of planting, mulch use and watering) was provided by the Newtown Department of Parks and Recreation staff, and soon the Newtown community was taking great pride in the development of their new orchard. A total of 30 different fruit trees were planted, with an additional 30 given to Newtown community members to take home and plant in their own yards. A small pot luck luncheon was served to the participants with live folk music playing from a local band. At the conclusion of the tree planting ceremony, many of the participants stood in awe gazing at the newly planted trees in the scenic backdrop of the Newtown Victory Garden (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2: Newtown Victory Garden Tree Planting Site**

At the end of the tree planting ceremony, several of the community members gave us hugs and their tears of thanks were authentic indicators of what we all were feeling that day. After the tree planting ceremony had concluded, we administered the Community Service Work (CSW) Questionnaire (see Appendix A) and a brief survey of five questions to each of the eight student participants who had helped the community residents plant the trees in the Newtown Victory Garden. The purpose of the questionnaire was primarily to determine what kind of impact (if any) the tree planting ceremony had on them, and secondarily to record their subjective experiences in completing the community service work. The CSW questionnaire asked participants a variety of questions pertaining to participant perceptions of the types of experiences that are typically associated with CSW activities and volunteer projects.

The CSW questionnaire identified four primary domains of community service work that have been shown to have strong internal consistency (Shiarella, McCarthy, & Tucker, 2000). Internal consistency refers to the degree that each question is actually measuring what it is designed to measure (i.e., a psychological construct) in the questionnaire. These domains included personal connectedness to one's community ( $\alpha = .92$ ); understanding of disadvantaged groups ( $\alpha = .84$ ); awareness of needs of others and importance of community service work activities ( $\alpha = .83$ ); and likelihood to participate in future community service work activities ( $\alpha = .93$ ). In addition to the CSW questionnaire, participants were asked five open-ended questions pertaining to their personal experiences in planting the fruit trees with the community members in the Newtown Victory Garden (see Appendix B).

## Results

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated to determine the relationship of the four domains of community service work. A significant ( $p < .01$ ) correlation emerged between the domains of CSW as important activities and willingness to participate in future CSW activities ( $r = .882$ ). Additionally, a second significant ( $p < .05$ ) correlation emerged between the domains of CSW as important activities and feeling "connected" to one's own community ( $r = .802$ ):

**Correlations**

		CSW as Important Activities	Feel Connected to Community	Better Understanding of Different Ethnic Groups	Will Participate in Future CSW Activities
CSW as Important Activities	Pearson Correlation	1	<b>.802*</b>	.747*	.882**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.017	.033	.004
	N	8	8	8	8
Feel Connected to Community	Pearson Correlation	.802*	1	.889**	.635
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017		.003	.091
	N	8	8	8	8
Better Understanding of Different Ethnic Groups	Pearson Correlation	.747*	.889**	1	.548
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.003		.159
	N	8	8	8	8
Will Participate in Future CSW Activities	Pearson Correlation	<b>.882**</b>	.635	.548	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.091	.159	



N	8	8	8	8
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\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Discussion

These findings suggest that the four domains of community service work activities are significantly correlated ( $r = .802$ ;  $r = .882$ ) among individuals who participate in a post-traumatic community service work activity. One critical finding is the relationship between CSW activities and feeling “connected” to one’s own community. Given the rapid development and prevalence of social media, people are replacing “real” interpersonal community service work and volunteer activities with online or “virtual” computer enhanced programs, and in many cases prefer the online activities over community engagement activities (Putnam, 2000; Ozguven & Mucan, 2013) as well as “real” or interpersonal communication (Tardanico, 2012). The second important finding in this qualitative essay report is that current involvement in CSW activities helps to promote future involvement with volunteer activities, and when we are provided with direct opportunities to work with others, our relationships with diverse groups also improves (Ohmer, 2008). The current study can be characterized as “preventative” because CSW activities help prevent alienation within the community and provide individuals with several modalities to “connect” and work in meaningful activities with other individuals in the community (Trickett & Rowe, 2012; Hoffman, Wallach & Sanchez, 2010).

This essay has two important recommendations that are relevant to the positive socio-environmental impact of CSW activities: The first addresses the tragic consequences of the Sandy Hook Elementary School and Columbine High School shooting massacres. In both instances, each of the three assailants had experienced problems in establishing interpersonal relationships with their peers and achieving “connectedness” and a sense of belonging with their school and community environments (Eller, 2012; Frymer, 2009). As a consequence of their failed attempts to achieve closer and more intimate relationships with others in their social and academic environments, the fantasy world of violent video game technology and reality ultimately became fatally blurred and distorted (Bruyere & Garbarino, 2012).

It would be speculation and conjecture to assume that the CSW activities would have prevented these tragedies from occurring, but mounting evidence shows that when communities provide tangible opportunities for individuals from diverse (ethnic, religious, economic) groups to work collaboratively, perceptions of each group significantly improves and the likelihood for conflict is reduced and negative ethnic stereotypes are debunked (Pettigrew, 1998). When individuals are provided with more opportunities to participate in different types of community service work activities, they are more likely to understand the benefits of group work and superordinate activities (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Our second recommendation recognizes that when individuals are provided with more opportunities to participate in different types of community service work activities involving superordinate goals, they are also more likely to understand the benefits of group work and superordinate activities (Gaertner, Dovidio, Banker, Houlette, Johnson, & McGlynn, 2000; Sheriff, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1988). The shooters at the Columbine High School had strong biases, resentment and anger that were clearly directed at specific groups

commonly seen in high school populations (i.e., athletes or “jocks,” social club members, etc.). A community service project requiring the skills of different students with a diverse set of skills could help bridge the gap of misunderstanding and resentment by identifying what each group had in common with each other rather than *perceived* differences within the groups.

During the interviews with our student participants, several students or respondents indicated that the opportunity to work with community residents from the Sandy Hook community was emotionally overwhelming and very positive: “I was made to feel like I belonged to the community and I felt that I was helping a community still suffering from their loss last December.” Another participant indicated that she felt “very positive about doing something [planting apple trees] that would be utilized by the community for generations to come . . . everyone here made all of us feel so welcome . . . like we are part of a family.” Finally, one student participant indicated that he felt “finally the community could open up and realize that they are not alone in the recovery from this disaster . . . it was the most meaningful experience I could ever hope for.” The Newtown tree planting activity shows the inherent benefits of community service work activities by providing community members with opportunities to see and experience the authentic positive and prosocial characteristics of people wanting to help others in their grieving and recovery process (see Figure 3). Conversely, we can also see the potentially negative and tragic consequences when individuals become disconnected and alienated from their own communities.

The strength of a community lies in its ability to address the needs of individual members through the development of ecologically-oriented activities and community-related projects (Brofenbrenner, 2005). Conversely, when communities fail to consider ecological factors and do not provide individuals with opportunities to work together, problems such as violence and antisocial behaviors can develop (Hong, Cho, Allen-Meares, & Espelage, 2011). When individuals are afforded the opportunity to share their skills and to work with each other, their relationships and trust with each other significantly improves (Hoffman, Wallach, Espinoza-Parker & Sanchez, 2009). Planting apple trees in a community orchard can help forge positive relationships by providing individuals with a variety of ways they can work collaboratively together and share their thoughts, feelings and goals for the future with each other. What a great way to reduce group conflict and aesthetically improve the physical appearance of our communities: Plant an apple tree.



**Figure 3: Students from Metropolitan State University and Inver Hills Community College Posing with the Newtown Victory Garden Bronze Plaque**

## **Appendix A**

### **Community Service Questionnaire**

**Please answer the following questions with a score of:**

**1 = Absolutely Untrue**

**2 = Somewhat Untrue**

**3 = Undecided**

**4 = Somewhat True**

**5 = Absolutely True**

1. I feel that participating in volunteer or community work is an important activity that all people should be involved in \_\_\_\_\_;
2. When I participate in volunteer work and community service work, I feel better as a person \_\_\_\_\_;
3. When I participate in volunteer and community service work, I feel as though I am contributing to make society better for all people \_\_\_\_\_;
4. I feel more “connected” to my school and community when I participate in community service work \_\_\_\_\_;
5. After participating in community service work I feel more like I “belong” to my campus and community \_\_\_\_\_
6. When I participate in community service work, I feel as though I can accomplish more and learn more academically \_\_\_\_\_;
7. When I participate in volunteer or community service work, I feel as though I am more capable of accomplishing other types of goals in my life \_\_\_\_\_;
8. I feel as though my potential for school work and academics has improved significantly while I have been participating in community service activities \_\_\_\_\_;
9. Since participating in this project, I feel as though I am more likely to participate in future community service activities \_\_\_\_\_;
10. When I participate in volunteer or community service work, I like working outside and enjoy how the activity makes my body feel physically \_\_\_\_\_;
11. I feel that I have a better understanding of members from different ethnic groups since I have been working in my community service activity \_\_\_\_\_;
12. When working as a volunteer in the community, I feel that my sense of pride for the community and my school has also increased \_\_\_\_\_;
13. I feel that community service work has helped me to better understand other people and to understand different cultures \_\_\_\_\_;
14. I feel more comfortable in communicating and working with members from different ethnic groups since my community service activity \_\_\_\_\_;
15. Since my community service work I feel like I have more in common (similarities) with members from different ethnic groups than dissimilarities \_\_\_\_\_ .



## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Questions**

1. Briefly describe your previous work in volunteer services to the community. What are your thoughts and feelings in completing the Newtown, Connecticut tree planting project?
2. How do you think the Newtown, CT community responded to you and the other student volunteers while completing the tree planting project?
3. Briefly describe what kinds of changes you expect to make in participating in this community project.
4. Do you feel that by helping the community plant trees in the Newtown Victory Garden you will have changed the lives of some of these community members? How so and in what way?
5. On a scale from “1” (least important) to “10” (most important), how would you rank the volunteer work that you have done in the Newtown, CT community? \_\_\_\_\_

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# One-Hundred-Twenty Acres, Not Forty Acres and a Mule

**J. MOFFETT WALKER**

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Freelance Writer & Author

Do you think a Mississippi slave descendent has an intriguing family history? If so, where can one find a descendent to make such a claim? I know the answer. I live this history every day; and it is the story of my ancestors. I am a relative of the late Elisa and Jennie Turner, their son, **Harry**, and his wife, Martha, who lived it and left this unique legacy. I own copies of the documents to support this interesting past, and I relish sharing my documented history.

These documents tell me more than what one usually finds when examining slaves' family history. They show me why it was important that at least one family of slave holders held on to their slaves. The documents may suggest some of us slave descendants might be geographically closer to our ancestors than we think. And my documented history shows what local or family records can reveal about slavery and war.

Actually, this historical research started when Alex Haley, author of *Roots*, inspired and motivated African Americans to begin searching for their ancestors. After watching the show, a cousin and retired teacher in Los Angeles, California, the late Alfonzo Turner, collected, published and shared the historical documents he had received directly from the John Wells' family. The Wells family owned the Bethesda Plantation.

Before Cousin Alfonzo's inspiration, fewer Black people attempted to research their past. Numerous road blocks prevented people from digging into their roots or backgrounds. But the Turner family's history proved differently.

I have copies of documents showing the following transactions:

*"A deed from Robert Wells to my grandfather, Thomas Wells, dated April 24, 1832, conveying **Harry Turner** to my grandfather; Robert Wells was a brother of Thomas Wells and a neighbor in this county. In 1839 Robert Wells moved to Arkansas and died there shortly thereafter."*<sup>1</sup>

*"A bill of sale from Dewitt and Barnes, slave merchants, dated November 14, 1835, to Thomas Wells conveying two slaves, one of whom was Martha, later wife of **Harry Turner**. She was fifteen years of age at the time of the conveyance."*<sup>2</sup>

Since my ancestors, the Turners, remained with the Wells family for decades, I have access to records written by Dr. John Wells about the Turners. For example, in 1803 Dr. John Wells wrote notes about his family and included information about my great-great-great grandmother, Jennie Wells Turner, who lived to be about seventy-two years old.

Records show she was ten years old when she moved from South Carolina to Mississippi with Nathaniel Wells, his family, and four other slaves. They settled in Pike County, a small town located near Summit, Mississippi.

*“**Harry** Turner’s father belonged to a man named Edward Turner, who owned a plantation in Pike County and partly in Amite Counties (County). Edward was a man of some prominence during the Territorial Days prior to 1817, when Mississippi was admitted to the Union.”<sup>3</sup>*

*“When Nathaniel Wells and his wife Elizabeth Simmons Wells [,] moved from South Carolina to Mississippi in 1803, they ‘bought’ [brought] 5 slaves with then. One of these was **Harry**’s mother Jennie, then a girl. It was in Pike County that **Harry** was born in 1817.”<sup>4</sup>*

I was so interested when I read the information about Pike County. I taught school at Burgland High School in McComb, Mississippi, from September 1961 to May 1962. I did not know about this family history or that there was a family connection near the school. I may have taught some relatives. Who knows?

I was also interested to learn from these how my family acquired the name Turner.

*“**Harry** took as his surname when he was emancipated [,] the name Turner.”<sup>5</sup>*

Dr. John Wells, W. Calvin Wells’ father, recorded these family notes:

*“**Harry** was the most valuable slave my father ever owned. He was born a slave of my great-grandfather, Nathaniel Wells, 1717-1884, ([A] major under Andrew Jackson in the Battle of New Orleans)[,] and by him given to my uncle, Robert Wells, who kept him some years and sold him to my father, Thomas Wells.”<sup>6</sup>*

*“He was the oldest son and second child of old Grand Mammy Jennie who was sold in 1844, after my grandfather’s death, she was appraised at nothing and my father took her and supported her until she died in 1864 or 1865.”<sup>7</sup>*

In his memoir, Cousin Alfonso Turner stated, *“My great-grandmother, Jennie Wells, was born in 1793 [,] the same year of the invention of the cotton gin in America.”<sup>8</sup>*

This information suggests Thomas Wells was a man who showed concern for others. He respected the elderly. I believe he saw slaves as real people and not as lower animals as some other slave owners did and as was proved by these owners’ actions. I believe Thomas Wells listened to his conscious and his heart. A plantation document indicated Thomas dealt with Harry as one man to another. I am unsure exactly what I mean by that, as one was master and the other a slave, but I do believe Thomas showed some empathy for **Harry**. Thomas Wells could have allowed old Grand Mammy Jennie to die by refusing to assist her. Or he could have sent her to another family. He could have assisted her in crossing over into eternity and there would have been no repercussions for him. Instead, he cared for her. The Wells also erected headstones of Elisa Turner and Grand Mammy Jennie Turner at Bethesda Church Cemetery, located on Canada-Cross Road, Edwards, Mississippi.

When I use the term “family circle” in this essay, what I mean is that the Wells sold their slaves only to other Wells family members. This was beneficial for the Wells, because it meant they knew their slaves were healthy, trustworthy, and responsible.

The fact that the Wells kept slaves in the “family circle” meant something else, perhaps something more significant, to the Turners. I believe the Turner family was relieved the Wells kept the Turner slaves in close proximity; I believe this made the Turners happier, and it probably helped to develop and maintain trust between masters and slaves. It meant the Turners did not live with the horrible fear other slaves did of being separated from spouses, children, siblings, parents or grandparents. For contemporary Turners such as me, it makes researching the past easier.

When I consider what I am calling the “family circle,” the relationships between the families, and the work done by both families, I have to consider the history of the 1800s and the period’s social class system. The idea of a “family circle” did not mean the same thing then as it does now. We have to understand this distinction in order to understand the family history I am discussing.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, female slaves worked outside the home in the Big House; they cleaned, cooked, and cared for the children. Most female slaves worked in the fields. On the other hand, most white females did not work at all and few if any worked in the fields. The white men took care of the women economically. In contrast, slave men were in servitude and did not have the opportunity to provide economically for their families. Today, most females work; some need the income to support their families.

Records show the Wells kept a workable “relationship” with the Turners. I believe the Turners received no beatings or hangings, and it seems they did not have to worry about their females being raped.

I had to learn to accept the titles, such as “grand mammy” and “uncle” and “aunt,” that were placed before slave names. Those titles could have meant respect in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but during my childhood years and during Separate-but-Equal times, the terms meant disrespect. Colored people considered these titles as an opportunity for white people not to address slaves as Mr. or Mrs.

Thomas followed his ancestors’ tradition and kept the Turners within the “family circle.” He also deeded **Harry** valuable land. I believe the Turners received better treatment than most slaves on other plantations did. Records support my position. Yet, I must be realistic. The Turners were slaves; they were not free. The only way I can understand these seemingly contradictory things is to realize in order to comprehend the Wells’ and the Turners’ life styles, I cannot judge them through my history. They lived through slavery, and I lived through Separate-but Equal.

All the documents I have mentioned are significant to me. These documents and others that I will discuss will prove that the Wells did own slaves but also they kept the Turners within their “family circle” for decades. I cannot explain how much these documents mean to me. If the

Wells had not shared these documents, the Turner family would not have known about our rich slave legacy. I know I am fortunate to have copies of the documents.

I see the “relationship” between the families as noteworthy within the context of slavery as well. What the Wells did gave me the opportunity to document nine generations, from Elisa and Jennie Turner to my great-grandsons Cam’ron Walker Baker and Keith Baker III. Furthermore, the “relationship” established between the Wells and Turners remained in place until **Harry’s** death and afterward. I say afterward, because I have included in this essay quotations which show how the Wells family carried out **Harry’s** wishes.

By the mid-1800s national developments were apparent to slave owners. Conflicts within the Union had been brewing and escalating for some time, but the issues became non-negotiable. The Southern states succeeded from the Union and formed the Confederacy with Mississippi joining the ranks on January 9, 1861. Soon after that the War Between the States began. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century some individuals question the reasons for the war. I understand slavery and the slave economy was one of the reasons, probably the main reason, in the South. Although the Northern states did not base their economy primarily on free slave labor, some Northern individuals owned slaves and some institutions profited. Slaves’ free labor provided slave masters the opportunity for financial success. I cannot imagine slave owners wanting to abolish slavery.

Slaves had no legal rights. The federal government did not recognize slaves as human beings, so they had no United States constitutional rights. Yet slavery became a moral issue to Northern Christians, especially Quakers. Some Christians began to speak out loudly and to declare slavery morally wrong.

However, 1863 proved a difficult time for Mississippi. **Harry** and his wife Martha remained on the Bethesda Plantation with the Wells family. They stayed there throughout the Civil War and afterwards. Slave masters took slaves to join the Confederate Army, and I believe some Turner family members joined the Confederate Army. Upon arrival, the slaves mostly got assigned to front lines; some slaves who survived ended up with the Union Army. Ulysses Grant’s army took soldiers from the Confederate Army when they won particular battles.

The Union Army outmatched the Confederate Army in the Battle of Champion Hill, Hinds County, Edwards, Mississippi, May 16, 1863. Slaves, mostly untrained, must have been confused. Although the slaves wanted to be free like other Americans were, they knew nothing but plantation life. They could not read or write. We know it was unlawful to teach slaves to read and write, although a few children taught their playmates to read so they could play board games with them. We know some mistresses taught cooks to read so mistresses did not have to remain in the house to read recipes for the cooks. We also know most slaves did not read or write.

The Union Army assumed responsibility for those slaves who tried to escape to the North. **Harry** and Martha remained where they were. During the spring of 1863 **Harry** and his master learned the Union Army had moved toward Hinds County, Edwards, Mississippi, en route to Vicksburg, Mississippi. They learned the Union Army was in Yazoo City, Mississippi, nearly fifty miles from the Bethesda Plantation, and I think they knew they had to protect the cotton produced on the plantation.



*“During the Civil War at the time when General Grant was approaching Edwards and the Bethesda Plantation in his drive on Vicksburg, the plantation had fifteen bales of unsold cotton on hand.”<sup>9</sup>*

I believe and the documents suggest that instead of trying to protect his family, **Harry** chose to protect property. Before the war his job had been to protect the property and to direct other slaves, so why would he do anything different during the war? The documents also suggest that although Thomas had many slaves on his plantation, he chose **Harry** to help him hide the cotton. According to the records, they took the fifteen bales to an island within a river. The Big Black River was in the general vicinity, but it was about fifteen or more miles from the plantation. However, a creek ran right through the plantation. I think they used the creek. I believe **Harry** and Thomas chose some inconspicuous spots in the creek, dug holes for the bales and placed them inside. Then they covered the spots with nature’s brush vegetation.

*“They were the only two who knew of its existence. The Northern army passed through, but did not find the cotton.”<sup>10</sup>*

*“My great-grandfather, Thomas Wells, the planter, operated a plantation of 1,500 acres with nearly one-hundred slaves at the beginning of the Civil War. **Harry** was his manager. Both these men were outstanding in their time, and the affection and friendship between them lasted until death.”<sup>11</sup>*

When I was a child, from 1939-1962, I lived on our family farm. The creek runs through our property, and it came in handy during extremely dry weather. We washed our laundry down at the creek when the water in our cistern became rather low. (Commercial running water in that section of the county came much later.) This is how I know about the creek, and I know how Thomas and Harry might have hidden cotton bales in it.



**Creek Behind Woods on Left Side**

After General Robert Lee surrendered to General Ulysses Grant in Vicksburg, Mississippi, on July 4, 1863, the Union Army began controlling the Mississippi River. The events thereafter changed. At the end of the war, Thomas Wells' economic welfare surpassed most former slave owners. Cotton was scarce. The price of cotton skyrocketed, and the Wells family made money because of the hidden commodity.

*"After the war the cotton was found in good condition [and was] sold for \$1.00 a pound and it was the proceeds of that sale that enabled my grandfather, when he returned from the army, to attend the University of Mississippi."*<sup>12</sup>

**Harry** had been a responsible and good helper for many years, and Wells rewarded **him**.

*"When the war was over, my father gave him 120 acres of land upon which he lived during the rest of his life."*<sup>13</sup>



**Pig Pond on Property**

According to Helen Griffith in *Dauntless in Mississippi*, in the fall of 1865 the Mississippi legislature passed laws which could be considered caste laws. They did not apply to white people. The Black Code denied the rights of Negroes to purchase or rent land. In 1870 the same year the Union re-admitted Mississippi, a race riot occurred in Clinton, Mississippi. Thomas Wells had begun to practice law in Raymond and was there when tensions in the Clinton-Edwards-Raymond area boiled high. Both colored and white individuals lost their lives in the Clinton Riot. As he was leaving the Raymond Courthouse, Attorney Wells was attacked and left to die. He survived but did not see the person who assaulted him.

*“My great-grandfather sent for **Harry** Turner and offered a reward of \$1,000.00 for the arrest of the person who had inflicted the injury.”*<sup>14</sup>

Because he lived in this small community, **Harry** knew what went on. **Harry** found out who had beaten Thomas, gave the information to officials and they made an arrest. One thousand dollars meant more in 1870 than it does in 2014. However, **Harry** refused to accept the \$1,000 reward. **Harry** believed in doing what he thought was the right and Christian thing to do. I smiled when I read that **Harry** had refused the reward.

*“Aunt Martha died---Uncle **Harry** lived single with his daughter, Hannah, until he died about ninety years of age. Uncle **Harry** and his wife were devoted to each other and lived an ideal life. He was a man of great physical strength, fine judgment and devoted to his friends and believed the best friend he ever had was my father.”*<sup>15</sup>

General William Sherman of the Union introduced the promise of “forty acres and a mule” to freed slaves. Some people in Georgia and the Carolinas had begun to enjoy their acquired property. But in 1865, during Reconstruction, President Andrew Johnson ordered the government controlled land be returned to the previous owners.

After Martha's death, **Harry** asked the Wells to write a will for him so he could leave his 120 acres to his three daughters. Of course the Wells carried out **Harry's** wishes. They also surveyed the land for free and divided it equally among the daughters as **Harry** had requested.

**Harry** did not need to worry about the "forty acres and a mule." Other slaves throughout the state received nothing. However, Hinds County slave owners did receive compensation for losses of freed slaves. A compensation request form with my relatives' names and values is included in my historical documents.

*(Harry, 45, \$1,800; Martha, 40, \$1,200; Alexander, 15, \$1,500; Jefferson, 11, \$1,100; Milton, 9, \$900; Indiana, 13, \$1,200; Charlie, 7, \$700; & Lively, 5, \$500.)*

Records show two children died. I was shocked and dismayed to learn the United States Government compensated the former slave owners but saw fit to give the freemen nothing! Yet this history suggests to me why, despite the fact that other minority groups who were deprived and mistreated in our beloved country have been compensated, some people still disagree with reparation.

*"In 1871 my great-grandfather, Thomas Wells, propounded a claim with the United States for reimbursement [for] slaves owned by him which had been freed under the Emancipation Proclamation. In this claim the slaves are listed, giving each name and value. A Xerox copy of this instrument is enclosed."* <sup>16</sup>

At Christmas time **Harry's** daughter, Indiana, sent Thomas Wells five dollars to purchase something that could be kept in her family forever.

*"I bought a silver butter knife and want it to go to my son, Calvin, and then to his son, Calvin."* <sup>16</sup>

The Turner daughters later moved up North seeking better opportunities. Sadly, they sold all their property. **Harry's** six sons received no land because **Harry** thought they lived wild lives. The Turners believe all **Harry's** sons remained in Mississippi. I am certain my grandfather, Charlie, did. The sons probably would have kept the property.

*"I am the granddaughter of Charlie Turner. My mother, Lydia Turner, married Willis Allen . . ."* <sup>17</sup>

Charlie was **Harry's** eighth child. His birthday is listed in family records as April 25, 1857. His death is recorded as January 1935 or 1936. No day is given. Lydia was the daughter of Charlie Turner. Lydia married Willis Allen and they purchased 60 of the original 120 acres from Hilliard Canada, a local white farmer, and built a house in 1930. The house had two bedrooms, a kitchen, a dining room, a living room and a built-in hallway which extended the length of the house. The house, like many other Southern structures, had a porch extending across the entire front. It still stands today.





**Original 1930 Structure**

Family documents indicate that at that time Turner decedents had regained 60 acres of the 120 acres. Lydia and Willis had one daughter. They named her Matlean Allen. Matlean married Fred Douglas Moffett. I am the fourth of six children of Fred and Matlean Moffett.

Unfortunately, Willis died a few years after he and Lydia had bargained for their farm. Therefore, Lydia decided to sign the property over to her only child and son-in-law. In the 1950s, **Harry's** youngest daughter, Indiana, gave Fred and Matlean an opportunity to purchase her share of the property, but local banks in Mississippi refused loans to Colored citizens. Fred and Matlean had no money and could not purchase the property. Had Mother and Daddy been able to purchase Indiana's share, we would own all 120 acres.

In 1980 Fred and Matlean purchased thirty acres of the original 120 acres from Lodge Baity, an African America farmer who had acquired it. That is the story of how the Turner family regained 90 of the 120 original acres. Oh, I wish I could purchase the other thirty acres!

Inheritance means many things to many people, but my family and I believe we own priceless property. There will never be an opportunity for me to inherit additional land that has such a history. I love the place. I adore the property. I value this historical site so much sometimes I shed a few tears when I think about my slave ancestors who lived and worked on and for this place. I get chills when I walk through the bedroom where I was born.

The family feels the 90 acres have a significant historical value for Hinds County. It has been suggested our property is probably the only site in the county with this connection to slavery and the Civil War. We have also been told, not only is it the only property in the county with that historical background, but also it is possibly the only property in the entire state of Mississippi

that has documentation to prove it was given to a slave by his former slave master. Therefore, I plan to begin researching the possibility of making the location a historical landmark.

The location of the property follows the history of slavery. Slaves lived in shacks off main roads. I remember seeing portions of old shacks, cisterns where the shacks stood and tomb stones marking graves. The property is seven tenths of a mile off the main road. As a child, I hated that, but now I love the privacy our property provides.



**Remodeled 1930 Structure**

Fred and Matlean's descendants, who now own the property, bubble with pride and joy over the legacy **Harry** and Martha left them. **Harry** and Martha are buried in the Little Zion Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery, Edwards, Mississippi, and I visit the graves often.

*"You have every reason to be proud of your ancestors, especially the ones from the Bethesda Plantation."*<sup>18</sup>

Although former American slaves did not get the "forty acres and a mule" as they were promised, **Harry Turner** and Martha Turner enjoyed 120 acres their former slave master and friend deeded to them despite the Black Code.

In 2014 as I write this essay from Hinds County, Mississippi, I am enjoying the fruits of my slave ancestry's labor. I am proud!

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## Participation and Co-Performance Two Senses in the Works of Max Scheler (1874-1928)

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Max Scheler is one of a group of European philosophers and social theorists whose work directly or indirectly was lost to the English speaking world due to Nazi and Stalinist repression. Fortunately, in the case of Scheler, the German émigré intellectual and social philosopher who taught at The New School for Social Research, Alfred Schutz (1899-1959), brought his somewhat selective understanding of Scheler's work to the attention of a younger generation of sociologists and anthropologists. Schutz was able to see within Scheler's phenomenology of spiritual experience ideas that would be useful in his work in phenomenological social theory. In particular, the reflections on the roles of participation and consequent co-performance in social experience attracted Schutz's attention. Scheler's reflections on human sociability have, through Schutz's work, influenced generations of such diverse writers as David Graeber, Peter Berger, Henry Giroux, and Pierre Bourdieu. Micro-sociology and participant observation, as well as much qualitative social research, relies on categories operative in Scheler's writings. To cite just one example from many possible, David Graeber, in his **Direct Action: An Ethnography** (2009) relies heavily on Scheler's notions of participation and performance. In contrast to such writers as Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), who situated the primary and immediate experiences of others in bodily presence, facial expression and gesture, Scheler found layers or orders of direct experience of the other. Ranking these 'layers' as ranging from the 'spiritual' or 'higher' intentional acts to the mundane acts of street level interaction, Scheler followed the classical tradition in a way that we will discuss below. Few if any contemporary social scientists would follow Scheler here. I will try to show how the notions of participation and co-performance are separable from Scheler's hierarchy, and how they have, in fact, been separated by those who have borrowed from him.

As the Interdisciplinary Studies community works towards the articulation of a methodology, operative concepts, and rigorous theoretical foundations, I believe that it will be useful to explore the roots of the interdisciplinary approach in various 20<sup>th</sup> century Continental theoreticians such as Scheler, Bachelard, or Tönnies. In this essay, I will try to isolate what there is in Scheler's reflections on participation and co-performance that have proved fertile for social theory and research since the Second World War, from the metaphysical encumbrances that are perhaps best left to Scheler scholars. Phenomenological philosophers have turned away from the language of "essential intuition of essences" as a source of knowledge, but not from the idea of a "disinterested knowing" as a way to access a pre-theoretical level of human experience.

In the course of this essay these ideas will be further developed as we articulate the notions of participation and co-performance. We will also raise the idea of a non-quantifiable and, more importantly, a non-methodological means of knowledge of others in and through participation and co-performance. The question of whether or not this form of knowing, or if any intuitive and direct access to the thoughts and experiences of others can be legitimately part of social science,

will not be addressed in what follows. All I can suggest here is that current research in neurophysiology, especially into the mirror neurons and their role in human empathetic connections, could well provide a verifiable foundation for the phenomenologists' reflections on the immediate experiences of intersubjectivity. For example, consult Michael Tomasello **Why We Cooperate** (2011). However, developing this idea here would take us way beyond the scope of this essay.

At the core of Scheler's epistemology and his theory of intersubjectivity is the notion of *participation*. It is understood as a spiritual—read intentional—act of a *Person*. It is used by Scheler in the characterization of the *essential intuition of being*, and of the *higher acts of affect and value* which are engaged in a unique manner in the *non-objectifiable* being of persons and acts.

In its *metaphysical* aspect, the notion seems to be grounded in the classical tradition; it is, however, more directly derived from the concept of understanding found in the culture sciences (*geisteswissenschaften*) and especially in the work of Dilthey and Richert. I hope to explore these connections in a future article.

While we could offer a full treatment of the concept of participation's genesis in the classical and neo-Thomist tradition, the work of the hermeneutic philosophers, or even in his contemporaries such as Martin Buber, we will focus instead on the duality at the heart of Scheler's work. Given these limits, I will trace the role that Scheler assigns to *participation* in *essential intuition* and in interpersonal knowledge. I will suggest that there are apparent inconsistencies between those two uses of the notion. At the very least, Scheler was using the important notion in two ways that differ significantly. It will be my contention that *participation* is essentially linked to the socio-cultural object realm (*Seinsphären*), and that as such, the extension of the notion to other realms is misleading, obscuring the importance of the idea for later social theory.

A more complete critique of Scheler along the lines followed in this essay is possible but beyond the scope of this project. Stegmüller, in his seminal **Main Currents in Contemporary German, British, and American Philosophy** (1970), cites Scheler's understanding of his project:

The true process of philosophical knowledge is not carried out through conscious intellectual operations; rather the philosophical approach that obtains primal knowledge is the loving participation of a person's innermost core in the essential reality of things.<sup>1</sup>

In the most general and inclusive sense, Scheler understands *participation* as a *spiritual* (intentional) act of the intuition of an essence (*Sosein*) of a being. This act is an entering into an ontological relationship between two beings. All beings are held to have both a moment of existence or *that-ness* (*dasein*), and a moment of essence of *what-ness* (*sosein*). *Participation* is, then, the act whereby the knower or, more properly, the *spiritual essence* of the knower and the essence of the known, come to be co-ordinated (*mimesis*). This characterization presupposes Scheler's belief, as presented in the essay **Idealism and Realism**, that the essence of a being can be separated from its existence and become *immanent to knowledge*. Scheler says:

I mean by this that any being A knows a being B whenever A participates in the essence or nature of B, without B's suffering alteration in its nature or essence because of A's participation in it. We say further of B that when A participates in B and B belongs to the order of objectifiable being, B becomes an objective being.<sup>2</sup>

The relation itself is active, a becoming or movement, understood by Scheler as *loving*, of the knower toward the known. Schultz:

This relationship of being is neither spatial nor temporal nor yet causal. It is rather a relation between the whole and the part. The known becomes a part of the knower without being changed...it is that by which the thusness (*sosein*) of a being becomes an *ens intentionale* in contradistinction to its mere thatness (*dasein, ens reale*) which remains always outside of and beyond the essential relationship.<sup>3</sup>

This mode of knowledge is sharply distinguished, following Scheler's dualism of psyche—spirit, from practical, life-relative or *interested* knowing. The latter mode of interested knowing yields empirical knowledge of *existents* and relations oriented toward the ends of adaptation, manipulation and control. This mode—interested knowing—in Scheler's theory places most of what we would commonly call knowledge in the natural standpoint into a class characterized in a way similar to the pragmatist theory of science and cognition.

Facts, known through sensation and action, through the application of *methodologies*, are contrasted with the knowledge of essences which is not dependent on induction or on goal-directed activity. This contrast will lead us to our goal of isolating the ideas of participation and co-performance. It is also here that we can see a hint of his dependence on the classical tradition or even a nod to the dualism of Martin Buber's **I and Thou** (1923).

For Scheler it is only our acts (intentional) that can be free—that is ideally independent of their material and vital bases. Vital and mental (*psychic, in the Aristotelian sense*) knowledge is knowledge of the environment and of the necessities of survival. This category of knowledge is further distinguished by Scheler through his characterization of **psychic** actions and abilities as *functions*. The sense of this is that the functions—of seeing, say, or motility—are conditioned directly to a greater or lesser degree by material and vital necessity (causal relations, organic imperatives). These relations and imperatives are the real correlates of this sort of knowing act.<sup>4</sup> For this reason the intentionality of interested knowing is limited, or *unfree*.

*Free Acts* and their correlates, essences, although *really* dependent on their bases for *energy* and *support*, are *ideally* independent in the sense that they can direct the functions (through selection), deny them or *transcend* them completely. It is interesting to note here that contemporary neuro-physiological research seems to confirm this directing or denial function.<sup>5</sup>

In Scheler's theory, acts come to their ideal independence through a denial or turning away from the functional unity of the subject and object on the vital and psychic levels. The needs of the organism, its immediate interests and engaged volitions, must be set aside (or must experience frustration) for the spiritual acts to become distinct, and for the possibility of the *higher order union of essential intuition, or of participation*.



Neither introjective nor projective, this disinterested stance (releasement) is similar to the standpoint of contemplative knowing of the classical tradition. Scheler grounds this idea of a disinterested stance in certain common intentional experiences. In sympathy, love, acts of value preference and essential intuition, Scheler discerns a mode of knowing that lets the known (object) and the knowing subject *be*. In these experiences there is a movement toward a *coordination in co-presence*. Scheler:

In our account, love is always thus the primal act by which a being, without ceasing to be this one delimited being, abandons itself in order to share and participate in another being as an *ens intentionale*. This participation is such that the two in no way become real parts of one another. What we call knowing, which is an ontological relation, always presupposes this primal act of abandoning the self and its conditions, its own contents of consciousness, of transcending them, in order to come to experiential contact with the world as far as possible. And what we call *real* or actual presupposes that some subject wills the realization of something, while this act of willing presupposes an anticipatory loving that gives it direction and content. Thus love is always what awakens both knowledge and valuation.<sup>6</sup>

...a love—determines movement of inmost personal self of a finite personal being toward participation . . . .<sup>7</sup>

For Scheler this special view point or *gaze* of disinterested love is the primal source of phenomenological knowledge of essences, conceived of as independent of the knower and as possessing their own mode of being. These essences may be real or ideal. Knowledge of their ontological status, but not of their essential content, is the theme of metaphysics. This knowledge of essences is the object of Scheler's special brand of phenomenology. This content may be brought into participation with the person through their loving acts and thus known for what it *necessarily* is.

Scheler asserts that all classes of intentional acts have essential correlates, and that all essences correspond to possible intentional (spiritual) acts. Of course, this is the ideal situation and not necessarily experienced by any one individual. It does, however, serve to generate descriptions of *layered* hierarchical structures of essential being which I mentioned above. However, even the use of 'spiritual' rather than 'intentional' sets his work apart from his contemporaries such as Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). If this is understood in the light of Scheler's psyche—spirit *dualism* in which *spirit* exercises a selective and orienting control over the lower orders of intentional acts, then the extent of the concept of intuitive participation becomes clear. This is the key point I am trying to make in this essay.

Without the theory of higher and lower classes of intentional acts mentioned above, Scheler's notion is quite similar to Husserl's understanding of the transcendental reduction which brings to *givenness* the *noemata* (meaning structures) of the various intentional act/objects of consciousness.

Noemata, although different for differing acts and referents, have a single descriptive unity as intentionally constituted *meanings* or significations *for* the subject. For Scheler, essential intuition understood as participation in essences is a prior category to other forms of intuition. It is understood as in opposition to and not in coordination with *lower order* acts as it is in Husserlian phenomenology. As we have already seen, the lower order acts are *mere functions*. Scheler's dualism of psyche—spirit<sup>7</sup> lends the essences a stronger sense of *independence* and *objectivity* than they have for Husserl, and tends to flatten the qualitative differences between the modes of intentionality and their *objects*. Added to these strengthened notions of independence and objectivity, Scheler rejects the Husserlian doctrine of constitutionality. For these reasons, *objects* in general carry a sense of *being* that for Husserl is appropriate, if ever, to only certain *object-fields*.

The extent to which the notion of *essence as sosein* is similar to the notion of noematic structures in more traditional phenomenology cannot be adequately explored here; however, Scheler's movement of *ontologizing* under the influence of the classical tradition could clearly become the focal point of an extended critique as I suggested above.

Scheler distinguishes, in the context of *spiritual acts* and their correlates, between being which is *objectifiable* and being which is not. It is the essence of the being of the acts that they *are—they exist*—only in their performance. Note this performative existence well. While other beings, as potential correlates of these acts at least subsist when not intended, acts cannot, as such, be made the objects of other acts. Scheler:

Objectifiable being must be sharply distinguished from the non-objectifiable being of an act, that is from a kind of entity which possesses its mode of being only in performance, namely in the performance of the act. *Being* in the widest sense of the word, belongs indeed to the being-of-the-act, to *cogitare*, which in turn does not require another *cogitare*.<sup>8</sup>

...for its mode of being is only accessible by virtue of participation (or reproduction) in thought, volition or feeling, just as an act is . . .<sup>9</sup>

And Alfred Schutz, who is responsible for first bringing Scheler to the English speaking world:

...an act can never be objectified. It is never given to our outer or inner experience and can only be experienced by performing it.<sup>10</sup>

Consistent with his fundamental dualism, Scheler distinguishes between *Person* and ego-subject. The ego-subject is understood as the empirical and historical identity of the vital organism and its mental functions (Psyche). As it is conditioned and determined by its material base and its adaptive exigencies, the ego-subject is objectifiable and can be known *essentially* in spiritual acts. In contrast, the person is an *active-center* of the various spiritual acts, and it is no more than these acts and can be manifest and grasped only through them. As such, the person is, like its constitutive acts, non-objectifiable.

Scheler:

We can come to know them only by participating in, or by entering into their free acts, through a kind of understanding possible in an attitude of empathetic love, the very opposite of objectification—in short, by identifying, as we say, with the will and the love of another person and thereby with himself.<sup>11</sup>

Schutz:

Being merely the locus of acts the totality of which codetermines each single act, a person is accessible for another person by co-achieving these acts, by thinking with, by feeling with, willing with the *other*.<sup>12</sup>

The person does not exist, except in the performance of its acts.<sup>13</sup>

Intuitive knowledge of persons and acts is, for Scheler, of a special kind. As it is impossible to objectify them by the application of any methodologies, the acts must be *co-performed*, *pre-performed* or *re-performed* to reach the quality of loving participation in the being of the other as person. This presents a unique problem for the contemporary social sciences since it directs us to a non-quantifiable form of knowledge which has been the subject of intense debates in the anthropological literature.

Much of Scheler's **The Nature of Sympathy (1970, originally in German, 1913)**, the most widely read of Scheler's works, is devoted to the clarification of the experiences of participation in which we know the other as person through his or her acts and our *co-performance* of them.

The body and the behavior of the other are, for the essentially social (other-directed) acts of love, sympathy and the like, *expressive fields* for the manifestation of acts. Even artifacts and *marks* serve for the intuitive (loving, sympathetic) glance as signifier for creative acts, and thus for other persons. In this way, a cultural product of an ancient or unfamiliar culture speaks to us still of the humanity of the individual who produced it, and of the culture within which it stood as meaningful. This direct perception of persons is not the analytic—pragmatic—*sensation*, but a primary and holistic view of the spiritual person.<sup>14</sup>

Schutz:

...the inner perception of other people's experiences requires a certain set of conditions, among them that my own body undergoes certain influences emanating from the other's body.<sup>15</sup>

Scheler:

The primary awareness, in ourselves, in animals and in primitives, invariably consists in patterns of wholeness. Sensory appearances are only given insofar as they function as the basis of these patterns, or can take on the further office of signifying or representing such wholes.<sup>16</sup>

Schutz:

Insofar as man lives only in his bodily feelings, he does not find any approach to the life of the alter ego. Only if he elevates himself as a person above his pure vegetative life does he gain experience of the other. Other person's acts can therefore, be seized only by co-performing, pre-performing, or re-performing them.<sup>17</sup>

In his analysis of the acts that bring us knowledge of persons, Scheler suggests that they presuppose the otherness of the other. In these acts we do not project our needs and feelings onto the other, nor do we introject their's into ourselves. As well, we do not take the other as an object for control and manipulation.<sup>18</sup> To the contrary, these acts create a union in difference through *co-performance* in affective and valuational modes. In short, the other is a primordially given in experience and **not** an inference from other givens.

This spiritual grasp of the other thus presupposes an individuation and emancipation from the vital *lower levels of felt unity*, here understood as a genetically prior state of indistinctness of act and content center (kern)—a *we consciousness*.

Scheler:

Inner perception first shows us only that aspect of experiences which corresponds to the traditional forms and modes of experiencing current in the family, in the people, and in the other forms of society of which we are members. Only an ongoing emancipation from the traditional forms of inner perception, from the historical system of categories within which inner perception takes place, enables us to grasp the psychic experiences of the individual.<sup>19</sup>

One's own experiences are at first completely veiled from inner perception by the alien experience which rest on shared action, vicarious sensation, and vicarious feeling, by experiences which are given to us, through an illusion, as *our own*.<sup>20</sup>

This felt, vital unity is the *natural state* of children and primitives (sic) according to Scheler. We return to it in experiences of passion in sexual love and in other moments of *identification*.

Ernst Ranly, whose book **The Phenomenology of Community** (1966) so well conveys Scheler's significance for the social sciences, agrees with Scheler that:

...man is other oriented in his most original experiences, since man is social prior to being individual, the study of man necessarily and intrinsically includes the study of the social nature of man.<sup>21</sup>

Scheler distinguishes various levels of engagement with the other, each appropriate to the levels of being and value. On the level of *body-sense*, Scheler denies the possibility of contact with the other. On the level of vital-feelings, the phenomenon of *identification* is predominant. This is the source of *group-consciousness* and is the means for the passage of tradition between generations. On the level of the *practical*, the unity is inferential and institutional. The simple fact that my meaning can be followed by the reader here exemplifies this institutional unity.

Each of these forms of sociability has its value and meaning; it is, however, essentially in the spiritual acts of love and sympathy that the value of the other as individual person is revealed. This is the consequence of the methodological inaccessibility of the essence of the person.<sup>22</sup> This inaccessibility also can present serious obstacles for the incorporation of Scheler's work into any possible social *science*. Schutz:

Only if he surmounts this and clears his mental life of sensory accompaniments does the mental life of the other become perceptible to him. And only then, by co-performing, pre-performing, or re-performing the other's act, does he participate as a person in the other person's spiritual life.<sup>23</sup>

In *The Idols of Self-Knowledge*, Scheler argues that the original certainty of others derives from a prior, pre-reflective state of *we-consciousness* that we all experience as children. Even in the most extreme case of isolation, where no other is ever directly experienced, the faculties of the person for sociability would be felt as significant in their unfulfillment, and this indicates to the individual his essentially social nature and at least the potential existence of others.<sup>24</sup>

Schultz:

...it belongs essentially to the *eidos* of a person to stand in community with other persons. The possible structural units of value and meaning of such a community are aprioristic, that is, independent of the empirical real connection which might prevail among particular persons and their contingent causes.<sup>25</sup>

It is not clear how the lack of ego distinction in infants concerning the origins of their feelings and thoughts, or the phenomenon of identification implies any sort of *group consciousness*, or an *undifferentiated stream of experience*. It is equally difficult to grasp the fine distinctions which Scheler wishes to draw between the various levels of the given-ness of the other. Even if my experience has its origin in another consciousness, it is still felt as mine and not as someone else's nor as a directly lived *we*. The subject-polarity of intentional experience clearly is grasped from a different level of *reduction* than is the phenomenon of progressive, personal and socio-cultural individuation.<sup>26</sup>

Alfred Schutz, bracketing Scheler's dualism, suggests an alternative description for the apparently immediate experiences of the other, and for the priority of the experiences to the reflective awareness of self. In his view, the phenomenon is rooted in the temporally posterior nature of reflection. To reflectively focus on our present feelings and acts, Schutz argues, we must thematize them in *second degree* acts. This implies that these feelings and acts are no longer in the *living present*. With the other's acts, emotions and intentions, we may attend to them directly though acts of love, sympathy or attentive interest. In these acts we are able to experience them as given in the other's expressions and gestures *immediately*. In Schutz's reformulation of Scheler's theory, the immediacy of the givenness of the other in the special acts gives rise to the sense of the experience of being at one with the other in co-performance. It is this quality of intersubjective experience that grounds the striking content of the experiences of sexual love, making music together, group dancing, playing sports, work toward a common goal,

and other focal points of intersubjective reality. Barbara Ehrenreich explores such social experiences in **Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy** (2007).

Scheler further characterizes these experiences of the participation in the acts of the other person as dependent upon the engaged individual's self-revelation through their gestures and expressions, and upon the experiencing person maintaining a non-manipulative stance toward the other. Concealment and deception are always possible. In this feature, the essential knowledge of the other, its personhood and its acts are radically different than, though never fully separate from, knowledge of *objectifiable being*.

The phenomenon of co-performance or participation is ubiquitous in culture. Ritual reenactments, group dancing and singing, and ceremonies are central to the cohesiveness of all cultures insofar as they hold mythic world-views.

In one interpretation, the *we* of Hegel's **Phenomenology** carries this sense of participation and co-performance and for this reason is the principal focus of the identity thesis that grounds the notion of *absolute knowledge*.<sup>27</sup>

Most recently the notion of participation has become central to the theories of ordinary language and to the *communicative theory of society*.<sup>28</sup> Phenomenological Marxists have explored those realms of meaning where the sense of subjective constitution carries the further sense of intersubjective and progressive creation through historical labor and struggle.<sup>29</sup>

Briefly, such theories hold that the life-world and culture are constituted by and through dialogic, symbolic interaction in ordinary language. Persons are understood as *potential participants* in the on-going maintenance and self-improvement of this *world*.

As the social world is expressively yet conventionally constituted through rules and norms, knowledge of it requires engagement in it—participation in its essential structures of labor, life and language. The essential feature of a world so constituted is that it precludes understanding of its structures through simple observation, say from a hypothetical standpoint of *divine positivism*. Rather, it requires both the *linguistic competence* to engage in the constitutive language games, and a living presence in the on-going and progressive constitution.<sup>30</sup>

Expanded into a more adequate account, such an analysis would serve to clarify and situate Scheler's understanding of participation in intersubjective experience, but would not follow him in the extension of this notion of non-dialogic intentional realms of science and logic.

Scheler:

...the natural world view is essentially the intuition of a human *community* which we define as a group of men (sic) whose mutual understanding is built up independently of the observation of their physical bodies . . . . Instead, the natural world view is built up from the experience of the expressive unities in the manifestations of their lived bodies. This enables us to join in intending the state of affairs intended in these manifestations . . . . Any technical terminology and any conventional arrangement essentially presuppose

this *mutual understanding* and a communality of group existence in general. Natural language is the most important form of this natural expression and its words and syntax are the units in which the expression is articulated.<sup>31</sup>

Several problems remain outstanding. What is the sense of the notion of the non-objectifiability of acts and persons? If this is understood as indicating a radical separation in essential features between the socio-cultural life world (*of dialogic constitution in history*), and the object realm of the strict sciences, then the theory seems to be at least consistent. However, if the notion is taken at face value, knowledge of, or reflection upon social meaning structures, including those of persons in intersubjective community, seem precluded.

Our acquaintance with these essences is relegated to the affective and valuational modes of intuition. The status and even the very existence of phenomenology and any possible culture-science are therefore threatened by this notion since even reflective understanding seems to be precluded in the affective realm.<sup>32</sup>

Reflective thematizing and clarification of these realms of experience—participation and co-performance as foundational of our fundamental cooperative intersubjectivity—are among the most pressing issues in current research and, since Scheler wrote much on these issues, it is difficult to accept at face value his strong sense of the non-objectifiability claim.

The problem seems to center on the claim of similarity between the various modes of essential insight. They are all understood as *spiritual acts* and as having the realm of *objective being of essences* as their correlates. They are, as well, distinguished from the more mundane mental functions as vital experiences.

If we grant the notion of participation a role in the understanding of the socio-historical life world, of intersubjectivity and dialogically constituted meanings, is it necessary to extend the notion to the other *non-dialogic* realms?

Essential insight into logical objects for example, although they are ideally intersubjective, does not carry the sense of progressive constitution in history (consult the now famous Appendix, *The Origin of Geometry*, to Husserl's **The Crisis of European Sciences**, 1936) as do such phenomena as national liberation from colonialist imperialism, the 99% demonstrations or the computer and communications revolutions of our time—to choose extreme examples.

Here I've tried to argue that insights into value-essences or into perception would, as well, display such differences in both act-form and content. The attempt to characterize both as *spiritual acts* or as *loving participation in being* seems to be a pointless simplification.<sup>33</sup>

From this perspective, Scheler's position seems to adhere to an aspect of classical or even Scholastic ontology that does not seem justified in more than a few of the qualities of the differing realms of the given. I do believe, however, that we can return to Scheler's work for insight into the notion of performance that is so essential for contemporary social theory.<sup>34</sup> As well, I believe that the Interdisciplinary Studies community would find much of value in a reading of this fascinating theoretician.



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## Notes

1. W. Stegmüller, **Main Currents in Contemporary German, British, and American Philosophy**, Bloomington, p.101. Here I would include such writers as Nicolai Hartman, Roman Ingarden and Edith Stein among others.
2. M. Scheler, *Idealism and Realism*, in **Selected Philosophical Essays**, Evanston, pp.292-293.
3. A. Schutz, **Collected Papers, Vol. III**, *Max Scheler's Epistemology and Ethics*, The Hague, p.145.
4. This theme is common in **The Nature of Sympathy**, and *The Theory of the Three Facts*, in **Selected Philosophical Essays**, for example.
5. Miller, Earl K; Cohen, Jonathan D. *An integrative theory of prefrontal cortex function*, **Annual Review of Neuroscience**, **24** (2001): 167-202.
6. M. Scheler, *Ordo Amoris*, in **Selected Philosophical Essays**, p.100.
7. M. Scheler, *The Nature of Philosophy* in **On the Eternal in Man**, p.74. Also see **The Nature of Sympathy**, *On Love*, Part II.
8. See for example, **Man's Place in the Cosmos**.
9. M. Scheler, *Idealism and Realism*, p.292.
10. M. Scheler, **The Nature of Sympathy**, London, p.224.
11. A. Schutz, **Collected Papers, Vol. I**, *Max Scheler's Theory of Intersubjectivity and the general thesis of the alter ego*, p.153.
12. M. Scheler, **Man's Place in Nature**, New York, p.48.
13. Schutz, **Vol. I**, p.153.
14. Schutz, **Vol. I**, p.155.
15. **The Nature of Sympathy**, Sect. 1, Chap. II, p.10.
16. A. Schutz, **Vol. I**, p.11.
17. **Sympathy**, p.264.
18. A. Schutz, **Vol. III**, p.140.

19. These are the key themes in **The Nature of Sympathy**.
20. M. Scheler, *The Idols of Self-Knowledge*, in **Selected Philosophical Essays**, p.87.
21. *Idols*, p.989.
22. E. Ranly, **Scheler's Phenomenology of Community**, p.62.
23. Scheler suggests a further level of religious community. Issues of philosophy of religion are beyond the scope of this paper.
24. Schutz, **Vol. III**, p.176.
25. See **The Nature of Sympathy**.
26. Schutz, **Vol. III**, p.177.
27. Again, the work of Dilthey would be instructive here.
28. A very contentious assertion.
29. See the work of the later Wittgenstein, Searle, Grice, and the work of Habermas, such as **The Theory of Communicative Action** (1985).
30. Enzo Paci and Tran Duc Thao for example.
31. See work of the late Merleau-Ponty, the Sartre of the **Critique of Dialectical Reason**, and Habermas.
32. Scheler, *Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition*, in **Selected Philosophical Essays**, pp.168-169.
33. Scheler might argue, in response, that phenomenological science seeks knowledge of *noemata* and not of *noema*. Knowledge of the later is only within the competence of participatory co-performance. I doubt that this response would hold up under any serious Husserlian critique.
34. Eugene Kelly, a Scheler scholar and colleague, denies that it is as simple as I suggest. He points to the *epistemology* present in Scheler's **Formalism in Ethics and the Material Ethics of Value**. Our disagreement, however, is based on differing scholarly approaches. Gene wished to present Scheler as he in fact was, while this essay is an attempt to develop Scheler's thought as it has proved influential in contemporary social theory and as useful for Interdisciplinary research.

## REVIEWS

**Antonio Barrenechea on Bandy, Mary Lea, and Kevin Stoehr. *Ride, Boldly Ride: The Evolution of the American Western*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012. 330 pp. Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-520-25866-2.**

In *Ride, Boldly Ride*, Mary Lea Bandy and Kevin Stoehr offer a sweeping summation of the Western from the one-reel “oaters” of the silent era to the genre-blending films of the digital age. The book is a labor of love, as is evident in the authors’ privileging of filmic wisdom over critical models. This film-first treatment contrasts sharply with scholarship from the past thirty years, which has tended to reduce the genre to ideology. True to the book’s subtitle, the authors’ concern is with the evolutionary scale. To illustrate the expanse, *Ride, Boldly Ride* has interspersed within it fifty-six black and white stills drawn from the archives of the Museum of Modern Art, a reader-friendly complement to the elegant and fluid prose of its authors. The volume will be useful to scholars in cinema, cultural, and American studies, and is well-suited for an undergraduate survey course on the Western.

The book features eleven chapters and begins with a token preface from none other than Clint Eastwood. The introduction then outlines Western genre staples, but does so while romanticizing the self-realization of the hero. Bandy and Stoehr barely make references to Native Americans or to Mexicans (who are erroneously referred to as “Spanish” in a few places in the book). Whether one considers the historical West, or simply the genre’s reimagining (and erasing) of these precursors to U.S. settlements, the inter-American playing field adds some unintended irony to the otherwise correct assertion that “the Western film helps to tell a story, usually more than a merely superficial one, about what it means to be—and what it took to become—an *American*” (6). *Ride, Boldly Ride* sometimes glosses over the complex dynamics of the West (and the racism of the Western as treated—and mistreated—by ideological critiques), but the book’s strength is in privileging films as individual works of art full of insight and contradiction. Discussions of imperialism and race occur principally within chapters that focus on films that are themselves critical of U.S. expansionism.

The first chapter traces the Western to William “Buffalo Bill” Cody’s 19<sup>th</sup> century Wild West shows, the public demand for which would find satisfaction through the new motion pictures. The authors locate some of the first examples of the genre in the films of D.W. Griffith, who established archetypes through his representation of the conflict between civilization (associated with white settlers) and savagery (a metaphor for Amerindians). Yet, Bandy and Stoehr also demonstrate how the Western left behind the blood-soaked conquest in favor of “morality tales that focus almost solely on the internal tensions between members of frontier society” (20). Their discussion of hardships within fledgling settler communities disrupts genre clichés about “cowboys and Indians,” and refocuses attention on the struggles of white pioneering communities. The chapter also interprets two silent films by John Ford, the genre’s foremost director. His artistic concerns resonate throughout *Ride, Boldly Ride*, as in the discussion of Indian-fighting, nation-building, and homesteading in chapter five, which considers Westerns made after the Great Depression. These big-budget films “took the form of trail-blazing and

community-building frontier epics, reminding their audiences that a great nation had arisen eventually and successfully from a savage wilderness and a constant struggle against adversity” (102).

Chapters two and three cast light on largely unexplored issues, and films, within studies of the Western. The discussion in the first centers on Victor Sjöström’s *The Wind* (1928), and is the best reading of any single film in the book. *The Wind* (which is currently unavailable on DVD), is a poetic and psychologically haunting film about the trials and tribulations of frontier life. Its strong female protagonist (Lillian Gish) disrupts the traditions of a genre preoccupied with male honor, as she fends off both lascivious men and the dark forces of nature. As the authors rightly contend, “[n]one of the Westerns produced before 1928 prepare us for *The Wind*’s fierceness, its passion, and its unrelenting, swirling maelstrom of wind and sand” (58). On a lighter note is Leo McCarey’s *Ruggles of Red Gap* (1935), the focus of the subsequent chapter. A brilliant comic Western about early settler social classes, the film parodies social pretensions among the American nouveau riche. Ultimately, however, the movie reflects the optimism of U.S. democratic ideals in line with classical Hollywood, for “*Ruggles* contains messages about fundamental American concepts of democracy and equality and about the supposedly little man who can make a difference in people’s lives” (71).

Chapter four approaches landscape and setting through close analysis of *The Big Trail* (1930) and *Stagecoach* (1939), two classic Ford Westerns starring John Wayne. The authors draw upon art historical sources to bring attention to the painterly compositions of Western cinematography. Their discussion of the ways in which history is reimaged, and landscapes get mythologized, makes this into one of the most sophisticated chapters in the book. Bandy and Stoehr also retain a sense of the sublime, and of man’s transience on the earth, something that the Western highlights through photographic scale. For instance, in Ford’s use of Monument Valley, the authors find “a seemingly eternal canvas against which the variables and vagaries of human existence can be etched” (95). Ford’s oeuvre gets an additional treatment in chapter eight, which centers upon *The Searchers* (1956) and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Vance* (1962), “true masterpieces within Ford’s later project of disclosing the dark underbelly of the American West’s progress from wilderness to civilization” (187). While the treatment of the first film works a bit too hard to sanitize a work often labeled (not without good reason) as racist, the analysis of the second includes a fascinating take on how modernity’s eclipsing of the West almost compels Ford’s stage-bound mise-en-scène.

Chapter six likewise targets a single director, but in conjunction with John Wayne as a lynchpin of the Western. Here, Bandy and Stoehr dissect Howard Hawks’s masterpieces *Red River* (1948) and *El Dorado* (1966). This results in an insightful and subtle discussion of quintessential Western themes: the paradox of American empire-building in the first, and the frailty of Western “heroes” in the second. Chapter ten also takes up a seminal figure, Clint Eastwood, star and director of stylish, and ultraviolent, post-classical Westerns. The discussion of infernal themes in *High Plains Drifter* (1973) is especially illuminating, as is the complex reflection on the ending of *Unforgiven* (1992), which provides a somewhat ambiguous coda to Eastwood’s career-long portrayal of a mysterious stranger with no name. As the authors note regarding the bloodbath, “[i]n these bullet-ridden final scenes, we are thrown into the central message of the movie, a lesson about the terrifying repercussions of violence, even when such acts seem absolutely

necessary—whether in self-defense, in the building of civilization, or for the sake of justified retribution” (260).

Chapters seven and nine center on how, post-World War II, “the Western became a popular narrative vehicle for the exploration of human instincts, emotions, and desires” (166). In the case of psychological Westerns by Ford, King Vidor, and Delmer Daves, the authors draw attention to the blending of the genre with film noir to create “noir Westerns.” These films about greed, lust, and murderous passion care less about majestic landscapes and more about Freudian mindscapes. As in film noir, the setting itself becomes a twisted psychological projection. More metaphysical is the existential Western of the 1960s, in which genre codes of behavior are no longer a given. Here, the authors provide a brilliant analysis of the underrated director Budd Boetticher, whose films “deal with an increasing need for self-knowledge rather than with goals of conquering the wilderness or fighting Indians or establishing a system of law and order” (220). According to the authors, the moody and morally ambiguous works of Boetticher are not reducible to nihilism, for they also create possibilities for self-motivated action. However, Bandy and Stoehr’s reading of Sam Peckinpah’s *The Wild Bunch* (1969) fails to elaborate significantly on what is widely-considered one of the greatest and most influential Westerns ever made. One missed opportunity, for instance, pertains to the omnipresence of laughter in the film, a defiant response to the absurd.

A coda brings *Ride, Boldly Ride* up to the present, but also leaves the reader clamoring for a fuller chapter, perhaps one premised upon the eclecticism that the authors identify as the only dominant trend post-1980. Yet, this craving for more attests to the powers of Bandy and Stoehr’s otherwise cogent and magnificent vision. No doubt, it is also proof that this homegrown genre, which has been pronounced dead several times before, remains in the throes of its evolution.

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**Chris Mays on Littlefield, Melissa M., and Jenell M. Johnson, eds. *The Neuroscientific Turn: Transdisciplinarity in the Age of the Brain*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012. xiii + 254 pp. Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-472-11826-7.**

At its core, *The Neuroscientific Turn* is a text that embodies deliberative debate. A diversity of disciplinary voices populate the chapters here, and this is one of the text's major strengths. Without being overly optimistic or critical, the book explores in detail the overlaps, divergences, and contradictions both of neuroscience itself and of the popular and scholarly embrace of many of the methods and results of neuroscientific research. As in any productive conversation, many of the participants critique each other, and in many instances, the authors both directly and indirectly comment on other works in the collection. But there are also agreements in the conversation, and in these there can be found useful convergences of the sciences and the humanities, as well as useful models for interdisciplinary work in general. Anyone interested in neuroscientific research for any purpose should read this edited collection, but especially so if one has any kind of scholarly interest in neuroscience. As these authors demonstrate, there are many dangers and pitfalls when appropriating work outside one's area of expertise, but, there are also many ways to benefit from conversations with those scholars outside of our own disciplines.

According to the editors, neuroscience is one area where such conversations have already been happening. As they write, neuroscience itself is "one of the most significant interdisciplinary collaborations in the history of the life sciences" (4), and as such is well-suited to interdisciplinary study. However their approach to the topic, as they put it, is more than just interdisciplinary, it is *transdisciplinary*. While the term has been used and defined variously in the past (see for example Patricia Leavy's *Essentials of Transdisciplinary Research*, reviewed in the Winter 2013 volume of *IMPACT*), here Littlefield and Johnson specifically define the term as connoting both *simultaneity* and *difference*; drawing on the definition set out in 2008 by the European Neuroscience and Society Network, the editors argue that transdisciplinarity entails "simultaneously taking into account visions and methods on the same topic from seemingly different perspectives" (2). To work transdisciplinarily, they argue, is to take rhetorician Kenneth Burke's approach of "perspective by incongruity" (87), and so such work purposely brings together incongruous "vocabularies, methods, and epistemologies that might seem to be mutually exclusive" (3).

Living up to this premise, the authors in this collection represent a wide variety of disciplinary and epistemological perspectives. In general, however (and for the purposes of this review), these authors can be classified by their stance on the blending of perspectives that has largely defined the neuroscientific turn. The more sanguine among them depict the broad possibilities of such cross-pollination of research—while such integrated research would have several defined limitations, the central takeaway from many of these authors' works is that neuroscience *is* amenable to collaborative work.

As an example from this group, Jameson Kismet Bell argues that historical examinations of what he calls "brain events" can provide useful context for our understandings of how the brain itself can be configured "within a particular epistemic frame," in so doing shedding light on the importance of investigating the interrelation of scientific knowledge and cultural performances



(65). In a separate contribution, Sarah Birge discusses the possibility of considering “creative literary works” as a method of “investigation or truth-seeking” that functions as “technology for self-exploration” (100). Birge’s argument explores the benefits of playing multiple disciplinary methodologies off of one another—a productive juxtaposition of difference. Gwen Gorzelsky heeds a similar call as does Birge; in her contribution Gorzelsky explores the possibility of using neuroscientific evidence alongside “textual and qualitative analysis” in order to explore the mechanisms of “cultural practices,” such as those involved in meditation, in “reshaping human biology” (122). And coming from a professional context itself situated at an interdisciplinary (or transdisciplinary) crossroads, neuroethicists Eric Racine and Emma Zimmerman discuss “the potential contribution of neuroscience to an ethics open to empirical research” (135). Racine and Zimmerman write that while uncritical uptake of neuroscience can lead to unreflective and reductive ethical prescriptions, there is room for a nuanced inclusion of neuroscientific perspectives.

On the other hand, there are several authors in this volume whose work hones in on the many dangers of the integration of multiple perspectives. In these selections, the authors remind us that any blending of perspectives can also subsume difference in such a way that elides precisely that which is beneficial about these perspectives on their own.

In one such contribution, Susan M. Fitzpatrick levels a simultaneously technical and adroit critique of some of the very kinds of neuroscientific evidence—such as fMRI—drawn on in other essays in the collection. And in another critical take, Anne Beaulieu voices an unease with transdisciplinarity’s aforementioned potential for flattening out difference, writing that because “different kinds of texts have different roles in research as in a culture,” it is important to pay “more attention to the variations in the kinds of neurosciences that are out there, and how best to use different sources” (157). In a unique contribution to this type of critique, Peter J. Whitehouse writes from a perspective as a neuroscientist who has worked for many years in the midst of these debates over the ramifications of neuroscience. Whitehouse urges caution in our uptake of neuroscientific work, and wonders if our “focusing on the neuroscience of brain changes may distract us from the major job of rethinking and revaluing our dominant cultural beliefs and actions” (232). And Kéline Gotman wonders if “the neural,” as a “both and” metaphor that brings together “micro and macro operations at the level of science (the neural body) and social and philosophical investments (the ‘I’) simultaneously,” is too good to be true (79). In other words, Gotman wonders if the unification of postmodern fragmentation and instability by the material, and by the authority of science, amounts to a “post-postmodern myth” where “change is constant, and yet there is—conveniently offered by the neurosciences—some reason to all this rhyme” (78–79).

The book is divided into three basic sections, and the contributors found in these sections come from disciplines of Neurology, History, Communication, Science and Technology Studies, Theatre and Performance Studies, Biochemistry, English, Psychology, and many others, although much of their work exceeds the narrow purview implied by these labels. The real strength of this collection, however, is in the cross-talk across all sorts of divisions. This collection embraces diverse perspectives, but it does not assume a single way for such perspectives to co-exist, and the agreements and disagreements among the authors provides an enlightening look at a “turn” that is not at all unified—and as these voices make clear, nor should

it be. The value of the collection, then, *is* in the collaborations, but also it is in the debate, in the critiques, and in the differences. And if the editors' version of transdisciplinarity is to be a viable critical route in the future, such valuable features are precisely what will help sustain it.

Chris Mays  
Illinois State University

### **Work Cited**

Leavy, Patricia. *Essentials of Transdisciplinary Research: Using Problem-Centered Methodologies*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2011.

**Nathaniel A. Rivers on Farrell, Katharine N., Tommaso Luzzati, and Sybille von den Hove, eds. *Beyond Reductionism: A Passion for Interdisciplinarity*. New York: Routledge, 2013. Routledge Series in Ecological Economics. xxv + 317 pp. Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-415-47014-8.**

It is my unfortunate task to reduce an edited collection working against the very act of reduction, which the editors describe as “the systematic [...] endeavor to interrogate the physical world, piece by piece, disclosing the secrets of nature” (1). Set against the backdrop of the Anthropocene, the contributors to *Beyond Reductionism: A Passion for Interdisciplinarity*, a mix of young and established scholars in and around what the editors label “social ecological systems” (SES), pursue the past, present and future of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity work. Such work is a response to reductionism, which, all contributors agree, leaves us ill-equipped to face the complex and global challenges we now face. SES is, “by definition, concerned with the interplay between complex living systems” (2). Breaking up the world into pieces simply will not do. In terms of inter- and trans-disciplinarity thought, reading work in SES is compelling because with it we have research necessarily predicated upon such thinking (36). For those outside of SES, then, the book is a valuable field site to witness scholars simultaneously engaging in interdisciplinary work and reflecting upon the values and implications of that work.

But before we get to the field site, we find two prefaces by Robert Costanza and Richard Norgaard, both of which enunciate what I see as the attitude of the collection. In his preface, Costanza links the nature of interdisciplinary politics to what, drawing on Deborah Tannen, he calls “argument culture” (xvi). “There is an almost obsessive desire in academia to stake out intellectual turf and defend it against outsiders” (xvi). This desire makes it difficult to link scientific research and environmental policy, which requires us to move beyond our disciplinary comfort zones: reductionism is comforting. Costanza suggests the reductionism is in fact born of our inability to move outside these zones. Nevertheless, transdisciplinarity is the way forward that Costanza proposes. Resonating with Costanza, Norgaard writes of a new way to link research and policy not predicated upon an unreasonable faith in the ability of science to provide all the answers. Working within the narrow confines of disciplines, researchers have produced correct answers (“partly correct” Norgaard says) that are nevertheless “wholly wrong” (xxi). By this, Norgaard means that narrow pursuits reduce complexity and so create “unrealistic expectations” about our own, human abilities to solve global problems (xxiii). Countering correct but narrow answers, Norgaard asks us to embrace humility. Humility and transdisciplinarity are, then, the spirits that animate *Beyond Reductionism*.

Part I (“The idea of ‘ecological economics’”) offers readers “a feeling for the general subject of interdisciplinary research concerning social-ecological systems and relationships” and points to challenges faced by its practitioners (3). An exemplar of this offering is Joan Martinez-Alier’s “Social Metabolism, Ecological Distribution Conflicts and Languages of Valuation,” which provides a series of methods that address the common reduction of economic concerns to the exchange of commodities (“actual or fictitious”). Martinez-Alier’s notion of metabolism attempts to make sense of global phenomena without reducing complex variables to a common denominator such as “commodities.” “But the requirement for such an exercise,” writes

Martinez-Alier, “is commensurability of values and a single language of valuation” (29). The value of interdisciplinary work, Martinez-Alier suggests, is its ability to approach complexity through multiple vocabularies. In this way, readers get a feel for what interdisciplinary research is in SES: an attempt to work through complex problems without the desire to reduce that problem.

The complexity implicit in Martinez-Alier is subsequently intensified by Farrell, et al.’s “What Lies Beyond Reductionism.” If we wish to move beyond reductionism, then we must not shy away from uncertainty, the fear that may very well motivate reductionism. Farrell, et al., reflect upon the six “inevitable characteristics” of interdisciplinary work: complexity, ontological diversity, methodological diversity, dominance and gatekeeper disciplines, a dual role for social science, and team research. These attributes clue us in to how the complexity of multiple vocabularies and values might be employed in interdisciplinary research: how does one maintain multiple methods across a team of scholars from multiple disciplines in the face of a discipline that sees itself as dominant? For instance, “within projects combining contributions from social and physical sciences the orientation [within SES research] is often weighted towards physical science methodologies” (47). Maintaining complexity in methodology is hard work, and Farrell, et al., describe that work.

Part II (“Life after reductionism”) gives readers a glimpse “into the world of applied interdisciplinary” investigations and analysis. A particularly compelling chapter (“How Ecofeminists Use Complexity in Ecological Economics”) is in fact a conversation between four practicing ecofeminists: Ariel Salleh, Mary Mellor, Katherine N. Farrell, and Vandana Shiva. Salleh states that by virtue of their desire to “redraw conceptual connections,” “most ecofeminist writing is transdisciplinary work” (155). The conversation then works through ecofeminism as practice beyond reductionism. Mellor remarks that ecofeminism positions humanity as “part of a dynamic, interactive ecological process that [sic] cannot manipulate at will or without consequences” (162). This lends itself, all the contributors agree, to a more holistic approach to ecological issues. Farrell pulls from a previous communication with Vandana where the latter argued, “Ecofeminism moves beyond reductionism by highlighting the integrity of ecosystem and organisms” (163). Mellor subsequently adds, “A holistic science would acknowledge that such complexity creates uncertainty and incomplete knowledge. This does not mean that we cannot take a reasoned approach” (164). What shines through the conversation is how ecofeminism resists the narrow, piecemeal approach of reductionism. Resonating with Norgaard’s preface, the contributors in Part II resist the temptation of certainty offered by reductionism, but nevertheless work to develop methods that allow us to deal with complexity. Incompleteness, contingency, and uncertainty are not reasons to stop research but calls to go on.

Part III (“Into the woods”) points readers toward the possible futures of interdisciplinary research: that is, how we might go on. One chapter in particular stands out. Writing that we are “still grappling with what complexity means and implies for both natural and social science” (284), Arild Vatn, in “Beyond Reductionism: Issues for Future Research on Sustainability,” argues, “what seems clear is that single analytics and one-dimensional approaches are not going to provide us with the information and analyses that are required to take up the challenge of developing [...] new forms of cooperation” (303). In addition to outlining several interlinking research agendas, Vatn makes a convincing case that we must be able to first “conceptualize

what kinds of institutions we will need in order to advance our coordination capacities” (303). Disciplines are tightly yoked to institutions, and vice versa. To embark upon inter- and trans-disciplinary work with no regard for the institutions in which it will take place might very well doom such an enterprise from the start. Indeed, another chapter, which combines the remarks of Brian H. Walker and C.S. Holding (“Probing the Boundaries of Resilience Science in Practice”), traces the history and possible future of institutions that support such work.

As I conclude, however, I must note that the collection, as a field site, does little to explain or pull itself together. Given the range of the collection, the introduction is somewhat insufficient. It addresses the moment that the collection responds to, but does little to describe the collection, how it was put together, how it hangs together, or how it might be approached, made sense of, or traced. While not necessarily a critique of the collection, potential readers should be warned that some chapters are more accessible than others. Now, this is certainly not a problem, but it does result in the collection feeling less developmentally coherent. I, for one, would have liked more guidance from the editors, but leaving work for the reader is as much an indication of the collection’s strength as it is its weakness.

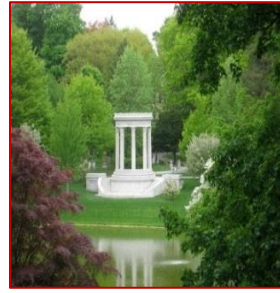
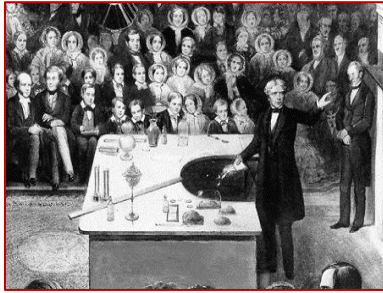
Nathaniel A. Rivers  
Saint Louis University

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## SUMMER INSTITUTE

### “VICTORIAN BOSTON”

July 11 & 12, 2014



Visit Boston urban open space. Experience the music of protest and leisure. Examine how Victorian reformers changed our world.

The Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning (CITL) institutes are designed for alumni, parents and members of the general public who enjoy exploring a subject of common interest from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. These institutes draw on the expertise of professors at BU's College of General Studies. **Victorian Boston** presenters include the following: Millard Baublitz, Associate Professor in the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, will present "Victorian Era Demonstrations in Electricity and Magnetism: Real-time Recreations of Experiments by Victorian Scottish and English Scientists"; Cheryl Boots, Senior Lecturer in the Division of Humanities and author of Singing for Equality: Hymns in the American Indian Rights and Antislavery Movements, 1640-1855, will present on "British Hymns and American Abolitionists, the Mid-century Sounds of Social Protest in Boston"; a Mount Auburn Cemetery guide will lead a field trip at Mount Auburn Cemetery to discuss how 19<sup>th</sup> century Boston created urban open spaces; and Kathleen Martin, Senior Lecturer in the Division of Social Sciences and author of Hard and Unreal Advice: Mothers, Social Science, and the Victorian Poverty Experts, will present "A Science of Society: Victorian Reformers and the Quest for Scientific Validity." **Victorian Boston** will also include the "Electric Edwardians" movie with music.

**Victorian Boston** will explore how 19<sup>th</sup> century reformers challenged conventional wisdom about their world and the people who inhabited it. **In Boston** political, environmental and scientific landscapes changed radically. Open spaces, increasingly rare in the growing urban environment, were designed to preserve nature and enhance public welfare (images 1 & 2). At the same time, abolitionists were signing about equality (image 3). How did these environmental and social changes forever alter Boston?





Image 1 Sam Hammer



Image 2 Sam Hammer

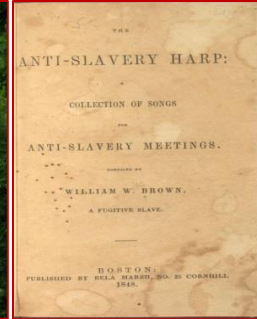


Image 3 Library of Congress

**In London** the post-industrial population boom, immigration and other factors increased the number of people living in poverty (image 4). Social scientists were determined to use scientific methods to study and ameliorate poverty, but did their quest for “objective” knowledge make the problem worse (image 5)? British scientists were making great strides, especially in the area of physics. How would this alter our understanding of the world (image 6)?

The “Electric Edwardians” film is footage of early 20th century Londoners going about their daily business is fascinating and will be accompanied by music.



Image 4 Google Image



Image 5 Google Image

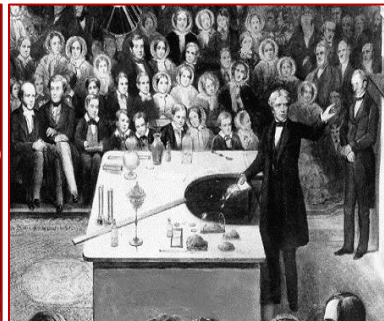


Image 6 Wikipedia

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With regard to lodging for the “BU Victorian Boston Institute,” you can stay in a dorm room in the Student Village OR you can stay in one of the two hotels below. Blocks of rooms have been reserved until **June 11, 2014**.

**Boston University Dorm Room** has single rooms available in suites of four that share two baths and a common area for \$79.00 per person per night. ***We will make those reservations for you.***

**Hotel Commonwealth** has rooms available for \$259.00 per night not including taxes. ***You are responsible for making your own reservation.*** The phone number to make your reservation is 866-784-4000 or 617-532-5019. In order to get the above rate, you will need to mention “BU College of General Studies.”

**Hotel Buckminster** has Deluxe Queen rooms available for \$176.00 per night not including taxes and Standard Double Twin rooms available for \$186.00 per night not including taxes. ***You are responsible for making your own reservation.*** The phone number to make your reservation is

800-727-2825. In order to get the above rate, you will need to mention the “BU College of General Studies.”

Experience Victorian Boston in all its interdisciplinary wonder! Join us for a memorable weekend of fun, friends and exploration of America’s Victorian background. Please see the full schedule below. Also note there is walking involved at the cemetery. If you have any questions, please contact [\*\*msullivan@bu.edu\*\*](mailto:msullivan@bu.edu) or [\*\*akcook@bu.edu\*\*](mailto:akcook@bu.edu).

[\*\*\*Click here to register for “Victorian Boston: An Interdisciplinary Institute.”\*\*\*](#)

## IMPACT BEST ESSAY COMPETITION

We did not have a winner for the 2013 *IMPACT* Essay contest.

The winning essay from 2012 is “Community Gardening Activities in the Higher Education: Planting Seeds of Inspiration” by August John Hoffman from Metropolitan State University.

The Editors of *IMPACT: The Journal of the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning* invite submissions of scholarly and creative non-fiction essays between 500 and 5,000 words on any aspect of interdisciplinary teaching or research. Essays should be readable to a general, educated audience, and they should follow the documentation style most prevalent in the author’s disciplinary field. Essays should be submitted by **the first Monday in December** to <http://CITL.submittable.com/submit>. CITL reserves the right not to publish a winner if there are no winning essays.

The author of the winning essay will receive a \$250 award and publication in *IMPACT*.

# ABOUT US

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## BIOS

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**August John Hoffman** is currently a Professor of Psychology and Coordinator of Graduate Studies in Psychology at Metropolitan State University. Dr. Hoffman's current research projects at Metropolitan State University include the development of a community fruit tree orchard and community garden with students at Inver Hills Community College. Additionally, Dr. Hoffman has published several books and academic research articles, including the texts *Unity through Community Service Activities*; *Understanding Sport Psychology and Human Behavior*; and *Stop Procrastinating Now!* He has completed a textbook: *The Historical and Philosophical Influences of Evolutionary Psychology: A Darwinian Approach to Understanding Human Behavior*.

**Chris Mays** is a graduate student in English with a specialization in Rhetoric and Composition at Illinois State University. His dissertation looks at the concept of "stubbornness" as it functions in a variety of public and scientific discourses. His 2012 co-authored article entitled "Priming Terministic Inquiry: Toward a Methodology of Neurorhetoric" appeared in *Rhetoric Review*.

**J. Moffett Walker** is a retired teacher/counselor who writes articles, essays and books. A Mississippi resident, she enjoys sharing her personal experiences of growing up in a time when segregation shaped all she knew. Walker, a graduate of Jackson State University and Purdue University, has published seven books: *Church Folk*, *Muh*, *The Powerful Web of Kinfolk*, *Muh's Cookbook: Recipes 1930 and Before*, *The Mississippi I Love*, *Blueprints of Sir Michael* and *Earth Angel*. Walker writes for *The Community News Flash* and is penning her memoir, *Daybreak in Mississippi* and is co-writing a biography, *Fancy* (<http://www.blueprintsofsirmichael.com/>).

**Nathaniel A. Rivers** is an assistant professor of English at Saint Louis University. His current research addresses new materialism's impact on public rhetorics such as environmentalism and urban design. He is at work on a book project currently titled "The Strange Defense of Rhetoric" and an edited collection (w/ Paul Lynch) exploring the impact of Bruno Latour on rhetoric and composition. His work has appeared in *College Composition and Communication*, *Kairos*, *Rhetoric Review*, *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, *Enculturation*, *Janus Head*, *O-Zone*, and *Present Tense*.

**Dr. Laurence (Larry) Winters** received his Ph.D. in Philosophy and Sociology from the Graduate Faculty of the New School University. He has been on faculty at Long Island University and Rutgers University and has held several positions in student life and student services at Rutgers. He was an education director at the Chubb Institute for computer training. He is currently on faculty at Fairleigh Dickinson University and is the director of the Bachelor of

Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies program. This is the first in a series of planned articles on the interdisciplinary implications of 20<sup>th</sup> century Continental philosophers.

## PREVIOUS ISSUES

Please find listed below the previous issues of *IMPACT*:

- [Winter 2014 issue](#)
- [Summer 2013 issue](#)
- [Winter 2013 issue](#)
- [Summer 2012 issue](#)

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