“Multiple Self: The Relational Body and Imagination”

Abstract: Personhood understood as the multiple self roots the conversation about imagination fully in the sensate, relational body. The multiple self understood from different vantage points -- through learning and postcolonial theories, psychoanalytic and trauma theories, feminist and womanist theologies, and interpersonal neurobiology -- grounds the understanding of the play of imagination, inter-psychically and inter-relationally, and therefore creates a learning and living environment capable of exploring and negotiating differences of race, gender and class.

Methodology: Interdisciplinary theoretical analysis draws upon qualitative research that is grounded in the phenomenological exploration of community from one pastor’s experience of koinonia in the congregation.

I. Multiple Self: Definitions
   A. Psychoanalytic and trauma: splitting.
   B. Postcolonial: hybrid identity.
   C. Womanist: bodily lived experience of racism, sexism, and class.
   D. Feminist: discourse theory and subjectivities.
   E. Interpersonal Neurobiology: attachment theory, emotion and shifting mental states.
   F. Integration of Multiple Self: narrative re-authoring of attachment histories.

II. Relational Body: Emergent and Complex
   A. Stance of the relational body: curious, open, accepting, loving.
   B. Alterity and bodily sensations: the play of anxiety and desire.
   C. Making Meaning: images, feelings and thoughts.

III. Classroom: Space of Imaginative Play with Self and Other
   A. Transitional Space that is “safe enough”: liminal, interstitial, and 3rd space.
      1. Dynamics of recognition and misrecognition.
      2. Trinity and Table as biblical images of hospitality.
   C. Play: engages images and acknowledges plural paths of knowing and participating.

IV. Spirit: Energy of Intra- and Inter-relational Embodied Space
   A. Desire as embodied yearning that connects, disrupts, transforms and, at the same time, is not satisfied.
   B. Immanent and transcendent power of God is simultaneously flattened and stirred up.
   C. Psychic reality of love and hatred in projection: role of denial and repression in shaping desire.

V. New Creation: Desire in the Relational Body of the Multiple Self
   A. Integration: movement and joy.
   B. Practices: mindful awareness and iconic play.
Bibliography


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