

WCTP 2013
Sept. 26 – Sept. 29
Paul's Motor Inn, Victoria, BC

Program

Sept 26 (Thursday)

Evening: Arrival

Sept 27 (Friday)

- Cor Baerveldt (University of Alberta) and Basia Ellis (University of Calgary): Depth and the Flesh of Culture

- Jack Martin (Simon Fraser University): Ernest Becker at Simon Fraser University (1969 – 1974)

- Brad Piekola (Vancouver Island University): Towards Depth in Culture

Sept 28 (Saturday)

- Bill Smythe (University of Regina): Depth in Culture According to Jung

- Jeff Stepnisky (MacEwan University): Return, Suspension and Rebeginning: Authenticity in Antidepressant narratives

Randal Tonks (Camosun College): Depths of Culture in Erikson's Childhood and Society

Sept 29 (Sunday)

Morning: Annual business meeting

Abstracts

Jack Martin

Department of Psychology, Simon Fraser University

Title: Ernest Becker at Simon Fraser University (1969 – 1974)

Abstract: The cultural anthropologist and existential humanist Ernest Becker spent the final four and a half years of his life at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada. During these years, Becker's thought and work underwent a profound transformation that resulted in the publication of the Pulitzer-Prize-winning book, *The Denial of Death* and a highly-praised companion book, published posthumously, *Escape from Evil*. However, surprisingly little has been known about Becker's final years at SFU. In this biographical essay, based on Becker's papers and letters, university records and documents, and interviews with several of those who knew him best during this period of his life, Becker's years at SFU are revealed as a professional, existential struggle, one that was both heroic and tragic – a struggle in which his work merged with his life as both drew to an end.

Brad Piekkola

Department of Psychology, Vancouver Island University

Title: Towards Depth in Culture

Abstract: Of the multiple meanings of the term 'depth,' when used in the context of culture and psychology, the expression can be used to refer to the sense of profundity, complexity, and penetration. It may further reflect the idea of a dimension from shallow to deep or of distance from a point of observation. Applied to both culture and psychology this may be further conceived of as ranging from the abstract, or general and shallow, to the concrete particular, actualized in living persons rather than as a remote conceptualization. Realistically, as Sapir (1932) noted, culture cannot be disconnected from individuals and, as will be contended, it is only in the individual that culture achieves true depth, as lived rather than as conceived. To grasp depth in culture, therefore, we must further capture depth in the individual, not as something interacting with culture but in terms of a mutuality and symbiosis, as the coordination of *person-in-culture*. To that end I want to propose that one way to approach the idea of depth in culture requires the development of an adequate theory of personality, a theory that captures the interpenetration of individual with culture as an individualized and unique system.

Jeff Stepnisky

Department of Sociology, MacEwan University

Title: Return, Suspension and Rebeginning: Authenticity in Antidepressant Narratives

Abstract: When asked the question: "Do antidepressants make you feel like yourself?" antidepressant users respond with three narratives. In return narratives, they say that antidepressants help to restore the feeling of lost selfhood. In rebeginning narratives they say that they have never had a self and therefore antidepressants help them to become their self for the

first time. In suspension narratives, antidepressants hold time still so that antidepressant users can be a self in the moment. Using the work of anthropologist Marc Auge and social theorist Charles Taylor this paper examines the implications of these narratives for contemporary understandings of authenticity and selfhood. I argue that in comparison to the relatively thin biomedical accounts of antidepressant efficacy, narrative analysis provides a deep conceptualization of antidepressant use.