

CFP: In the Shadows of Religious Experience: Hostility, Violence, Revenge | Oct 6-8, online conference

From: [Olga Louchakova-Schwartz](#)

In the Shadows of Religious Experience: Hostility, Violence, Revenge

CFP - Society for the Phenomenology of Religious Experience, Oct 6-8, 2021 Conference (Online), Hosted by the University of Vienna, Institute for Philosophy, and in association with the FWF project "Revenge of the Sacred: Phenomenology and the Ends of Christianity in Europe"

Recent advances in the study of religion successfully have demonstrated the positive, community-building potentials of religious experience in terms of its material practices, psychological models of coping with pain/crisis, and embodied habits that help individuals establish more heteronomous, and less autonomous forms of reason in order to have a more grounded, and socially coherent epistemology.

Without disregarding or disagreeing with the innumerable potential effects and benefits of having and creating religious experiences, in this conference we wish to focus more so on how the ambivalence of religious experience simultaneously can lead it to bear its discontents and negative socialities, namely, in the forms of hostility, violence, and revenge. Although violence is not the necessary product of hostility, it always looms as a threat. And although revenge is not a necessary response to an act of violence, individuals and groups quite often resort to it in order to appease aggrieved individuals and parties. Of course, this trifecta of hostility, violence, and revenge takes place in human activities irrespective of religious traditions and engagements. Yet in some cases, this trifecta becomes even more pronounced due to the way and means by which individuals and groups have, and choose to have, religious experiences.

Can we describe phenomenologically the core motivations for why hostility, violence, or revenge are preferred in some cases over peaceful interactions with others? Does a certain entitlement or perverse freedom arise from a sense of representing divine power, stemming from unconditional claims? To what degree does the dialectic between purity and compromise play a role in the will to act aggressively and violently towards others? Could the clear-cut orders of the sacred and the secular possibly contribute to a dualism that inevitably leads to the propulsion towards establishing equilibrium through revenge? Further, if religious experience does not necessarily invite the irrational (or on the contrary, hyper-rational) responses of seeking the harm or injury of others, in what way do forms of religious experience contribute to these negative socialities? What kind of role might the presence of a non or a-religious community or politic, as a "secular" and confused modernity that acts as a counterweight to those professing religious experiences, create spaces of opposition that might lead to hostility, violence, or revenge?

We invite reference to the whole phenomenological movement, including post-phenomenology, hermeneutics, and deconstruction; historical and contemporary research with the engagement of

phenomenology, experienced-based comparative studies like cultural anthropology of experience, qualitatively based sociology of religion, as well as theological and psychological perspectives that utilize phenomenological research methods. Abstract and Paper proposals on the following topics would be most welcome:

- Critiques of the relationship between religion and 'secularism' as a social, political, and epistemological separation.
- Analyses of the role religious experience might play in academic, social, and political discourse(s) on hostility, violence, or revenge.
- Developments of accounts of religious experience that clearly demonstrate its ambiguous role in how it fundamentally is constitutive of the human condition.
- Depictions of social imaginaries that nourish the habitus of cultures of violence.
- Descriptions of how the break-down of meaning, and the advent of apathy and nihilism have influenced religious communities.

Please submit papers of no more than 600 words, formatted for anonymous review, before July 10, 2021. Enclose you biographic information in the body of email. Send the paper to vienna2021@sophere.org. You should receive a response acknowledging your submission. Notifications of acceptance will be emailed by July 20, 2021.

The format of presentation: 30 minutes including question and answer period, i.e. a paper of approximately 3500 words.

Selected papers will be considered for publication in special guest-edited issues of well-known journals in philosophy and religion.

Contact:

Jason Alvis jason.wesley.alvis@gmail.com

Michael Staudigl michael.staudigl@univie.ac.at

Please feel free to distribute.

Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, M.D. Ph.D. (Neuroscience)
Clinical Professor, VCF
Founding President, Society for the Phenomenology of Religious Experience
www.sophere.org

Dept. of Public Health Sciences
UC Davis School of Medicine
Med Sci 1C, Davis, CA 95616-8638
Fax:(530)752-3239
Tel:(916)254-9959
<mailto:Email%3Aolouch@ucdavis.edu>