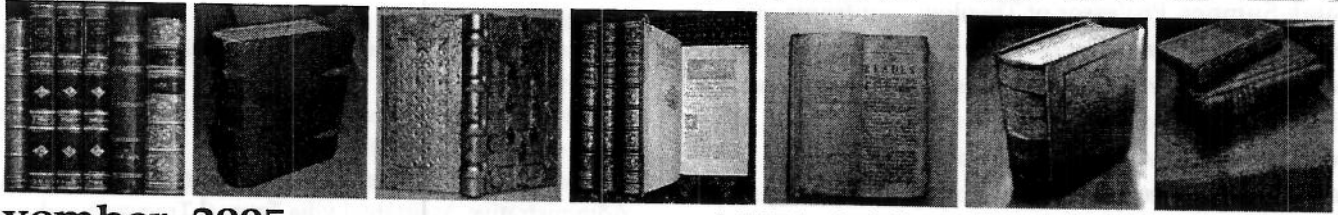


RESEARCH REPORTER

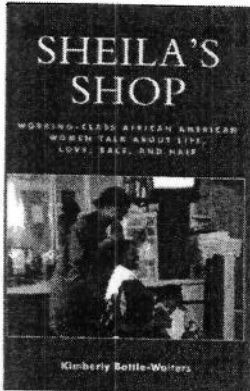


November, 2005

APU Office of Faculty Research

FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

Creative Resilience



Dr. Kimberly Battle-Walters' work *Sheila's Shop: Working Class African American Women Talk About Life, Love, Race, and Hair* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004) focuses on the way African American women maintain a strong support community through a relatively un-studied institution: the beauty salon. "Social scientists over the last decade have identified beauty

shops as key social and informational centers," she writes.

"This has become especially evident within Black communities, when solidarity can sometimes feel lost." Far from lost, a study in the real life experiences of these women reveals an ability to turn racial and gender victimization into what Dr. Battle-Walters calls "victorization." "This positive reconstruction does not exonerate or call for less change from people or social institutions that have been guilty of myopic views and hegemonic practices toward working-class African American Women," she writes. "Rather, in addition to supporting necessary changes, it highlights the ability of these women to reinterpret themselves despite the challenges they have faced and negative labels they have been ascribed." Dr. Battle-Walter's work is a study in resilience, showing us how hope comes from the joyful condition of our own souls in the midst of hardship and from the expectation of what God will do for us more in spirit than in fact. – KW

Business

The "Digital Divide" and Consumer Preference

Dr. Stuart C. Strother, Professor of Business, dispels much of the myth behind the "digital divide" – the idea that poorer communities are limited in their social and political engagement because of their lack of access to computers.

The divide is real, but it is not due to economic disadvantage nearly so much as a lack of interest in information. Indeed, according to his study, much of the money that could go to computers is more often spent on mobile phones, cable TV, and satellite dishes. Dr. Strother's findings are important

because much government policy aimed at closing the digital divide only works to spread computer access to people who simply have no interest in using it. He proposes that such programs could be more effective if they were refocused on "instructing individuals on the educational, political, and economic advantages of connectedness in the digital age." Like many claims to public interest and the government programs that often follow, the "digital divide" error is largely due to a failure to understand the real needs of poorer communities – in this case, the virtue of civic participation. "Unequal access or consumer preference? An economic and geographic analysis of the digital divide in one U. S. City" appeared in *Critical Planning*, Vol. 12, pp. 5-26. – CL

Humanities

What the Heathens Know

Dr. Thomas Parham, Professor of Communication, takes a deeper look at the cinematically obvious: "Christian" films are *bad*. Both critics and box office numbers agree that their badness comes from Evangelical values, which tend to surpass not only excellence in filmmaking, but the themes that make the tragedies and ironies of human life so beautiful. It is only in this context that we can truly see the significance of Christ – a savior who did not die for the Christians alone, but for the sinners, i.e., *all of us*. True, mainstream films are also bad, elevating that baseness in ways that make them more pornographic than thoughtful. But, Dr. Parham argues, it is wise of us to see that thoughtfulness when it is there, exposing our longing for communion with God, and the sins that keep all of us from His fellowship. Grace would be cheap indeed if there were not at least hints of God's divine light shining in even the darkest corners of the human experience. Redemption *requires* fallenness, just as the answer needs a question. Jesus' descriptions of the Kingdom of God are mysterious, as they should be, but we can at least be certain that the Kingdom, whatever it is, is something far greater than what we find in the typical Christian bookstore. Dr. Parham's article, "Why Do Heathens Make the Best Christian Films?," appeared in *Behind the Screen: Hollywood Insiders on Faith, Film, and Culture* (Baker Books, 2005) and online at GodSpy.com/culture.

– KW

Theology

Submission, Sacrifice, and Union

Dr. Sarah Sumner, Professor of Theology, confronts our modern difficulties with Ephesians 5 where Paul calls for wives to "submit to your husbands as to the Lord," and describes the husband as the "head" of the wife. This, of course, tends to drown out the later passage for many extreme conservatives: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her."

Mutual submission, or marriage as a contract, is often the preferable interpretation of this passage. Yet an agreement between autonomous individuals excludes some important details: husbands are not called to submit to their wives, nor are wives called to be the head of their husbands. Indeed, such a reading of this passage can neutralize the dynamics of gender in the marital union. With high divorce rates among Evangelical Christians, it seems wise to reconsider the biblical description of marriage – that husband and wife become "one flesh." The husband is the head; the wife is the body. To tear the two apart is to rupture "one flesh"; that is why it is so painful when marriages fall apart. In other words, the Scripture gives a picture of their unity. The husband is the head "of the wife," not the house. In the likeness of Christ and the Church, he is to sacrifice himself for her, and she is to submit herself to him. Dr. Sumner's article "Bridging the Ephesians 5 Divide" appeared in the September, 2005, issue of *Christianity Today* (pp. 59-61). – KW

APU FACULTY RESEARCH

The Office of Faculty Research and the Office of Sponsored Research and Grants work to assist APU faculty with their research and dissemination endeavors, provide external research funding, and promote an academic climate that celebrates and strengthens the Azusa Pacific University community of Christian scholars and researchers.

Please contact us if you have any questions or comments about the *Research Reporter*, or if you would like to be formally recognized for your research and publications.

Note: We join the family, friends, and students of **Dr. Gerald Wilson** in mourning his passing last week. An extensive tribute to Dr. Wilson's extraordinary scholarship will appear in the next issue of the *Research Reporter*.

We will also feature **Dr. Craig Boyd's** study of the just war tradition in light of modern sociobiology, **Dr. Susan Warren's** discussion of parental involvement in education among Latinos, and **Dr. Teri Merrick's** article on Kant's view of mathematics.

Office of Research Personnel:

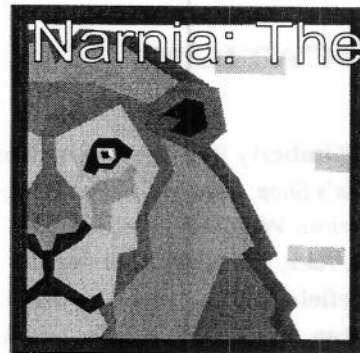
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Narnia: Then and Now

December 9-10, 2005

More than fifty years after their first publication, *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis remain beloved classics, not only for the greatness of the story but also for the moral themes and

theological teachings. They were written for children, yet they are relevant for all humanity. Lewis' story will be receiving unprecedented attention this month with Disney's release of *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*. How will *Narnia* be received by the modern mind? Can Lewis' view of human nature be conveyed to an audience who has rejected such a concept? Can a film compensate for what books teach in a post literate society? In addition to a lecture by Lewis Scholar Marjorie Mead from Wheaton College and screening of the film on the 9th, we will feature a Lewis symposium on the 10th that will explore these questions from literary, pop-cultural, and political-philosophic points of view. We hope you and your students will join us for this fascinating discussion. The event will be held in the Wilden Lecture Hall.

9:30-10

Continental Breakfast

10-11

Narnia and Imagination

Scott Okamoto, Moderating
Marjorie Mead (Wheaton College)
Diana Glycer

11:15-12:15

Narnia and Nature

Kevin Walker, Moderating
Craig Boyd
Dennis Ockholm
John Mark Reynolds (Biola University)

12:15-1

Lunch

1-2

Narnia and Popular Culture

Thom Parham, Moderating
B.J. Oropeza
Leo Partible

2-2:15

Closing Remarks

Contact Dr. Teri Merrick for details: TMerrick@apu.edu.