**The Psychology of the Other Conference**

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Authors:

Roy Barsness. Ph.D.

The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology

206.329.3370

[rbarsness@theseattleschool.edu](mailto:rbarsness@theseattleschool.edu)

Brad Strawn, Ph.D.

Fuller Theological Seminary

626.625.7588

bradstrawn@fuller.edu

WORKING TITLE: Reaching for the Other: Levinas, Buber and the Moral Third

ABSTRACT: Any psychotherapy worth its salt must be evaluated on its outcome. Any outcome that doesn’t deepen the patient’s ethical stance towards the Other, we believe is suspect. In this presentation we consider the psychoanalytic concept of the Moral Third. Theoretically the Moral Third refers to efforts to resolve or transcend binary opposites, affirms contrast while opposing denial, acknowledges violations and seeks to repair and restore dignity and respect for each other’s rights. This presentation discusses the Moral Third in relationship to the ethical traditions of Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Buber. We perceive Levinas’ radical self-for-the-other as a part of the Moral Third and link Buber’s I/Thou and his notion of Distance and Relation as the compliment to understanding the efficacy of the Moral Third. For Levinas, the “other” must always exceed oneself where the ethical “I” seeks to depose or dethrone itself for the sake of the vulnerable other. The response toward the other must be “Me voici” (me here). We would suggest expanding Levinas’ “*me here*” not only from “me here for me to take you in,and stand for you” but also “*me”* here for you, to also be able to see – mutual recognition. We would assert that the Moral Third is influenced by Levinas’ primary responsibility to the other *and* by Buber’s primary movement of the I/Thou where we enter into direct relationship with the other as a uniquely whole person and that a thickening of one’s own ethic towards the Other, is summoned.