

A post-9/11 reflection on Mourning, Splitting, and the Failure of the Good Object, Preceded by musings on doctoral work under Dr. Ann Belford Ulanov

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The first day of classes for my Ph.D. in Psychiatry and Religion dawned spectacularly. It was a beautiful Tuesday morning, in early September. I packed my backpack with books for my first class with Dr. Ulanov. Having not studied with her since the first semester of doing an S.T.M. three years earlier, I was excited to begin academic studies with Dr. Ulanov again. I already had a full case load of psychotherapy clients at the Blanton-Peale Graduate Institute of Religion and Health, which was one of the clinical partners in this Ph.D. program at Union, but was looking forward to getting back to the demands, challenges, and delights of sitting in class and reading the way-too-long lists of books and articles Dr. Ulanov would assign. I left my apartment in Diocesan House at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, where I was an Assistant Priest, grabbing my backpack, full of books for the first class—‘Aggression.’ Racing down the pathway to a staff meeting in Cathedral House, that would precede my 10 a.m. class, a colleague shared the news.

It was September 11, 2001.

Instead of the staff meeting, cathedral clergy and Diocesan staff gathered with the bishop in his office, as he was the only one to have a television at work. It was with horror, that we watched the footage of not only the billowing smoke from the North Tower, of the World Trade Centre (WTC), but saw live the crash of the second plane into the South Tower at 9:02 a.m. Within half an hour, President Bush was on television saying that there had been “an apparent terror attack on the country.” By the time I reached Union, a third plane had crashed into the Pentagon. I was standing in the commuter lounge at Union, a little off to the side of the big crowd gathered around the only available television, watching with shock and horror as the South Tower fell. I was on my cellphone, desperately trying to get through to one of my close friends, another Union student who, as far as I knew, “worked at the World Trade Center.” I was not to hear from my friend for four hours, and as I watched the North Tower fall, I feared she was dead.

As it turns out, my fellow student did not work in the World Trade Center, but adjacent to it, in 1 Liberty Plaza across the street. She had been outside the WTC when the first plane struck, at 8:46 a.m., and later described with vivid horror the sound of the plane too low overhead. (Incidentally, after hearing her story, it would take me some years to stop doing the unconscious reactive duck

when a low-flying plane went overhead, even though I had been over 100 blocks uptown.) My friend went up to her work, saying, “I came in so you know I was here. I don’t know about you, but I’m leaving.” She was inside her building when the second plane hit the South Tower, 16 minutes after the first. Leaving the site, my friend began walking out of the area and up the island, as all the subways were shut down. As she was walking north, with the procession of other evacuees from the area, she heard a shout, “Run! Run! Don’t look back!” She, and those around her, raced just ahead of the ash cloud caused by the fall of a WTC tower. It took her almost four hours to walk to Union, the time that it took us to discover that she was still alive.

Later that day, I was back at the Cathedral where we held an impromptu service at 6 p.m., as we did each night that week, which was attended by hundreds of people. I have no memories of the service, only of the pastoral task afterwards, where we, as Cathedral clergy, would go from seat to seat, to sit with those who did not seem able to get up out of their chairs and leave after the service was over. Some, like my friend, had literally walked out of the towers and up the island, into the cathedral. One person had a neighbor who had received a call from her son on Flight 93. Others were first responders, firefighters, and police officers, still on duty in the area, but with their hearts down at the World Trade Center with their uniformed brothers and sisters, dead or alive. The evening was full of sobs and numb stares, stories and the thick silence of unarticulated suffering.

My first class in ‘Aggression’ with Dr. Ulanov, turned out in be an *in vivo* demonstration about the reality of the extremes of such, inflicted upon the world. Dr. Ulanov would say of that class:

This class I was starting to teach was ... on aggression. So I shaped the course after Sept. 11 to focus on, can human destructiveness be transformed? As in all my teaching, I presented four or five psycho-analytic theories about human destructiveness. Then I presented some theological theories, and bullied, bullied, cajoled, wooed, and got the students to think what their point of view was. Where would they come out? They had to answer now, after Sept. 11,”¹

The semester that followed for me was one of dealing with the realities of such aggression, and the reparative response to such on the ground. Theologically, Dr. Ulanov was pushing us constantly out of the victim position, where, (as transactional analyst Karpman would argue,²) we cannot think and feel at the same time, into facing our own vulnerabilities, consciously, and also into facing the reality of the capacity of humanity to perpetrate such violence upon itself. Ulanov would not let us split off and separate ourselves from this aggression, but

1 ‘Faith and Doubt at Ground Zero,’ PBS Interview. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/front-line/shows/faith/interviews/ulanov.html> (accessed 7/3/15).

2 Stephen B. Karpman referenced in Choy A., *The Winner’s Triangle*, *Transactional Analysis Journal*, Vol. 20, No.1, 1990, p. 40–46.

challenged us to own our shared humanity with not just the victims of that attack, but also the aggressors, even as she was not afraid to use the word ‘evil.’

Sometimes students, who had not done courses in the Psychiatry and Religion program, seemed to think that Ulanov’s classes had to do primarily with the inner world, and not so relevant to ministry on the ground. For those of us privileged to sit in her classes, we knew that was not the case. Ulanov was, almost always, keenly attuned to each person’s context of ministry, and how they embodied it. However, she was indeed even more keenly attuned to how the inner world can impact the external, so much so that we can become fused with our inner perception of the Divine Imperative, without any gap between our God images and our conscious ego. Such a fusion can manifest the rationality we had witnessed – the mass murder of a plane full of people and towers full of weekday workers, as a religious act.³ Ulanov often alerted us, through text and discussion, to the dangers of closing the gap between God and humanity, and widening the gap between one human and another. She sought to counter the splitting between ‘us,’ and ‘them,’ drawing us onward to the Kleinian ambivalence⁴ of knowing that, even as we decry the violence in others, we too have to acknowledge the possibility, in certain circumstances, of such violence in ourselves. This made Ulanov’s classes into forums that were not always comfortable or easy. Aside from her ruthless reading lists, her assignments often asked for a personal engagement, in the context of an unflinching academic rigor. Ulanov herself uses the term “bullied” when she speaks about her requirement for students to come to terms and begin to articulate what they thought about September 11th. Such benevolent ‘bullying or wooing,’ in such a sweet gentle package, was dreaded but welcomed by her doctoral students, because it was a use of her aggression, not in a sadistic way, but in service of the good of the other. Dr. Ulanov would not let you off the hook.

I well remember one of my monthly meetings with her as a doctoral student, (which characteristically often felt like an oral exam.) I was waxing lyrical about how pleased I was that we were currently studying object relations theory at The Blanton Peale Institute, and how much I was enjoying being reacquainted with the psychoanalytic thought of Ronald Fairbairn.⁵ Without missing a beat, Dr. Ulanov responded, “So when the object splits, what happens to the ego?” Panicked, I thought it through for a long moment, and replied, “The ego splits too.” This brief interchange has stayed with me over a decade, and continues to shape my thinking about trauma, and particularly that of 9/11.

3 The argument of whether this was really a religious act of martyrdom, or the suicidal ideation of sacrifice for political ends, is the subject for another forum. Ulanov, invited us to consider, however, an imagined rationale for such that included the idea that this was the will of God in the mind of the terrorists.

4 Melanie Klein, ‘A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States,’ *Love, Guilt, and Reparation, and Other Works 1921–1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 287–288.

5 W.R.D. Fairbairn, *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality*, (London: Tavistock / Routledge, 1952).

When I entered the doctoral program at Union, I had wanted to write on women's episcopacy, continuing the research I had done on pastoral formation in my S.T.M. However, through this birth into doctoral studies, symbolically captured in the reality of being a theology student in New York in a post-9/11 reality, I ended up writing a pastoral theology on the potent relationship between Trinity, trauma, and transformation. Although in the genre of pastoral theology, rather than psychology of religion, this topic in many ways is reflective of advisor as much as student. Dr. Ulanov constantly challenged students to bring their theological perspectives to considering psychological realities, and the other way around. However, she respected each discipline in its own right, and would not let you collapse the gap between the two. Thus, as she would argue, the doctoral program which she oversaw was, by nature, necessarily interdisciplinary. Students needed to delve deeply, and learn to swim in the waters of both theology and psychoanalytic psychology without drowning. Having worked as a psychiatric chaplain for a number of years, this was a good fit for me. I had seen enough clinical realities as a chaplain, to seek out a mentor, that knew, not just on an academic level, but a "boots-on-the ground," "plunged-in-the pool," knowledge, of the length, breadth, depth, and height which soul and psyche can reach in the gap between God and other, self and the other, and self and Self, and what would happen if that gap collapsed. What September 11th forced me to do academically was to take this from the one-to-one, of chaplain and patient, pastor and parishioner, psychotherapist and client, to the one to many, to engage with the collective experience, not just of the inner world, but of the external community and psyche of group, city, nation.

I think Sept. 11 deepens anybody's spiritual life, mine included. Whether you try to slam the door shut again or feel this wind coming in again when it's thrown open, I think you're left with, "What is this? What am I to make of this?" ... But what Sept. 11 adds [is that] it's a collective trauma, not just a personal trauma. It's not just losing someone you love to accident or illness or old age and dying. It's a trauma forced on us—mass murder, if you like. ...⁶

So instead of interviewing women bishops from New Zealand and the U.S. (the only two countries ordaining women to the episcopacy in the Anglican Communion at that time,) my doctoral research, under the guidance of Dr. Ulanov, took me to an interview room, at the New York Disaster Interfaith Services, which overlooked 'the Pit' left by the destruction of the World Trade Center, interviewing clergy who had worked there as chaplains: being present, holding the community in prayer, blessing bodies, and body parts, five years before.

MOURNING AND THE FAILURE TO MOURN IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

Of the insights that stood out to me in my work as a chaplain, (not at Ground Zero, but in other aspects of the 9/11 disaster response,⁷) was the gap between the public discourse, and the “boots-on-the-ground” experience of the disaster community at that time. The public rhetoric seemed defined and dominated by that of the Bush administration—that the United States would not make a distinction between terrorists and those who harbored them,⁸ on the evening of September 11th, and the declaration of war the following day.⁹ ¹⁰ In reality the Bush administration’s statements were more nuanced but the repetition of those key narratives appeared to fuse the image of a plane crashing into the South Tower of the World Trade Center and the declaration of war made the day following:

The deliberate and deadly attacks which were carried out yesterday against our country were more than acts of terror. They were acts of war. This will require our country to unite in steadfast determination and resolve. Freedom and democracy are under attack.¹¹

The first statement by President George Bush, still at the Booker Elementary School in Florida, where he heard the news of the plane crashes into the World Trade Center, shows what could be interpreted to be a more genuine humanity and vulnerability. Bush leads with the words, “Ladies and gentlemen, this is a difficult moment for America,” and speaks of a “national tragedy.” He pledges a “full-scale investigation to hunt down and find those who committed this act,” and declares, “Terrorism against our nation will not stand,” before asking for a moment of silence.¹² This acknowledgment of “a difficult moment” is soon

7 I was privileged to work, as an American Red Cross chaplain, at the Family Assistance Centers at the Amory and Pier 94, at Respite 2 at the Marriott near Ground Zero, and at the Disaster Mortuary and the New York Medical Examiners Morgue at Bellevue Hospital.

8 ‘Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation’ (9/11/01, 8:30pm EDT.) <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html> (accessed 07/17/15).

9 ‘Remarks by the President In Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team,’ (9/12/01, 10:53 am, EDT.) <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010912-4.html> (accessed 07/17/15).

10 For six years, up to a decade and a half after the events of 9/11, I have tracked the response of students sitting in either a lecture on Public Theology or in my disaster spiritual care course. Those who have not experienced these events in a personal way (knowing those who had died, a parent being involved in the response, being part of the military response,) seem to have only consciousness of these two key elements of the public narrative – attack and war.

11 Ibid.

12 ‘Remarks by the President After Two Planes Crash Into World Trade Center,’ Emma Booker Elementary School, Sarasota, Florida, 9:30am, EDT. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911.html> (accessed 07/17/15).

eclipsed by the rhetoric more characteristic of ‘Empire.’¹³ By the time he touches down at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana, Bush is declaring, “The resolve of our great nation is being tested. But make no mistake: We will show the world that we will pass this test.”¹⁴ Eleven hours after making his “difficult moment” statement, the President addresses the nation from his desk in the Oval Office at the White House, saying that:

The pictures of airplanes flying into buildings, fires burning, huge structures collapsing, have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and a quiet, unyielding anger. These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat. But they have failed; our country is strong.

A great people has been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve.

America was targeted for attack because we’re the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining.¹⁵

The administration is no longer simply pledging to investigate, hunt down, and punish the perpetrators of this terrorism, but “will go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in this world.”¹⁶ Presumably, the statements that follow the next day, upon meeting with the National Security Team, that this is not just acts of “terrorism,” but “war,” is not disconnected from the disclosure to the public that ‘intelligence’ indicated that the White House and Air Force One

13 Social ethicist Gary J. Dorrien writes in 2010, “...Americans have come to debate whether their country is some kind of empire, an idea foreign to the nation’s historic idea of itself as a benevolent republic. Most of the world has no doubt that the U.S. is an empire, but today it holds plenty of uncertainty and concern about what kind of empire the U.S. wants to be. For U.S. Americans, emerging from denial that we are an empire is a crucial first step toward becoming something better.” *Economy, Difference, Empire: Social Ethics for Social Justice*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2010, p. 259. Dorrien agrees with Hardt and Negri “that globalization is changing empire into something more fluid intertwined and transnational than the older state-centered imperialisms.” However, he contends that “nationalism and nation-states remain powerful forces in the world.” *Ibid.*, 283.

14 ‘Remarks by the President Upon Arrival at Barksdale Air Force Base,’ Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, 09/11/01. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-1.html> (accessed 07/17/15).

15 ‘Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation,’ (*;30pm, EDT.) <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html> (accessed 07/17/15).

16 *Ibid.*

were also intended targets, and the Pentagon, was not necessarily so.¹⁷ However, what is of concern is not simply the perhaps understandable declaration of war, in those circumstances, but the globalizing language that is not just characteristic of language of Empire, but a psychological splitting that decries nuance, and ambivalence. It is the language of “us” and “them,” “good” and “evil,” “light” and “dark,” which takes on global proportions.

- This enemy attacked not just our people, but all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world.
- We will rally the world.
- This will be a monumental struggle of good versus evil. But good will prevail.¹⁸
- But our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil.
- In every generation, the world has produced enemies of human freedom. They have attacked America, because we are freedom’s home and defender. And the commitment of our fathers is now the calling of our time.¹⁹

I had previously thought that the Bush administration failed to show any vulnerability after those early hours, however, a perusal of the accounts of the President’s engagement with the victims of the terrorism decry this simplistic view. When visiting the Pentagon on Sept 12th, he speaks of feeling sad on the one hand, and angry on the other;²⁰ when visiting the injured at the Washington Hospital Center, he notes that it was a sobering moment for him listening to those describ-

17 “...we have specific and credible information that the White House and Air Force One were also **intended targets of these attacks.**” Press Briefing by Ari Fleischer, The James S. Brady Briefing Room, 09/12/01, 4:05pm, EDT. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010912-8.html> (accessed 07/17/15).

18 ‘Remarks by the President In Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team,’ (09/12/01, 10:53 am, EDT.) <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010912-4.html> (accessed 07/17/15).

19 ‘President’s Remarks at National Day of Prayer and Remembrance,’ (09/14/01, 1:00pm, The National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.). <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010914-2.html> (accessed 07/18/15).

20 ‘Remarks by the President While Touring Damage at the Pentagon,’ (09/12/01, 5:53pm.) <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010912-12.html> (accessed 07/17/15).

ing “the horror of the incident...fighting for survival;”²¹ and on a call with New York’s governor, George Pataki, and mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, he says he weeps and mourns with America.²² In the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance service he says that, “our wounds as a people are recent and unhealed.”²³

Of note, also, are Bush’s comments about Arab Americans, early on. On September 13th, the President met with King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, and later that day commented to Pataki and Giuliani:

I know I don’t need to tell you all this, but our nation must be mindful that there are thousands of Arab Americans who live in New York City who love their flag just as much as the three of us do. And we must be mindful that as we seek to win the war that we treat Arab Americans and Muslims with the respect they deserve. I know that is your attitudes, as well; it’s certainly the attitude of this government, that we should not hold one who is a Muslim responsible for an act of terror. We will hold those who are responsible for the terrorist acts accountable, and those who harbor them.²⁴

Six days after 9/11, the President spoke from the Islamic Center of Washington, “an act of leadership and statesmanship,” Samuel G. Freedman, of the New York Times, was to say, that “has all but vanished from the collective memory.”²⁵ In the speech the President notes:

The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That’s not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don’t represent peace. They represent evil and war.

21 ‘Remarks by the President to the Travel Pool After Visiting Washington Hospital Center,’ (09/13/01, 12:20 p.m.). <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010913-5.html> (accessed 07/18/15).

22 ‘President Pledges Assistance for New York in Phone Call with Pataki, Giuliani Remarks by the President In Telephone Conversation with New York Mayor Giuliani and New York Governor Pataki,’ (09/13/15, 11:00 a.m.). <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010913-4.html> (accessed 07/18/15).

23 ‘President’s Remarks at National Day of Prayer and Remembrance,’ (09/14/01, 1:00pm, The National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.). <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010914-2.html> (accessed 07/18/15).

24 ‘President Pledges Assistance for New York in Phone Call with Pataki, Giuliani Remarks by the President In Telephone Conversation with New York Mayor Giuliani and New York Governor Pataki,’ (09/13/15, 11:00 a.m.). <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010913-4.html> (accessed 07/18/15).

25 ‘Six days after 9/11: Another Anniversary Worth Honoring,’ On Religion, New York Times, Sept. 7, 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/08/us/on-religion-six-days-after-9-11-another-anniversary-worth-honoring.html?_r=0 (accessed 07/18/15).

When we think of Islam we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world. Billions of people find comfort and solace and peace. And that's made brothers and sisters out of every race—out of every race.

America counts millions of Muslims amongst our citizens, and Muslims make an incredibly valuable contribution to our country. Muslims are doctors, lawyers, law professors, members of the military, entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, moms and dads. And they need to be treated with respect. In our anger and emotion, our fellow Americans must treat each other with respect.²⁶

Some may argue that such a response is six days too late. Three days later he was to say more specifically,

The terrorists practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics—a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam...

I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims throughout the world. We respect your faith. It's practiced freely by many millions of Americans, and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends. Its teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah. The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them.²⁷

However, the message of American religious pluralism, which included Islam, was overshadowed by the continued talk of war. The above message was preceded by the nomination of Al Qaeda as the perpetrator of the terrorism, and naming of Osama Bin Laden as its leader. Whilst saying that the United States respects the people of Afghanistan, this statement extends the previously men-

26 “Islam is Peace” Says President, Remarks by the President at Islamic Center of Washington, D.C. (09/17/01, 3:12 p.m, EDT. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010917-11.html>).

27 ‘Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People,’ (09/20/01, United States Capitol, Washington, D.C., 9:00 p.m.), <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html> (accessed 07/18/15).

tioned vow to treating terrorists and “those who harbor them” the same, to “every government” that harbors them. Therein follows the demands to the Taliban to:

- Deliver to United States authorities all the leaders of al Qaeda who hide in your land.
- Release all foreign nationals, including American citizens, you have unjustly imprisoned.
- Protect foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers in your country.
- Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, and hand over every terrorist, and every person in their support structure, to appropriate authorities.
- Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating.

These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. The Taliban must act, and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate.²⁸

A fuller discussion of the push for war is beyond this article, however, psychologically, what is of note, is that the key movement in many of the public narratives is that from sadness to anger, from anger to an omnipotent moralism, captured in this statement by the President, “Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.”²⁹ It is in this movement, that we see the appearance of mourning, and the refusal to mourn, which is manifest in the globalizing statements so representative of splitting.

We have suffered great loss. And in **our grief and anger** we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war. **The advance of human freedom—the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time—now depends on us.** Our nation—this generation—will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.³⁰

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 *Ibid.* bold type, mine.

The proportional response of investigating, and hunting down the perpetrators behind the terrorism of 9/11 now becomes not just a goal of making the nation secure and seeking justice for these acts, but a global, generational quest on behalf of humanity itself. This grandiose claim shows the United States as that which is associated with all that is 'good,' 'right,' and 'just.' That, which stands against it, is the bad. Nine scant days after 9/11, the President declares on a global level, "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."³¹ The United States, like the global sheriff of a town in the 'Wild West,' or a small child playing the same, is splitting up the world into "good guys," and "bad guys," and asking people to choose sides. Here, there are no shades of gray.

In fact, three days before the speech above, the Press Corps caught Bush in an off-hand moment. Less than three and a half hours before he declared, "Islam is peace," when questioned by a member of the Press, at the Pentagon, after speaking to employees, whether he wanted Osama Bin Laden dead, the President's words were of "justice," however, he unthinkingly shared the visual image of such justice for him, characterized by a Wild West poster. When challenged, he equivocated, "I just remember, all I'm doing is remembering when I was a kid I remember that they used to put out there in the old west, a wanted poster. It said: 'Wanted, Dead or Alive.' All I want and America wants him brought to justice. That's what we want."³² This childlike splitting between 'good,' and 'bad' is a defensive move against the sadness engendered by terrorism, and the reality that the 'justice' of the death of the key perpetrators will not assuage the grief of the deaths of 2,977 innocent others. The defensive move from sadness to anger psychologically is normative, but one can wonder whether it should define the foreign policy of an administration.

What is not being debated is that terrorism requires a response. It is, of course, far beyond the purview of this essay to debate, in terms of just-war theory, what a proportional response to terrorism might be. However, what is being argued is that in the splitting of 'good' and 'bad,' one group/people/nation gets idealized, and the other demonized. Psychoanalytically, one would question, "If the object(ive other) splits, what happens to the ego?" As Ulanov pushed me to realize, one cannot demonize the other without idealizing the self. If one splits, so does the other. Therefore, the self becomes suffused with a grandiose omnipotence, which does not admit the possibility that one can also be vulnerable, wrong, and even, 'bad.' It is as if the gap between the ego, and the ego-ideal has closed. When this happens, not only is no distinction made between the terrorists and those that harbor them, but also the danger is that no distinction is made between those that harbor them, and the nations in which they are harbored. When this happens, there is also the risk that whatever actions the idealized nation takes

31 *Ibid.*

32 'Guard and Reserves "Define Spirit of America," Remarks by the President to Employees at the Pentagon, (09/17/01, The Pentagon, 11:45 a.m.). <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010917-3.html> (accessed 07/18/15).

are seen as to 'the good.' Hence, innocent casualties of war – “collateral damage,” ethical questions regarding torture, and simple mistakes are negated in contrast with the demonized other.

Despite the fact that, a little over two weeks after the demands were made of the Taliban, when the U.S. military began strikes against Al Qaeda strongholds in Afghanistan on October 7th, the U.S. promised medicine, food, and supplies, for the “oppressed people of Afghanistan,”³³ however, the reality on the ground was more reflective of the unilateral move against the country. Despite the fact that more than a million food packages were dropped between the start of the campaign and the two months following, it took the military administration that long to realize that the Humanitarian Daily Rations they were dropping on Afghanistan were the same size and yellow color as the unexploded cluster bombs they were also dropping on the country, albeit in different regions. Such a mistake, caused the necessity for the U.S. military, to also have to do a leaflet drop, in the appropriate languages, to help Afghani citizens differentiate between the two.³⁴ Such a necessity would be comical, if it were not so horrific in reality. Again, despite the desire to help these “oppressed people,” the Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs at Brown University, determined that “Approximately 210,000 Afghan, Iraqi, and Pakistani civilians have died violent deaths as a direct result of the wars,” which followed 9/11. However, they note, “War deaths from malnutrition, and a damaged health system and environment likely far outnumber deaths from combat.”³⁵

The sadness and anger occasioned by the terrorism of 9/11, led to a mission that was costly not only to the U.S. Whether it led to ‘justice’ is open to debate.

MOURNING AND ‘FAILURE OF THE GOOD OBJECT,’ IN THE 9/11 CHAPLAINS AT GROUND ZERO

Surprisingly, in the face of the absolute devastation wrought by the terrorism of 9/11, when the chaplains working at Ground Zero were asked about what made them most sad or angry, their thoughts did not immediately turn to the terrorists; to victims of the terrorism, yes, to the perpetrators, not necessarily, no.

Those that were involved in the chaplaincy at Ground Zero, beyond the first six weeks of disaster response when clergy from the Archdiocese of New York staffed the Temporary Mortuary, and those from the Episcopal Diocese of New

33 ‘Presidential Address to the Nation,’ (10/07/01, The Treaty Room, The White House, 1:00 p.m.) <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011007-8.html> (accessed 07/19/15).

34 ‘U.S. Changes Color of Food Aid,’ CNN. (11/01/01). <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/11/01/ret.afghan.fooddrops/> (accessed 07/19/15).

35 ‘Costs of War,’ Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University. <http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human/civilians> (page updated March 2015) (accessed 07/19/15).

York, provided ministry out of St. Paul's Chapel, worked primarily as volunteers for the American Red Cross.³⁶ The main role of the chaplains, who provided ministry to those who were working in the recovery effort to retrieve the remains of those who had died in the twin towers of the World Trade Center, was to bless the bodies and body parts of the civilians and 'members-of-service' (FDNY – fire and EMS, PAPD, NYPD, and FBI),³⁷ lost in the disaster.

In some ways, this ministry grew out of the rituals for members-of-service of the chaplaincy and ceremonial units of the uniformed services, but were extended to the civilian remains recovered also. It may also have been built on the foundation of the liturgical traditions of prayers at the time of or after death of the Catholic and Episcopal clergy who ministered in the first six weeks. Additionally, it also developed in the context of the death of 343 members of a fire department whose majority with faith affiliation was Roman Catholic.³⁸ Each body or part thereof was blessed at the Temporary Mortuary by chaplains working in an ecumenical and interfaith ministry, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for the entire nine months of the recovery effort. When a member-of-service was recovered, a chaplain would generally also be present on the pile, or down in 'the pit,' to pray with those who recovered the remains and the honor guard through which the stretcher would pass. The prayers of the chaplains were broadcast over the radios of those on the site, as all working on recovery stopped, and if safe to do so, uncovered their heads, as the recovered member was brought out, to be 'brought home.' Some days the chaplains prayed over almost unidentifiable body parts, other days, they could be praying over as many as thirteen members-of-service recovered together.

The chaplains who ministered at Ground Zero, on the whole, experienced this ministry as a privilege and whether they were Christian, Jewish, Muslim, or Interfaith, thought they were making a response appropriate to their faith commitment. Many of the chaplains took a shift one day a week for the entire nine months that the recovery effort was in operation. They were doing so in the context of ministering to, and working alongside those recovery workers, often FDNY and PAPD, who were potentially recovering the remains of those they knew personally.

When asked about sadness, the chaplains share a picture of both a personal and collective grief. These chaplains' descriptions reflect many who responded:

- It's just for me, I began to be sad when I first saw the images to some degree. But the wave happened when I came down here. It

36 See S.K. Swain, 'The T.Mort. Chaplaincy at Ground Zero: Presence and Privilege on Holy Ground,' *Journal of Religion and Health: Vol. 5, Issue 3 (2011)*, 481–498.

37 FDNY – Fire Department of the city of New York, which included the FDNY Emergency Medical Service; PAPD – Port Authority Police Department, under whose jurisdiction of the World Trade Center fell; NYPD – New York City Police Department; FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation.

38 Although precise numbers are not available, this claim can be inferred from the fact that the FDNY chaplaincy at 9/11 consisted of 3–4 Roman Catholic chaplains, a Protestant chaplain, and a Jewish chaplain.

was just overwhelming. I was really sort of taken out by the whole thing. Just emotionally and I don't understand why this particular thing devastated me. Whether, what the series of circumstances were, but I got devastated at a deep, deep level inside.³⁹

- There was an infinite sadness. I had no attachment to the Trade Centers themselves. I didn't feel bad that the buildings were gone. I didn't have a feeling about that. But every time there was a recognizable body or body part, there was an infinite sadness. A sadness for everybody who had been lost. A sadness for all the people affected by it and had been left behind. And sadness for the whole thing it signaled. Life as we know it was changed forever and we were going to have to live a different life in a different way and it was never going to be the same again. That's when I was feeling the most sad. That carefreeness of childhood, which is what America felt like up to that point, was gone. We all had to suddenly grow up and be adults.⁴⁰
- The first time I went down, when I came back up and I walked into St. Paul's, I just broke down. And I don't think I've stopped being sad. I mean that's later, that's now. Go back to then... I think I felt sad whenever I thought about it. It was sad to me and I think the sadness and the grief drove me to do something because I couldn't live with not doing something. So I kept coming, I brought parish groups down to volunteer at St. Paul's, that kind of thing. The sadness of others affected me. I'd talk to people who'd lost somebody. It was like scuba diving in a lake of sadness. Am I the scuba diver? It's like swimming in a lake of it, I would say.⁴¹

What is interesting here, is the mourning, and the movement to action, which helps mitigate against being overwhelmed by the mourning without negating it, but also the ability to transform the sadness through what Klein would call the reparative function. Such a move to the 'depressive position,' where one can both think and feel at the same time, where one can be sad *and* angry is one where the one who mourns begins to rebuild the inner world that has been lost, as well as the outer world. In the chaplain's, and the Ground Zero disaster response community's, mission to 'bring the bodies home,' there is a reconstruction of the outer world. Not one that will put the bodies together again, but one where the part represents the whole, and even one part is a tangible sign of that which has been

39 Swain S.K., *Trauma and Transformation at Ground Zero: A Pastoral Theology*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 96.

40 Ibid., 104.

41 Ibid., 103.

lost, which facilitates the grief. “At least the family will have something to bury.” However, it is the loss of the inner world that needs to be grieved and reconstructed also, the life that was “never going to be the same again.” Rather than a regression to an infantile splitting of ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ as one of the chaplain’s above said, “We all had to suddenly grow up and be adults.”

Melanie Klein describes ‘normal mourning’ in a way that takes account of the reactivation of the infantile losses:

In normal mourning the individual reintrojects and reinstates, as well as the actual lost person, his loved parents who are felt to be his ‘good’ inner objects. His inner world, the one which he has built up from earliest days onwards, in his phantasy was destroyed when the actual loss occurred. The rebuilding of this inner world characterizes the successful task of mourning.⁴²

Klein suggests that in normal and abnormal mourning, we all regress to some extent, to a position akin to that in the manic-depressive state, “the infantile depressive position is reactivated.”⁴³

In normal mourning, however, the early depressive position, which had become revived through the loss of the loved object, becomes modified again, and is overcome by methods similar to those used by the ego in childhood. The individual is reinstating his actual loved object; but he is also at the same time reestablishing inside himself his first loved objects – ultimately the ‘good’ parents – whom, when the actual loss occurred, he felt in danger of losing as well. It is by reinstating inside himself the ‘good’ parents as well as the recently lost person, and by rebuilding his inner world, which was disintegrated and in danger, that he overcomes his grief, regains security, and achieves true harmony and peace.⁴⁴

In the case of 9/11, it is not the actual “good parents,” that are reinstated, but those things which become cultural representations of that which holds us, our worldview, our sense of meaning and purpose, and for some, our faith, our God. These are often represented by people, institutions, and organizations of which we are a part, and with whom we identify. In a disaster, what may be traumatic is not just the destruction of human life and property, but the destruction of the inner fabric of our lives – a sense of safety and security within national borders, a belief in the ability to defend ourselves from harm, the belief that we are the best representatives of “freedom and democracy,” the thought that we will always choose

42 Melanie Klein ‘Mourning and Its Relation To Manic-Depressive States,’ *Love, Guilt, and Reparation, and Other Works 1921–1945*, (New York: The Free Press, NY, 1975), 363.

43 Ibid., p. 369.

44 Ibid.

to do what is good and right, and even for some the belief that if God blesses us, nothing ultimately bad will befall us.

The thought of a terrorist attack within the borders of the continental United States, which would cause such a massive loss of life and destruction of buildings that were symbolic of the United States' global, economic, and military power, without any obvious defensive response, was incomprehensible to so many, causing a crisis that is a death of a worldview, as psychologically real as the deaths of those in the planes, the towers, and in the Pentagon. In the public domain, in the face of such a crisis, how has God blessed America, if something like this can happen? How does one cope with such a crisis, work it through, mourn it, and learn to live with the loss? Ulanov articulates this crisis, thus:

Since Sept. 11, the images that are most vulnerable to being smashed, suddenly, shockingly, are 'God is in his heaven and all is right with the world.' The test of any religion is, what do you do with the bad, and how much "otherness" can you tolerate? Sept. 11 is so horrible, and horrible for years and years to come, that it can just smash any image of God who has a providential plan for me, those I love, my group, my nation, this world.⁴⁵

Those who suffered such a crisis, had to find a way to work through, putting their image of God, group, nation, world, and those they love, back together, or to mourn the loss, and reconstruct an inner world of "good objects," that would deal with the post 9/11 reality.

Klein describes, through a clinical example, the splitting, which is characteristic of abnormal mourning and manic-depression.⁴⁶ In contrast with 'normal mourning,' and the reestablishment of inner 'good objects,' the one who fails to mourn shows 'great hatred, anxiety, and tension, but scarcely any sorrow.'⁴⁷ In her case study, Klein indicates that depression and sorrow is warded off by feelings of hatred and persecution, and aggressive phantasies of violent destruction. When we work these through, anxiety about our own destructiveness decreases, confidence in restoring that which is good builds, and a sense of persecution lessens. However, as it does so, grief increases. Rather than the manic flight from grief, in normal mourning we work through this natural tendency to avoid it, and turn again to suffering that which has been lost, whilst at the same time, reestablishing an inner world that acknowledges both the good and bad, but is not overcome by the latter.

⁴⁵ 'Faith and Doubt at Ground Zero,' PBS Interview. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/front-line/shows/faith/interviews/ulanov.html> (accessed 7/3/15).

⁴⁶ It should be noted that what is described as 'manic-depression' in Melanie Klein's work would be seen as 'Bi-polar disorder,' since the change of term in 1980 in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders III*.

⁴⁷ Klein, *op.cit.*, 365–6.

Klein notes, however,

Failure to do so may result in depressive illness, mania or paranoia. I pointed out one or two other methods by which the ego attempts to escape the sufferings connected with the depressive position, namely the flight to internal good objects (which may lead to severe psychosis) or the flight to external good objects (with the possible outcome of neurosis). There are, however, many ways, based on obsessional, manic, and paranoid defenses, varying from individual in their relative proportion, which in my experience all serve the same purpose, that is, to enable the individual to escape from the sufferings connected with the depressive position.⁴⁸

As we can see, intimated in Klein's description, mourning is a complex process, a wrestling with both the inner and outer world, but in the end, is an achievement over the splitting that would deny the suffering, the infantile aggression it arouses, and the willingness to be broken, to be whole. It also indicates that working through comes from a reparative, rather than a retaliatory function.

For the chaplains at Ground Zero, who were on a regular basis confronted with the reality of the radical destructiveness of the terrorism, one might expect that their anger would be directed at the perpetrators of such destructiveness. Surprisingly, however, their anger turned most often, not to these external 'bad objects,' to use a psychoanalytic term, but to previously held 'good objects,' those people, and institutions, that they expected to uphold them at such a potentially traumatizing time, that did not.

Although a number of the chaplains experienced some of the symptoms of that comprise the larger cluster of symptoms that would lead to a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder, it was paradoxically not the horrific aspects of the recovery that generally were experienced as traumatic but the helplessness generated by the relationships often with their own administrative structures.

"...It became apparent that despite the traumatic aspects of working on the site, what was most painful was what Winnicott would describe as 'the failure of the good object' – those people and organizations that the chaplains expected care and support from and community with, but which left them feeling more isolated in the task."⁴⁹ In a sense this has an obvious rationality. One expects terrorists to commit terrorism, and one can feel anger, even "unmitigated hatred"⁵⁰ against them, but these were not generally what came to mind when asked about anger.

A number of the chaplains, especially those who were working as assistants or associates in church congregations, or in other chaplaincies, like hospital or prison, or as seminary faculty or staff, found that they had to engage in chaplaincy on their day off. They were surprised to find that the church or their organization

48 Ibid. p. 368.

49 S.K. Swain., *op.cit.*, 2011, 133.

50 Ibid., 169.

treated the chaplaincy as something they as individuals took on for themselves, rather than as representative of the church.

- The biggest challenge I had was finding the time to do it. The lack of understanding on the part of various, at that time, part-time employers that, “You know, rather than spending three days answering your phones, I could spend two days [at Ground Zero] this week and you could consider this a ministry of your parish.” But they were not at all interested in that sort of thing. ...But that’s the church, right? “We pay your salary. You work for us.”
- It was hard to say, being in the [center of the denominational] sanctity and getting that reaction. ...”Oh, you missed another day of work.”
- My diocese, even though they knew I was doing it, it was like, “Well, that’s his thing.”
- [I] still was a little provoked at them [the church]. Just seemed to me that we had all these resources and, it’s like, “Who’s minding the store?” I mean, of all the times in the world that we should have been organized, it just didn’t happen.
- I initially thought my denomination would be more supportive and more helpful... But I guess I kind of felt abandoned by the church. I felt like the church, in a great catholic way, had done a good job. But the narrow focus of the church didn’t do a very good job.

Unlike the aforementioned split between the ‘good guys’ and the ‘bad guys,’ many of these chaplains found, to their dismay, that what was most injurious to them was the ‘good’ people, institutions, and organizations that acted ‘badly.’ For some it was their archdiocese, diocese, synod, or conference, for others it was their seminary or chaplaincy organization, who left them feeling somewhat isolated and unsupported in their ministry, but later came to laud the contributions they had made. It is this experience of being split, psychologically pulled in two directions, that was difficult. As the chaplains worked alongside others, who seemed to experience a sense of mission and purpose, reflective of the faith and commitment of a religious community, the chaplains sometimes experienced their religious communities acting with a mentality more reflective of a secular employer. This was, however, reflective of the psychological flight to that infantile omnipotence, often a part of the public rhetoric, reflected in statements like, “We’re not going to let them [the terrorists] affect us,” “We’re going to carry on as normal,” “we’re not going to let them win.” Such splitting is captured so well in the comment of Mayor Giuliani:

I think for the people in New York, the best way to deal with this tragedy right now, is not only to *deal with all their own grief, which we all feel and have*, but to show that we are *not going to be in any way affected by this*, that we're not going to be cowed by this, that we're not afraid. We are going to go about our business, and lead normal lives and *not let those cowards affect us in any way.*" (NYC.gov, 2001)⁵¹

This invitation to 'deal with our own grief, which we all feel and have,' and yet let it "not...affect us in any way,' encourages a split, at the very least between feelings and behavior, but more likely between thinking and feeling in a way where we become either unconscious rescuers who have to help with an obsessional fervor and become over-identified with the disaster response community, or unconscious persecutors, where we don't see how our actions to assert our own need for routine, purpose, safety, security, and even the need for justice, begins to victimize others who are innocent. The 'grieve/don't grieve' message can be tolerated from those whom we see as ambivalent objects, possessing qualities both good and bad, when not in crisis. However, in the face of such a crisis as 9/11, that which we hold to be 'good,' is psychologically invested with greater energy, in the face of the destructive forces of that which we experience as 'bad,' and is less likely to be tolerated without some sense of injury.

As Klein notes, this kind of splitting is normal. The problem is, however, that we generally don't expect those organizations and institutions that are representative of our ego-ideal to do so. Even Christian clergy, who are sometimes jaded by the political and pastoral realities of ministry, expect the Church to show the best of who is it is, in the face of crisis, not only to victims, but also to those who support them. Christian clergy expect the church not to want to jump over the 'Good Friday space,' but to see the place of suffering as the place where God is most likely to be present, and present through their mission and ministry in response. Yet, chaplain after chaplain spoke about the demands of doing ministry at Ground Zero on their day off, or their 'free time,' in response to institutions that stated, 'we're going to carry on as normal,' rather than find a 'new normal.'

Some chaplains, who had non-stipendiary positions in the church and worked in secular employment during the week, paradoxically experienced from their secular employers the kind of care and support they would have expected from the church. One chaplain noted his employer told him, [you go to Ground Zero one day a week, and we will keep you on full pay. This is part of our commitment to the disaster response.] Several other chaplains spoke about the care they received from their congregations, who also saw it as part of the ministry of their church, [you are doing this for all of us.] Another chaplain, who expected to retire early, noted simply that after 9/11, his congregation and he "discovered we needed each other."

51 Boyatzis R.E., et. al, 'Effective leadership in extreme crisis,' in Neria Y., et.al. *9/11: Mental Health in the Wake of the Terrorist Attacks*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 207. Italics mine.

For those, however, who experienced the church as unsupportive of their ministry at Ground Zero, I would posit that what was often most traumatic was not the horrors of the site of Ground Zero, the destruction and dismemberment they witnessed, but the destruction and [temporary] dismemberment of their relationship to the Church. Here, I would trace the ‘failure of the good object.’

Object relations theorists and clinicians from Klein to Winnicott, Fairbairn, to Guntrip, and even self-psychologist Heinz Kohut, argue that to developmentally progress in life, we need to realize that our primary caregivers (parents or otherwise) are not all good (or all bad) but that even though we may be held, handled, and have the world presented to us in a way that does not overwhelm us, there are times when they simply fail to do so, and get it wrong. In fact, for our mature development, we need them to do so, in developmentally appropriate ways, so we can begin to see them as whole persons, and ourselves as whole persons also. As we internalize and introject those early relationships we build a self that can learn to tolerate frustration, fear, and sorrow, guilt and distress, and not be destroyed by them. To do so, we need ‘good enough’ external objective relationships, to build a good-enough sense of self. Such a sense of self is generally resilient enough in times of tension and test. However, disaster and the context of demanding emotional engagement may test that resilience. There is the natural regression as a reaction to the destruction of external and internal realities. When in the case of the kind of crisis engendered by terrorism, our ‘good objects’ are experienced as ‘not good enough’ they split and become for us ‘bad objects,’ and the ‘good’ is identified with only a part of what that object previously represented. An example of which would be the institutional church for Christian chaplains being experienced as ‘bad,’ but the ‘ministry’ as that which is good. In some circumstances, that may be experienced as church organization or even congregation losing meaning for a chaplain, and the ministry at Ground Zero becoming “real ministry.”⁵² What is seen as persecutory is not simply the terrorism that caused the disaster, but the institutions and organizations preventing what is seen as an appropriate response.

Pre 9/11:	Church and Ministry = Good Object
9/11 Impact & Rescue:	Church and Ministry = Good Object & Bad Object
Short-to- Long Term Recovery:	Church = Bad Object Disaster Ministry = Good Object

⁵² It is of note that a fifth of the chaplains who worked at Ground Zero experienced their usual ministry, conducted on days other than that at Ground Zero, less meaningful than the shifts they did at the site of the destruction of the WTC. Swain, (2011), *op. cit.*, 137.

Scottish psychoanalyst Ronald Fairbairn, one of the early object relations theorists, noted such an experience of ‘the failure of the good object,’ also. When examining what would now be termed ‘Post-traumatic Stress Disorder,’ but what in his time was termed ‘war neuroses,’ he noted:

In military cases it is common to find that a traumatic situation is provided by the blast from an exploding shell or bomb, or else by a motor accident – and that quite irrespective of any question of cerebral concussion, but being caught in the cabin of a torpedoed troopship, seeing civilian refugees machine-gunned from the air or shelled in a crowded market place, having to throttle an enemy sentry in order to escape captivity, being let down by a superior officer, being accused of homosexuality, and being refused compassionate leave to go home for a wife’s confinement are all examples chosen at random from among the traumatic situations which have come under my notice. In many cases Army life in time of war itself constitutes a traumatic experience which approximates to the nature of the traumatic situation, and which may confer the quality of a traumatic situation upon some little incident of Army life.⁵³

If we extrapolate from Fairbairn’s comment, we could well say, “In many cases [Church] life in time of war itself constitutes a traumatic experience...” What was needed to survive the challenge of facing the physical realities of so much destruction, in the human remains recovered and blessed at Ground Zero, was being held in a wider community of meaning that connected not just the disaster response community, but the church and the world in which it was embedded. Chaplains, who work in disaster ministry, need the strength and support of their own faith communities, who acknowledge the need to mourn, and own the mission of act in ways that are reparative of the sense of humanity, as a mission of the church as a whole.

For those who were responding to the needs of those involved in recovery at Ground Zero, and for part of the concrete local community that formed in response to it, the mission was indeed to them a mission *of the church*, or whichever faith community they came from, through “being fully in com-*passion*” with the world at that time. The church’s failure to recognize that in the immediacy of that time and place, rather than in hindsight, was, to return to the use of analytic understanding, a traumatic break in the ‘continuity of being,’ both psychologically and, one could argue, spiritually.⁵⁴

53 W.R.D. Fairbairn, ‘The Repression and the Return of Bad Objects (with special reference to the ‘War Neuroses,)’ (1943,) *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality*, (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1952),76–77.

54 Swain, *op.cit.*, 2011, 139.

MOURNING AND REPAIRING THE GOOD OBJECT

The challenge of this need, is that such institutions that we need to be ‘good-enough,’ are also on a collective level facing the same crisis of the need to mourn and the failure to mourn that we have outlined in the acts of the Bush administration. The public rhetoric of “We are going to go about our business, and lead normal lives and not let those cowards affect us in any way,”⁵⁵ was reflected not just in secular life, but also in some of our faith institutions, the most close to home of these being Union itself. After a day of dealing with the potential traumas of 9/11, on 9/12/01 Union went back to “normal,” the administration citing the same rhetoric of “we’re not going to let them affect us.” Despite the calls for competent chaplains who had done Clinical Pastoral Education, who were needed to begin ministering at the 9/11 Family Assistance Center, Union’s classes and tutorials were to continue as scheduled. This meant, in a couple of cases, given that this was the first week of classes and the classes on 9/11 itself had not happened, that Ph.D. students who were tutors for survey courses were sometimes the first to face groups of distressed first years students who had just moved to New York a couple of weeks before, and now were experiencing a potentially traumatic reality neither they, nor the tutors, had ever anticipated. Additionally, several of the new S.T.M. and Ph.D. students, myself included, had to sit language exams the day after 9/11, as the Union administration would not delay them until a later date. Although Union would later make a documentary, brochure, and devote a *USQR* issue to its response to 9/11, many of us experienced the same failure to mourn in those early days and weeks inside the quad, as outside the walls of Union.

Such an example highlights the reality that faces all of us as those engaged in ministry, be it in church, seminary, faith-based non-profit, or simply the engagement of humans in life. The reality is sometimes we get it wrong, sometimes even our most cherished institutions fail us, and our idealized worldviews become persecutory to others. There are countless examples of times Union has not failed to stand up and be in the forefront of crisis, disaster, and the fight against discrimination and destruction of the humanity of others, such as the recent responses to Occupy Wall Street, and the violence against African American men across the country, such as the response to the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO. Yet there will continue to be times that Union misses the mark.

For those of us who teach in a seminary setting, we are all cognizant, I trust, of the responsibility and privilege of being tasked with the education and formation of those that are and will be leaders of faith communities. Such crises as 9/11 are unwelcome but necessary “difficult moments,” opportunities to be and build a community that models the response and reality we would hope for in the ministries of those that will graduate from these halls. However, to do so we need to own our vulnerabilities and our failures, without denying our strengths, we need

55 Mayor Giuliani, quoted in Boyatzis R.E., et. al, ‘Effective leadership in extreme crisis,’ in Neria Y., et.al. *9/11: Mental Health in the Wake of the Terrorist Attacks*, Cambridge University Press, NY, 2004, p. 207.

to counter the splitting and arrogance that is often typical of Seminary life, “us” = good, “other” = bad, “us” – right, “other” – wrong, and live into the brokenness of our own humanity, that we may be whole. Ulanov would tell us that this means owning not just our passion, but our aggression, that we may find our compassion rooted in a place where not only the text, or the context, gets deconstructed, but also ourselves, both personally and institutionally. Diagnosing the splits in our community life, whether in seminary, congregation, or nation, will lead us to a place of suffering, but also potentially to a place of joy.

As she “upped the ante,” for each of the students she worked with, Dr. Ulanov manifested that characteristic quiet, resilient, relentless joy even as she taught us to face into rather than away from suffering. Perhaps for her, in her reparative task, of crafting a response to 9/11 in demanding a response from her students, she was working through her own call in the face of such a disaster. She says,

One of the ways I’ve been affected is to take the life I have with both hands and live it even more fully every day, as if it’s the last day. I’ve always lived that way, but this has really sort of upped the ante. So it’s more intense, more urgent, if you like, and hence in an odd sort of way, more buoyant and more joyous. On the other side, the side of the suffering, that is also more keen. So I feel, probably along with a lot of other people, that I’m digging down to a different, new experience of God.⁵⁶

As Ulanov notes, such a call is not simply about us, but about the God who calls us to care for Godself in the other, whether the one broken at the foot of a cross of steel formed by the sheered girders of a 112 story tower, the one whose body lies breathless on a Staten Island street, or the one we experience most as “other” on the other side of the classroom or pew. It is in these encounters, through ‘disaster’ or what is simply ‘daily,’ that we can in reality reparatively ‘dig down to a different, new experience of not only of God, but also ourselves, personally and collectively, where we can create space for the other, bear their pain, and be transformed by the experience, not ideal but real objects, in a broken and breathtaking world.

56 Ulanov A.B. in ‘Faith and Doubt at Ground Zero,’ PBS Interview. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/faith/interviews/ulanov.html> (accessed 7/3/15).