
Catherine Bell papers MSS.2013.06.16

2nd edition

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Title: Catherine Bell papers

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Date (inclusive): 1965-2008 (bulk 1996-2008)

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Abstract: The Catherine Bell papers, 1965-2008 (bulk 1996-2008), document Bell's research process as she began writing *Believing and the Practice of Religion*, left unfinished at the time of her death in 2008. With this book, Bell sought to spur a discussion about belief, a phenomenon that few religious scholars had addressed but that Bell held was central to the study of religion. The collection includes her unfinished manuscript and related research materials. The manuscript consists of chapter outlines, drafts of an introduction, notes, a preface, a table of contents, her thesis, and articles and presentations about belief authored by Bell. This collection is arranged into one series: *Believing and the Practice of Religion*, 1965-2008. This collection is located in Santa Clara University Library's Archives & Special Collections.

Language of Material: English, some research materials in French.

Access

Collection is open for research.

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

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Preferred Citation

Catherine Bell papers, MSS.2013.06.16, Santa Clara University Library Archives & Special Collections.

Processing Information

Guide created by Shannon Hartman in 2014 and encoded by Shannon Hartman in 2015. Additional description added by Daniela Baez in 2019. Reviewed by Andrea Hoff.

Biographical History

Catherine Bell (1953-2008) was a religious studies professor at Santa Clara University and an expert on ritual and Chinese religions. She completed a B.A. at Manhattanville College in 1975 and earned her M.A. (1976) and Ph.D (1983) in History of Religion from the University of Chicago Divinity School. She taught in Japan and completed post-doctoral work in Taiwan before joining the religious studies department at Santa Clara University in 1985. Bell was named the Bernard Hanley Professor of Religious Studies in 1998 and served as the chair of the department from 2000 until 2005. She retired from teaching in 2007 due to complications from multiple sclerosis. She passed away on May 23, 2008 at age 55. Bell is survived by her husband, Steven Gelber.

Bell contributed to the fields of critical theory, history of Chinese religions, liturgical theology, ritual studies, and Scripture. Her published works include *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (1992) and *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (1997). She served as editor and contributor to *Teaching Ritual* (2007). An accomplished scholar and teacher, Bell was the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the American Academy of Religion Book Award in the History of Religions, the Brutocao Award for Excellence in Curriculum Innovation, and the Godfrey Diekmann Award. In 2005, she was named Alumna of the Year by the University of Chicago Divinity School. Bell received fellowships and grants from the Mellon Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 2007, Bell received a NEH fellowship to pursue the study of belief. The resulting manuscript, *Believing and the Practice of Religion*, was left unfinished at the time of her death.

[Bibliography](#)

Crowley, Paul. "The Department Mourns the Death of Professor Catherine Bell." *Perspectives* Spring (2008): 1-2. Web. Nov 10, 2014.

Hogue, David. "Catching the Dog's Own Tail: An Essay in Honor of Catherine Bell." *Religious Studies Review* 36.3 (2010): 175-181. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*. Web. Nov 10, 2014.

Organizational History

Santa Clara University was founded in 1851 by the Society of Jesus as Santa Clara College and is California's oldest operating institution of higher learning. It was established on the grounds of Mission Santa Clara de Asis, the eighth of the original 21 California missions. The college originally operated as a preparatory school and did not offer courses of collegiate rank until 1853. The institution became known as the University of Santa Clara in 1912, when the schools of engineering and law were added. For 110 years, Santa Clara University was an all-male school. In 1961, women were accepted as undergraduates and Santa Clara University became the first coeducational Catholic university in California. The number of students and faculty tripled over the next decade and the university began the largest building program in school history with eight residence halls, a student union, and an athletic stadium. In the early 1970s, the Board of Trustees voted to limit the size of the undergraduate population, an action that was intended to preserve the character and ensure the quality of the university for generations to come. In 1985, the university adopted Santa Clara University as its official name.

Bibliography

Santa Clara University. "About SCU - History." www.scu.edu/about/history.cfm (Accessed Nov. 23, 2010)

McKeivitt, Gerald, S.J. *The University of Santa Clara: A History, 1851-1977*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1979.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into one series: *Believing and the Practice of Religion*, 1965-2008.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Catherine Bell papers, 1965-2008 (bulk 1996-2008), document Bell's research process as she began writing *Believing and the Practice of Religion*, left unfinished at the time of her death in 2008. With this book, Bell sought to spur a discussion about belief, a phenomenon that few religious scholars had addressed but that Bell held was central to the study of religion. The collection includes the unfinished manuscript and related research materials. The manuscript consists of chapter outlines, drafts of an introduction, notes, a preface, a table of contents, her thesis, and articles and presentations about belief authored by Bell.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Religious thought

Faith

Religious education -- Study and teaching

Santa Clara College (Calif.)

University of Santa Clara (Calif.)

Santa Clara University (Calif.)

Series I. Believing and the Practice of Religion, 1965-2008

Scope and Content

This series documents Bell's research while writing her unfinished book, *Believing and the Practice of Religion*. This series includes her unfinished manuscript and related research materials. The manuscript consists of chapter outlines, drafts of an introduction, notes, a preface, a table of contents, a thesis, and articles and presentations about belief that were written by Bell. Many of the pages are annotated. Research materials include photocopies of academic articles, articles written by Bell, book catalogs, book reviews, class syllabi, clippings from magazines and newspapers, conference programs, manuscripts, newsletters, notes, pamphlets, printouts of emails and online search results, reviews, and student papers.

Arrangement

This series is arranged topically.

box 1, folder 1

Believing and the Practice of Religion, unfinished manuscript (folder 1 of 3), circa 2002-2008

box 1, folder 2	Believing and the Practice of Religion, unfinished manuscript (folder 2 of 3), circa 2002-2008
box 1, folder 3	Believing and the Practice of Religion, unfinished manuscript (folder 3 of 3), circa 2002-2008
box 1, folder 4	What IS Religion? Bell's proposal for an introductory textbook for the study of religion, undated
box 1, folder 5	Research materials, circa 1972-2008
box 1, folder 6	Belief, Oxford seminar, circa 1994-2008
box 1, folder 7	Cognitive theory: how and why we believe (folder 1 of 2), circa 1989-2007
box 1, folder 8	Cognitive theory: how and why we believe (folder 2 of 2), circa 1989-2007
box 2, folder 1	Cognition and culture, consciousness, evolution, language, morality, circa 1990-2007
box 2, folder 2	Cognitive science, lying, natural history of religion, scientific study of religion, circa 1980-2006
box 2, folder 3	Anthropomorphism, cognitive science, evolution of religion, spirit possession, circa 2000-2006
box 2, folder 4	Cognitive science, 2001
box 2, folder 5	Religiosity, 2002
box 2, folder 6	Cognition and culture, circa 1993-2007
box 2, folder 7	Prayer (folder 1 of 3), circa 1984-2006
box 2, folder 8	Prayer (folder 2 of 3), circa 1984-2006
box 2, folder 9	Prayer (folder 3 of 3), circa 1984-2006
box 2, folder 10	Historical paradigms, circa 1972-2006
box 3, folder 1	Historical paradigms, circa 2003-2006
box 3, folder 2	Ethnography (folder 1 of 3), circa 1985-2007
box 3, folder 3	Ethnography (folder 2 of 3), circa 1985-2007
box 3, folder 4	Ethnography (folder 3 of 3), circa 1985-2007
box 3, folder 5	Bibliographies (folder 1 of 4), circa 1999-2007
box 3, folder 6	Bibliographies (folder 2 of 4), circa 1999-2007
box 3, folder 7	Bibliographies (folder 3 of 4), circa 1999-2007
box 3, folder 8	Bibliographies (folder 4 of 4), circa 1999-2007
box 3, folder 9	Student essay on theology, 1998
box 4, folder 1	Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Vol. 74.3, 2006
box 4, folder 2	Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Vol. 75.1 and 75.2, 2007
box 4, folder 3	Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Vol. 75.3 and 75.4, 2007
box 4, folder 4	History of Religions, Vol. 39.1, 45.4, and 46.3, 1997-2007
box 5, folder 1	Research materials for Believing and the Practice of Religion, circa 1986-2007
box 5, folder 2	Religious studies, circa 1996-2007
box 5, folder 3	Culture, theory, world religions, circa 1996-2004
box 5, folder 4	Lecture on atheism by Michael J. Buckley, S.J., 2000
box 5, folder 5	Research materials for Believing and the Practice of Religion, circa 1974-2007
box 5, folder 6	Religion and science, religious paradigms, secularism, concepts of belief, circa 1982-2006
box 5, folder 7	Belief and history, cognitive theory, religion and naturalism, theory of culture, circa 1977-2008
box 6, folder 1	Research materials for Believing and the Practice of Religion, circa 1964-2004
box 6, folder 2	Belief and illness, cognitive science, morality, the role of belief in the study of religion, circa 1982-2007
box 6, folder 3	History of belief, cognitive science, psychology of religious behavior and belief, circa 1991-2008
box 6, folder 4	The Psychology of Religious Behaviour, Belief, and Experience, survey, 1997
box 6, folder 5	Approaches to the Study of Religion, selections, 1999
box 6, folder 6	Anthropology of Religion: A Handbook, selections, 1997
box 6, folder 7	The Catholic Imagination, 2000
box 7, folder 1	The Psychology of Religious Experiences, selections, 1965
box 7, folder 2	Atheism, knowledge and belief, modern ways of believing, circa 1951-2007
box 7, folder 3	Introduction and thesis, circa 2007
box 7, folder 4	Belief, problem with the term, 1978-1999
box 7, folder 5	Body - Embodiment (folder 1 of 2), circa 1984-2002

box 7, folder 6	Body - Embodiment (folder 2 of 2), circa 1984-2002
box 7, folder 7	Belief - History of the West, circa 2007
box 7, folder 8	Psychological approaches, 1989-2007
box 7, folder 9	Cognitive theories, 2003-2007
box 7, folder 10	Practice theory, 1990-2007
box 7, folder 11	Case studies, circa 2007
box 8, folder 1	Religion vs. science (folder 1 of 2), 2001-2007
box 8, folder 2	Religion vs. science (folder 2 of 2), 2001-2007
box 8, folder 3	Belief constructed via authority, text, discourse, communities, cosmologies (folder 1 of 2), circa 1966-2006
box 8, folder 4	Belief constructed via authority, text, discourse, communities, cosmologies (folder 2 of 2), circa 1966-2006
box 8, folder 5	Prime concerns of religion through the ages, circa 1976-2006
box 8, folder 6	Religious materialism, 1976-2007
box 8, folder 7	Economic themes of religiosity, circa 1990-2006
box 8, folder 8	The classical world, 2007
box 9, folder 1	Theories of religion (folder 1 of 3), circa 1972-2006
box 9, folder 2	Theories of religion (folder 2 of 3), circa 1972-2006
box 9, folder 3	Theories of religion (folder 3 of 3), circa 1972-2006
box 9, folder 4	Secularism and communicating beliefs, 1997-2007
box 9, folder 5	Disbelief, faith, Gnostic New Age, modern religion, political theology, circa 1993-2007
box 9, folder 6	Evangelism, gurus, health, the nature of belief, circa 1974-2006
box 10, folder 1	Atheism, modern religion, sociology of religion, circa 1969-2007
box 10, folder 2	Modern religion, circa 1999-2007
box 10, folder 3	Exploring the Religious Life, 2004
box 10, folder 4	Justification and rationality, 1986-2006
box 10, folder 5	Rationality, Religious Belief, and Moral Commitment, 1986
box 10, folder 6	Faith, Belief, and Rationality, 1991
box 10, folder 7	Cognitive science, faith, reason, symbolic forms, circa 2000-2006
box 10, folder 8	Faith, memory, reason, 1988-2004
box 10, folder 9	Democracy, ethics, justice, observation, 1977-1997