

Studies in Spirituality 21/2011 – Abstracts of articles

Kees Waaijman

Spirituality as Theology

In the last fifty years the discipline of spirituality has changed radically: in relation to other theological disciplines, it has gained its independence; the theological landscape has altered significantly and the scholarly reflection of spirituality in non-theological disciplines has expanded explosively.

In view of these developments, the reorientation of the study of spirituality to theology is, in our opinion, in order. We build this thesis in the following way: we begin in ancient Greece which supplied the matrix for Christian theology, including the study of spirituality. After a short stop in Athens, where Paul comes into contact with Greek forms of theology and spirituality, we pursue the three most important forms of Christian spiritual reflection: fundamental spirituality, biblical spirituality and practical spirituality. Some conclusions round off this study.

Rachel Elior

The Dead Sea Scrolls – Who Wrote Them, When and Why?

The article is discussing in its first part the explicit priestly nature of the sacred library of thousand Hebrew and Aramaic scrolls, known as The Dead Sea Scrolls. The explicit priestly content of the scrolls is analysed according to references to *holy time* (priestly calendar of 364 days and 52 Sabbaths), *holy place* (Divine Chariot in heaven and in the holy of holies in the Jerusalem Temple on Mount Zion), *holy ritual* (priestly-angelic ritual of 24 priestly watches serving in pre-calculated liturgical cycle the Temple) and *holy memory* (the history of divine covenants and the history of the Levitical priesthood commencing with Levi). The second part of the article is contesting the accepted scholarly assumption about the imminent connection between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Essenes.

Lia van Aalsum

The Jewish Piyut *Shir haYihud* – Biblical Intertextuality in Service of Spirituality

Shir haYihud, the *Song of Unity*, is an intriguing poem from the Middle Ages. According to the general opinion it belongs to the genre of the piyutim (poetry), creative compositions that embellished the Jewish liturgy since the fifth century CE. Thorough research however has demonstrated that this is only an aspect of the whole picture, as can be found in the doctoral thesis of Lia van Aalsum. We are dealing with an anonymous author, who is, firstly, not only giving witness of his own spiritual longing, but who is, secondly, also providing a spiritual education to his listeners and readers. The biblical quotations play an important role in this process of teaching, learning and formation. This article is a presentation of the main findings and conclusions of the dissertation. After an overview of the most

important elements of the context, the spiritual content of the song will be explored, and issues of intertextuality and hermeneutics as well. However, the main goal of this article is to give an impression of the impact of the intertextual network. It appears that the many biblical references are functioning in a special way. They offer a spiritual strategy, creating a spiritual education. This spiritual schooling is not only of cognitive significance, but also of mystagogical value. The development of knowledge and sensibility is focused on four interrelated topics: God; the human being; God and man in their dynamic relationship; the special value of the Name JHWH in this biblical and spiritual process of transformation.

Roman Gruijters

The *Ruba'iyat-I-Sarmad*, Sufism, and Sarmad's Concept of Mystical Unity

This article will analyze the religious and mystical identity and character of Muhammad Sa'id Sarmad (±1590-±1660) and his works – especially the *Ruba'iyat-I-Sarmad* – within the context of hybridity and multiple religious belonging. Doing this, we will also consider that Sarmad was one of the many Sufi poets on the subcontinent, which is in fact the historical framework of Sarmad's mysticism.

Sarmad, who originally lived in the Kashan region in Iran seems to have bridged several cultures in Persia and India. Born as a Jew, he read both the Taurat (Torah) and the Injil (Gospel) before studying Islam, to which he converted. Sarmad also played a considerable role at the Mughal court (Delhi), during a regime of religious toleration, called *Suhl-i-kuhl*.

Himself a talented poet and wealthy merchant, Sarmad first became known widely through his *Ruba'iyat* (a collection of epigrammatic verse quatrains) which rapidly became a sort of bestseller. Besides that he was drawn into the circle of students of religion from which emerged an important work in comparative religion, entitled *Dabistān-i Mazāhib* (School of Religious Doctrines).

Thomas Quartier

Liturgische Spiritualität nach der Regel des heiligen Benedikt – Rituelle Konzepte und monastisches Leben

In this article, Benedictine spirituality is interpreted as *liturgical* spirituality. A broad use of the word 'liturgical' does not only imply the celebration of explicit liturgical services, but also other pillars of Benedictine life: lecture and work. By using concepts from ritual studies, several resources are analyzed in an interdisciplinary way to identify *ritual* dimensions in Benedictine *spirituality*. The main source is the Rule of Saint Benedict, but contemporary field impressions are also presented. The conclusion of the article is that a fundamental union between liturgy as being a traditional rite, and other ritualizing activities like work and lecture offers an enriching perspective for both, liturgical studies and spirituality, moreover not only in the Benedictine tradition.

Andrés G. Niño

Formative Practices in Augustine's *Confessions*

In a previous article I discussed a cluster of spiritual exercises that emerge from a reading of Augustine's *Confessions* as a meditative ascent towards God through a radical change of thought and behavior. In this paper I show that the transformative power of those exercises expands through engagement with select formative practices to consolidate the choice of a Christian way of life. Among them are attentive silence, assiduous *lectio Divina*, construction of a personal narrative, participation in ritual, ministry to the community, spiritual counseling, and observance of the *Rule*. Each has both a private and a social dimension; together they constitute Augustine's distinctive and fundamental discipline of spiritual development.

Michael McGlynn

Silence and Ineffability as Cognition in San Juan de la Cruz' *Coplas del mismo hechas sobre un éxtasis de alta contemplación*

This essay is an expansive (non-reductive) treatment of one poem of the Early Modern Spanish mystic San Juan de la Cruz, namely, *Coplas del mismo hechas sobre un éxtasis de alta contemplación*. The refrain of this poem is a claim to transcend all knowledge through an ineffable experience. As disciplinary walls tumble, this ineffable experience bears re-evaluation with evidence from experts in pertinent fields, such as cognitive science. A case is made that Juan's claim to know by unknowing is a feature of ordinary cognition, though perhaps his experience was an extreme case. As a corollary conclusion, it is observed that twentieth-century approaches to texts are quickly giving way to approaches that match the 'holistic', networked culture that characterizes contemporary society from Toledo to Taipei.

Dominic Doyle

From Triadic to Dyadic Soul – A Genetic Study of John of the Cross on the Anthropological Basis of Hope

A genetic study of John of the Cross's work as a whole, which takes into consideration the influence of his associative logic, reveals significant developments in his anthropological grounding of the theological virtues, especially hope, as he shifts his conception of the soul from tripartite to bipartite. While his earlier works forward a straightforward correlation of faith, hope, and charity to the intellect, memory, and will, his later works reformulate the memory not as a distinct, parallel faculty, but as coextensive with the self. Thus conceived, memory is increasingly elided with the substance of the soul. Consequently, its accompanying virtue of hope conveys the whole person's desire for an ever-deeper participation in divine wisdom and love through the ongoing transformation of human knowing and loving over time.

C. Michael Shea

Ignatian Influences in the Theology of Pierre Rousselot S.J.

Scholarly attention to Rousselot's work has tended to focus upon interpreting it systematically, with little attention paid to the thinker's Jesuit context or experience. The current study seeks to broaden the discussion on Rousselot by reading his doctoral dissertations, 'Pour l'Histoire du Problème d'Amour au Moyen Âge' and 'L'Intellectualisme de Saint Thomas' against the backdrop of Saint Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises* and the writings of two contemporary interpreters of the retreat, Fathers René de Maumigny, S.J. and Georges Longhayé, S.J., who were influential in shaping the spiritual ethos of Rousselot's community. The analysis suggests that Rousselot's Thomistic thought strongly reflects the Jesuit spiritual practice of his day. In interpreting the *Spiritual Exercises*, Rousselot's community made use of the language of the soul's faculties within a participatory framework guided by the major themes of creation, sacrifice, personal salvation, and order in the First Principle and Foundation of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Rousselot creatively adopted the broad contours, distinctive emphases, and language of this vision in his major and minor dissertations, which formed a unified project that determined much of the young Jesuit's subsequent work.

Kick Bras

Thomas Merton – Word from the Silence

In his essay *Day of a Stranger* Thomas Merton describes the inner quality of a normal day in his life in the hermitage. In this essay the meaning of silence for Merton's ability to speak as a prophet and to write as a poet is explored. In letters he wrote to Latin-American poets he explained the importance of silence to receive a liberating language. For him living in silence and solitude was necessary to find a language that was not manipulated by the interests of the North American society. He also had to dissociate himself from images that his popularity produced under his many readers. It was in nature that he could find his 'virgin point', his authentic communication with the Word that God speaks in silence. Also the clear language of the Psalms purified his spirit and gave him the words to practice the ABC of faith. It was in silent mystical union with the Eternal that he found the well from which his words rised up.

Nancy Roberts

Reflections on Conversion

This essay sets out to explore and clarify the factors that influence how we view the process referred to as 'conversion'. After describing this process from a personal, experiential perspective, the essay explores the various meanings of the term 'conversion'. It then treats the phenomenon of conversion as viewed in light of

social, intellectual and psychological motivations, and lastly, how one's view of religious conversion varies depending on whether one views religious truth from an exclusivist, inclusivist, or pluralist perspective. The underlying thesis of the essay is that, despite the undeniable doctrinal differences between the major religious systems of the world – with an emphasis in my case on the sister faiths of Islam and Christianity – there are, nevertheless, ways of understanding their truth claims, and ways of viewing truth itself that can serve not only to reduce the perceived conflict between them, but, in addition, lead to a sense of their being complementary to one another. What I have to say on the themes outlined above reflects a way of understanding the relationship between my home faith (Christianity), my faith by adoption (Islam), and other faiths that views them all, complete with their seemingly incongruent belief systems, as being equally in the service of a single Ultimate.

Jos Huls

Faith in the Face of Death – An Interpretation of Kierkegaard's Meditations on Abraham's Sacrifice

In his philosophy Søren Kierkegaard gleans inspiration from biblical texts and in doing so offers a contribution of biblical spirituality. The four meditations of Kierkegaard about Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac in *Fear and Trembling* are all attempts to understand this story of faith from the perspective of an outsider who is triggered by this story, but cannot enter it with the tools of his own logic. Every time Kierkegaard tries it from a different angle, but cannot find a clue. With this exercise he shows that faith is a reality of encounter that from the perspective of the human being means a continual dying. Only by letting go of the images of our ideas and projections can we create the space to let reality itself speak to us as the invisible face of the Other. This reality cannot be possessed, much less transcended. Thus the statement that we could go further than faith is absurd in the eyes of the author and can seemingly only be employed by people who have not dared truly to let themselves be stripped by faith. Had they done so, they would have seen that it is they who out of fear of this baring have avoided the true face of faith.

Bettine Siertsema

Transcendence and Immanence in Eucharist Prayers by Huub Oosterhuis

Huub Oosterhuis is one of the leading Dutch poets of new liturgical texts. After the initial Roman Catholic appreciation he is now often criticized and even censored because of his 'horizontal' theology. The dimensions of transcendence and immanence, in the traditional theology, come together in the Eucharist. This article explores how Oosterhuis deals with these dimensions and the relationship between the two in his Eucharist Prayer and some of his other liturgical texts.