

SiS 28/2018 – Summaries

David B. Perrin

Mimesis – The Substructure of Hermeneutical Methodology in Christian Spirituality

This article, based on the philosophical hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur, proposes a theoretical model that helps explain the substructure of hermeneutical methodology used in studies in Christian spirituality. Ricoeur goes beyond the phenomenological approach, which seeks a ‘thick description’ of the phenomenon, to understand why and how historical works can not only be observed and described, but taken back up into a life such that the ‘story of the past’ in turn becomes ‘the story of the present’ – our story, our living reality.

Wilhelm Dupré

Primo es homo, secundo Christianus, deinde vocatus ad hoc vel illud – Some Remarks on the Imago Dei as Key to the Unfolding of Being Human and Cultural

By approaching the human being as image of God Cusanus resumed, like Augustine before him, a theme of the biblical tradition. However, by interpreting this being in terms of a living image he opened a new road which enabled him to bring the whole spectrum of humanity into perspective. Since novelty and creativity are essential features of the living image, it is both the past and the future of being human and cultural, no less now than at the time of Cusanus, which turn out to be the subject of inquiries. The paper is an attempt to outline some of the ramifications which come along with the idea of the living image.

Albrecht Classen

Mystical Literature for the Modern Reader – Responses to a Dilemma and Pragmatic Suggestions for the Teaching of Mysticism Today. With a Focus on Mechthild of Magdeburg

This study probes two critical questions regarding medieval mysticism. First, how do we build bridges from the twenty-first century to those stunning religious visionary texts, and second, closely related, how do we help our present student generation gain a comprehension and appreciation of mystical literature? Primarily, approaching those revelations as literary creations mirroring experiences with the transcendental and divine, allows us to recognize them as powerful expressions of a different kind offering significant epistemological insights even, if not especially today.

Louisa van der Pol

Buzzing Up Towards the Choirs – The Theme of Gotes Geswigen in C.O. Jellema’s Poem ‘De Tombe van Meister Eckhart’

The Dutch poet C.O. Jellema translated six treatises and thirty-six sermons of Meister Eckhart. The title of his translation – *Over God wil ik zwijgen* (Of God I will not speak) – is often explained, at least in the Netherlands, as a restraint upon any speaking of God, because whatever we may say and in whatever way we may say it, these are but human fabrications. By studying Jellema’s poetry, in which Eckhartian themes are interwoven, it will be clear that as much for Eckhart as for Jellema ‘not-speaking of God’ is an act of praising Him in full surrender. Especially I will demonstrate this by considering the posthumously published poem ‘De tombe van Meister Eckhart’ (‘The Tomb of Meister Eckhart’) which, within its intertextuality, includes Eckhart’s treatise *Parisian Questions I*.

Dale M. Schlitt

Abbot Suger – A Trinitarian Space

This article is a study of and reflection on the spiritual, indeed Trinitarian, significance of the Royal Chapel of Saint-Denis, located in the suburbs of Paris. The chapel was renovated around 1140 under the leadership of Abbot Suger, who commented at length on its architectural meaning and spiritual message. So renovated, the chapel marks the beginnings of Gothic architecture. The study notes the chapel’s past and present contexts. It considers both architectural and literary evidence suggesting that Abbot Suger intended to create a truly ‘Trinitarian space’. The study focuses at length on various aspects of the façade and the interior of the chapel which help those who visit it to appreciate the trinitarian character of the space he has created. The study suggests that the arched roof of triangles and the side walls, with light spreading down upon those within the chapel, have provided a sense of being embraced by the Trinity and that they can continue to do

so. Abbot Suger has, as his commentaries and other considerations confirm, left an architectural gem in testimonial to experience of the Trinity. Within it the worshipping community provides the fullest testimonial to that experience.

Chad Thralls

Urban Parks as Sacred Places – Pilgrimage, Lolliturde, and Access to Nature

The paper begins with an appreciation of the ‘turn to nature’ seen in recent scholarship in Christian spirituality, and then proceeds to offer a suggestion how this rich literature might be made relevant to those who connect with God through the natural world, yet live in cities far removed from wilderness areas. An urban park is often an oasis of green in a ‘desert’ of streets, sidewalks, and buildings. By offering access to natural scenery, parks provide relatively quiet spaces in stark contrast to the noise and distractions of the city surrounding them. To understand their spiritual use, the paper claims that parks serve as pilgrimage sites in cities because they provide spaces where it is possible to find a degree of solitude and access to scenic natural features such as trees, flowers, and small bodies of water. Using the author’s experience as an example (and Victor and Edith Turner’s work on pilgrimage as a guide), the paper concludes that walking out of Manhattan’s street grid into The Ramble, a wooded section at the heart of Central Park, can facilitate a transition of attention inward from the concerns of everyday life to the presence of Christ in the heart.

Kieran Hayes

Merton and the Red Thread

Inspired by ‘A Midsummer Diary for M’, the journal of Merton’s relationship with Margie Smith, a young nurse he met while in hospital, this essay examines the relationship between sexuality and spirituality. After a quarter of a century of celibate life, of austerity and prayer, Merton found love not in the abstract but in the arms of a young woman. The relationship revealed Merton at his most insecure and confused, struggling with the pain of the deep loneliness he carried within. Merton’s understanding of love, solitude and loneliness were changed by this encounter. He could finally write that ‘the ground of loneliness/Is Love’ and that solitude is ‘the wide-openness of love and freedom’. The ‘red thread’ refers to a 14th century Zen *koan* or riddle that challenges the spiritual seeker to confront the power of sexuality, rather than suppress it, to integrate the physical and spiritual and to become whole. The *koan* asks ‘Why cannot even the most enlightened person sever the red thread of passion?’

Reginald Alva

Embodiment & Spirituality – The Role of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in Promoting Spirituality through Embodiment

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (CCRM), which started in 1967, spread rapidly from its country of origin, the U.S.A. to over 235 countries within a short span of 30 years. The CCRM attracts people as it offers them a forum for lively worship, thereby encouraging the use of body (senses) and emotions to experience the power of God. The use of bodily senses and emotions during prayer sessions helps people to experience God’s love and healing in every realm of their life. In this paper, we shall examine why Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity could grow and spread rapidly in spite of growing secularization in the global context. We shall also examine the prominent features of the spirituality and practices of the CCRM, which encourages contemporary people to seek genuine experience of God through the embodiment of their religious acts. We shall focus on the use of the ritual of healing, the worship, gestures, images and language employed by the Charismatics to attract people to their prayer groups and communities.

Hannah Wortzman

The Daughters of Men and the Sons of God – Breaking the Boundaries between the Spiritual and the Divine

This essay discusses the spiritual and social boundaries that are broken between the mixing of the divine and mundane worlds as seen in the narrative of the Sons of God and daughters of men in Genesis 6:1-7. According to various exegeses, this story demonstrates the evil that may result from the breaking of these boundaries as the Sons of God use fear and terrorize the women that they ravish. As such, Genesis 6:1-7 may be viewed as a rape narrative where the daughters of men are the victims of corruption and defilement by a higher authority, the sons of God. This essay presents this understanding of the narrative as seen in Early Jewish, Christian, Gnostic and rabbinic interpretations and questions whether or not higher, divine powers are in their right to take which women they choose and to copulate with them. In almost all of these

exegeses the female's consent is disregarded and instead the sin is the breaking of boundaries between the spiritual and mundane worlds.

Cullan Joyce

Cosmology, Worldview, and Attitude – A Discussion of Maximus the Confessor in Light of Mindfulness Meditation

Among other things, contemporary mindfulness studies have identified how a meditation that engages non-judgementally with experiences can help transform a person's attitudes. By responding to experiences in a non-judgemental way, negative behavioral patterns lessen. In this way, mindfulness has demonstrated a positive effect on mental health, physical pain, and even improves community resilience. Meditative traditions that emerge from religious contexts, on the other hand, often have quite complex worldviews, concepts, and attitudes. These structures inform how a person responds to experiences that arise in meditation. In this paper, I discuss how Maximus the Confessor's (580-662) *Ambigua 7* describes the creation and the world we experience which provides a framework for an attitudinal shift toward receptivity. Cosmology and worldview play an important role in Maximus' redefinition of attitude away from a more active engagement with experience to a more receptivity attitude. I suggest that receptivity can be understood as a way of encountering experiences in meditation.

Casthelia Kartika

Origen on the Return of the Fallen Soul to God through the Interplay of Prayer and Scripture

Many studies of Origen's biblical hermeneutics address Origen's allegorical approach in isolation from his devotional practice. This approach does not reflect the fullness of Origen's mystical understanding of the Scriptures. For Origen, the spiritual reading cannot stand alone because prayer is needed to make the reading work in the life of readers and the hearers. Origen believes the hidden meaning of Scripture has a close link to the absolute power of God over human beings. The teachings concealed under a poor style of letter can only be illuminated by the power of God. Therefore, prayer and the mystical reading of Scripture are inseparable elements functioning to edify the soul toward perfection. For Origen, in order to take Christians to an encounter with the deepest meaning of Scripture so that they might experience Scripture mystically, prayer is the key.

Frits Mertens & Beatrice van der Heijden

Spirituality at Work – Results from a Questionnaire among 765 Blue en White Collar Workers

The input of employees into organisations results from psycho-social and spiritual motivations and determines the company's success. Psycho-social motivations pay off in terms of providing identity, contacts, challenges and commitments. Spiritual motivations are rewarding as they enable employees to discover their limits, to understand who they are and whether they are following their hearts. Here we describe an empirical study determining which motivations predict job satisfaction. An on-line survey among 765 blue and white collar workers investigated the impact of psycho-social and spiritual motivation on job satisfaction. Our study differentiates itself from many others in its semi-longitudinal, quantitative design, the large number of respondents, the inclusion of blue-collar workers, and the use of several empirically constructed measurement techniques. The outcomes of our study indicate that over a three-year period spirituality is the strongest predictor of job satisfaction. We conclude that any HR development policy or theory should include spirituality. To pay attention to spirituality (as indicated by the individual items of our spirituality measurement) enhances employee's job satisfaction and the companies' success.