

Zinan Zhang & Anthony Dupont

Temporal Spirituality? – Philosophical Inquiries into Time and Spirituality in the Early Oeuvre of Augustine of Hippo

This article examines the intricate relationship between time and spirituality in Augustine of Hippo's philosophical thought, from his conversion in 386 to the composition of his *Confessiones* a decade later. Through a chronological examination of his early works, Augustine's evolving understanding of temporality and its intersection with spirituality is elucidated. Augustine's early reflections on time assumed its physical externality, but as his philosophical investigation advances, he delves deeper into the spiritual dimensions of time. In his discussion on the validity of temporal law, the ethical dimension of time is highlighted. Augustine's discussions on the cultivation of inner virtues underscore the transformative power of spirituality to transcend temporal constraints. Through the practice of *attentio* and the pursuit of eternal truths, Augustine suggests a path towards spiritual liberation and the attainment of inner peace. Overall, this article offers a comprehensive analysis of Augustine's evolving philosophical discourse on time and spirituality in the first decade after his conversion to Christianity.

Keywords: Augustine of Hippo, Philosophy of Time, Spirituality, Virtue, Contemplation, Eternal Law, *Confessiones*

Albrecht Classen

Angela of Foligno – the Mystery of the Mystic in Light of Gender Issues, Poetic Creativity, and Religious Life

The late Middle Ages witnessed an amazing burst of spiritual energy, most pronouncedly reflected by mystical authors, such as Angela da Foligno (Angela of Foligno). Although she has been discussed already from various perspectives, this paper investigates her mystical revelations once again in light of her self-consciousness, her concept as God's vessel, her literary abilities, and her contributions to the mystical discourse in comparison with some of her near contemporaries. As the analysis of her texts will reveal, God's revelation to her empowered Angela to establish her own identity and social role within the religious life of her time. Mysticism can thus be identified as an astounding empowerment of late medieval religious women such as Angela.

Keywords: Medieval Mysticism, Angela of Foligno, Women's Literature, Spiritual Empowerment

John Arblaster

Mending a Mirror with a Stone? – On Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls* and John of Ruusbroec's *Sparkling Stone*

The works of John of Ruusbroec (1293–1381) are generally thought to be antagonistic towards Marguerite Porete's († 1310) *Mirror of Simple Souls*. The scholarly consensus is that if Ruusbroec knew and read the *Mirror*, he condemned it. Nevertheless, in the history of their reception, the two authors were aligned so closely with one another that the *Mirror* was actually attributed to Ruusbroec in the fifteenth century. This contribution examines the textual evidence to establish the possible convergences of thought and expression between Marguerite's *Mirror* and Ruusbroec's *Sparkling Stone*, particularly concerning their mystical itineraries, the place and role of the virtues, and their respective doctrines of deification and the 'common' soul. Setting aside the question of direct influence or condemnation, this comparative analysis seeks to establish what Marguerite and Ruusbroec shared and thus to nuance the prevailing view and offer some suggestions as to why her book might erroneously have been attributed to him.

Keywords: Marguerite Porete, Jan van Ruusbroec, Mystical Theology, Medieval Mysticism, Deification Studies

Paolo Colizzi

The Mystical Self between Annihilation and Deification – Cusanus as Interpreter of Dionysius the Areopagite

In *De visione Dei*, Nicholas of Cusa reinterprets Dionysian mystical theology in a way that both preserves and transforms its apophatic core. God remains ineffable, a superluminous darkness beyond all conceptual grasp. Yet this divine unknowability does not entail the annihilation of the self, as in Dionysius' mystical union. Instead, the encounter with God becomes for Cusanus the path by which the soul discovers itself as the image of the Ineffable. Individuality – marked by perspective, difference, and creative power – is not something to be overcome, but the very medium of divine manifestation. In this way, Cusanus lays the groundwork for a Renaissance anthropology rooted in Neoplatonic metaphysics, yet centered on the individual, creative human being. The divine shines not despite human limitation, but precisely through it.

Keywords: Mysticism, Neoplatonism, Individuality, Nicholas of Cusa, Dionysius the Areopagite

Andreas Schmoller

Painting the true Christian – The Martyrdom of Franz Jägerstätter in Terrence Malick's Film *A Hidden Life*

This article explores how the protagonist of Terrence Malick's film *A Hidden Life* relates to the historical person Franz Jägerstätter. For that purpose we analyze the film in two directions. First we clarify some misunderstandings about the historical persons that might occur if viewers only know the film. Second, we compare the interpretative narrative of *A Hidden Life* with the subjective religious meaning-making of the historical persons. Malick is widely acknowledged as philosophical and spiritual film maker. How does Malick relate to Jägerstätter's spirituality as we know it from the historical sources? I argue that Terrence Malick does so (and can thus claim a consistency for it) particularly on one essential point. He shows how the struggle to follow Christ can be understood as the core of Christian existence. Beyond that he ignores most of Jägerstätter's historically formed world of faith and piety, which ultimately cannot be grasped in the film.

Keywords: Franz Jägerstätter, Martyrdom, Conscience, National Socialism, Austria, Just War

Chad Thralls

It's Raining Right Now – God's Love as Pouring Out in the Christian Contemplative Tradition

In this piece, I explore some key moments in the development of a particular mystical theme: God's love as pouring out, especially the pouring out of a liquid. This image addresses the relationship between the gift of divine presence and the human effort necessary to become aware or conscious of this gift. My intention here is not to provide a comprehensive introduction, but to highlight a few notable examples of the use of this theme that underscore its power to evoke intimacy with the divine. After treating the thoughts of Teresa of Avila, Meister Eckhart, Thomas Merton and Mechtild of Magdeburg on this theme, I conclude the paper by highlighting a mental habit that occasionally prevents me from experiencing the continual outpouring of the love of God, using a recent Academy Award winning short film and my own experience as examples.

Keywords: Pouring, Teresa of Avila, Meister Eckhardt, Thomas Merton, Contemplation

Macario Ofilada Mina

Posse mediare as Experiential Circumference and Ascesis in History – Spirituality as Experiential Mediation toward Eschatological *Religatio*

Understanding experience is vital in spirituality. The idea that spirituality, within the context of exercise or ascesis (which in history is a battle or struggle), is developed by means of experience in terms of the power of mediating or *posse mediare* enriches the way by which we can comprehend the modality by which spirituality attains its perfection, which is theological or metaphysical in direction. Though spirituality is developed in history, its directionality, given that it is metaphysical or theological, is eschatological. Hence, *posse mediare* is to be understood as eschatological, going beyond the happening or existence of history and reaching the fullness of living which is liturgy or celebration in eschatology. The fullness of living is attained wherein experience or mediation of the real to be reality, of reality to be real is lived as *posse mediare* which is power and empowering since

it is not just living the spiritual life by oneself but by sharing it in communion and participation with all in mystagogy, in the originary or *religatio*.

Keywords: Experience, *Religatio*, Eschatology, *Posse mediare*

Halvor Eifring

Mind Wandering in Science, Contemplative Traditions, and Modern Meditation

Neuroscientific discoveries of the twenty-first century have sparked a strong popular and scientific interest in the mind's tendency to spontaneously wander away from the task at hand. On the surface, this interest resembles the concern with mind wandering that has been typical of contemplative traditions across the Eurasian continent for more than two thousand years. However, this article argues that traditional contemplative views of mind wandering differ sharply from those of modern scientific and popular discourse. The article also looks into the different strategies contemplative traditions employ in their encounter with mind wandering, ranging from fierce suppression to openness to the unexpected. Finally, the article explores how modern meditation movements straddle the contrast between modern scientific/popular and traditional contemplative approaches, usually by seeking this-worldly goals such as stress reduction but occasionally relating to an intuitive dimension beyond thought, feelings, and the senses.

Keywords: Mind Wandering, Contemplative Traditions, Modern Meditation, Neuroscience, Non-phenomenal Dimension

Jeroen A. van Lawick van Pabst

Inspiring Design? – How Western Mysticism, along Guidance by Michel de Certeau and Cusanus, may Inspire and Support Design Critique

Designer-scholars have started to critique our modern technocracy and design's detrimental role therein in order to redesign design and the world towards better futures. Like design critique, Western mysticism can be understood as critique to modernity's technocracy. However the potential contribution of Western mysticism's thinking and practices to design critique remained obscure so far. This paper aims to explore how Western mysticism may provide a way to think through, inspire and support design critique. We look through the lens of mysticism, by works of Michel de Certeau and Cusanus, to designer-scholars' dealing with uncertainty, ambiguity and not-knowing as encountered in their critical interacting with a complex world. Insights are extracted; design critique may transform into a spiritual way of the designer-scholar, feeding into design leadership. Overall Western mysticism may offer an unexpected yet relevant perspective to what design critique thematizes nowadays. Limitations and suggestions for further study are presented.

Keywords: Design, Design Critique, Mysticism, Spirituality, Leadership, Modernity, Technocracy, De Certeau, Cusanus, Nicholas of Cusa, *De visione Dei*

Polyxeni Moira, Kyriakos Tselegidis, & Dimitrios Mylonopoulos

Hospitality of Visitors in Mount Athos and in Buddhist Temples in Korea (Templestay) – A Comparative Analysis

Religious-cultural tourism is a form of alternative tourism involving visits to sites of religious significance. Pilgrimage in these areas reflects spiritual aspirations, including communication with the divine, vow fulfillment, and participation in religious ceremonies. This study offers a comparative analysis of visitor accommodations in two key religious tourism models: Mount Athos in Greece and the Templestay program in South Korea. The study draws on the results of a quantitative survey conducted among visitors to Mount Athos as part of a doctoral dissertation, as well as findings from similar studies involving participants in the Templestay program. The analysis shows that both models provide significant spiritual and cultural benefits, though with different priorities and emphases. At Mount Athos, the emphasis is on religious devotion and spiritual renewal, while Templestay focuses on Korean cultural heritage and the broader tourist experience.

Keywords: Mount Athos, Templestay, Motivations, Hospitality, Experiences, South Korea

Thematic Section: *Mysticism and Modern Literature*

Introduction – *Lieven De Maeyer*

Marc De Kesel

Unio Critica – On Jean Genet's 'Mystical Experience' (with a Coda on Jean de Saint-Samson)

'When, one day, in a train compartment, while looking at a passenger sitting opposite me, I had the revelation that every man *is worth as much as every other* (...). Behind what was visible of this man (...), I discovered, experiencing it as a shock, a sort of universal identity with all men. (...). What I experienced I could convey only in this form: I flowed out of my body, through my eyes, into the traveler's, *at the same time that the traveler flowed into my own*. Or rather: *I had flowed*, for the look was so brief that I can recall it only with the help of this tense of the verb'. So, we read in a short text of the twentieth-century French writer Jean Genet. Formally Genet's experience can be described as 'mystical', be it that instead of the bliss of joy and delight, that experience had a traumatic effect on Genet's further life and writing. This article presents an analysis of Genet's strange, 'democratic' 'mystical' experience and reflects upon what that could imply for our common view on mysticism.

Keywords: Mystical Experience, Eroticism, Truth, Jean Genet, Jean de Saint-Samson

Lieven De Maeyer

Writing Without a Subject – Madame Guyon's and Surrealism's Subversion of the Modern Self

This article compares the French mystic Madame Guyon's divinely inspired writing with surrealist *écriture automatique*, and argues that both are informed by a typically modern 'logic of exclusion'. This logic manifests itself in the need for the writer's disengagement from the writing process, so that an other – divine inspiration, for Guyon, and the unconscious, for surrealism – can express itself freely. This article situates this logic of exclusion within Michel de Certeau's theory of modernity, which argues that modern subjectivity arose from the loss of a cosmological order rooted in the divine Word, replacing a 'vocational' with a 'scriptural' relation to the world. Both Guyon and the surrealists resist this shift by attempting to recover a form of receptive subjectivity. By connecting the expression of the Divine Word and the unconscious to the absence of the subject's conscious experience, their writing practices do not result in a more intimate relation between the subject and its 'other'. This article concludes, therefore, that Guyon's mysticism and surrealism are more appropriately characterized as a tragic subversion of, rather than a true alternative to modern subjectivity.

Keywords: Madame Guyon, Surrealism, Automatic Writing, Modern Subject

Janneke van der Leest

The Concept of the Romantic Artist in the Footsteps of the Mystical Passions – Case Study: Coleridge and Chatterton

The concept of the romantic artist as suffering, prophetic and neglected outlaw and genius has its roots at the end of the eighteenth century. Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770) became the archetype of the suffering romantic artist. This article gives a brief outline of the path that led to this classification. In doing so, it distinguishes some devotional aspects associated with the mythologizing process, including the call for compassion for Chatterton and his fate after his death. Formal parallels between the 'martyrs of poetry' and Christian saints and martyrs are drawn. Through the martyrs, the article arrives at the mystics with their extreme devotion to God and passionate identification with Christ and his Passion. Chatterton sacrificed himself to poetry, like the mystic who sacrifices him/herself completely in his/her passion for God. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem 'Monody on the Death of Chatterton' serves as a case study to illustrate this.

Keywords: Romantic Artist, Identification, Martyrs, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Chatterton

Joeri Visser

The Saint and the Madman – Antonin Artaud and the Mystical Experience in Madness

This article investigates the writings of Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) from the time he was interned in the psychiatric hospital of Rodez. From a mystical point of view, we will see how Artaud's mystical experiences are necessarily situated in his madness, in what way this madness is a condition for it and in what manner the Christian mystics to which Artaud refers (Eckhart, Ramón Llull, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross or Swedenborg) help us to understand these experiences. Artaud's mystical experiences are essentially embodied; they stem from the body and they are directed toward the body. The intense forces of life that traverse our body are tantamount, following Artaud, to what other mystics would have experienced and it is only by fortune that they have not been interned in a psychiatric hospital.

Keywords: Antonin Artaud, Affirmation of Madness, Mystical Experience, Suffering, Vitality, Teresa of Avila

Gísli Magnússon

Rainer Maria Rilke – An Esoteric *poeta vates* Interpreting Christian Mysticism?

This article examines Rainer Maria Rilke's complex engagement with Christian mysticism through the lens of esotericism and the *poeta vates* tradition. While Rilke's early reception cast him as either a mystic or an atheist, recent scholarship increasingly acknowledges his role in re-enchanting reality through spiritual poetry. The article explores Rilke's use of mystical figures – Meister Eckhart, St. Francis, and John of Patmos – to articulate a vision that transcends traditional religious frameworks. Rilke's creative process, influenced by spiritism and visionary poetics, aligns with a broader European esoteric tradition, positioning him within a lineage of poet-seers including Novalis, Baudelaire, and Yeats. Through a discussion of automatic writing, spiritual eroticism, and the synthesis of aesthetic and mystical thought, this article contributes to the growing recognition of Rilke's spirituality as an essential component of his poetic project.

Keywords: Rainer Maria Rilke, Esotericism, Mysticism, Neomysticism, *Poeta vates*, Spirituality

Veerle Fraeters & Lieke Smits

Orewoet's Journey – The Reuse of a Medieval Mystical Term in a Contemporary Novel

After centuries of oblivion, the Middle Dutch neologism *orewoet* [madness of love] – a key term in the writings of the medieval mystic Hadewijch of Brabant (c. 1240) – has made a striking comeback in the contemporary cultural field of the Low Countries. This article situates the resurrection of *orewoet* in the broader context of the religious turn of the twenty-first century and the 'affective dominant' evident in contemporary literature, taking the novel *Orewoet* (2016) by Dutch author Emy Koopman as a case study. Using the methodology of Cultural Transfer Studies, we analyze the semantic field of maddening desire in, first, Hadewijch's mystical love lyrics, and second, Koopman's novel. This comparative analysis reveals that, in the secular love story *Orewoet*, only one aspect of Hadewijch's *orewoet* is appropriated: the lover's suffering from unrequited love as a destructive force. The deifying potential of *orewoet* as a painful yet transformative force for self-annihilation that propels the lover into spiritual maturity, did not survive its journey from Hadewijch to Koopman.

Keywords: Hadewijch, Medieval Mysticism, Emy Koopman, Orewoet, Cultural Transfer, Relationship, Affect