

EDITORIAL

Catharina Stenqvist

This issue contains three special articles on mysticism: ‘Cultivating solitude: Thomas Merton and Ludwig Feuerbach on solitude and loneliness’, by philosopher of religion Catharina Stenqvist; ‘Mystical consciousness: new psychological perspectives’, by psychologist Antoon Geels and ‘M&Ms, or mystical mindscapes: the awkward problem’ by theologian Roland Karo. These articles are based on some of the presentations held at the Interdisciplinary Symposium on Mystical Consciousness or Conscious Mystics? Perspectives from Theology, Psychology, Philosophy and Neuroscience, in Fyn, Denmark, 27-29 May 2011. The symposium was organized by the Copenhagen University Network of Science and Religion and the Forum Theology and Natural Sciences, Århus University. The aim was to discuss the highly debated phenomena consciousness, mysticism and solitude from psychological, theological, philosophical and neuroscientific perspectives. In this regard, five prominent researchers were invited to present their views and research results. Besides Catharina Stenqvist, Antoon Geels and Roland Karo, theologian Rose-Marie Tillich presented a paper titled: ‘What is reality? Demythifying mysticism in selected sermons of Bernhard of Clairvaux and Meister Eckhart’ and neuroscientist Thilo Hinterberger presented his research on consciousness, ‘Researching consciousness: the science of privacy’.

The three articles are published in memory of Catharina Stenqvist who sadly and unexpectedly passed away this spring after a very short time of illness at the young age of 63.

Catharina became a priest in the Swedish Protestant Church in 1977, earned her doctoral degree in Theology 1984 and became professor in Philosophy of religion at the University of Lund in 2001. Besides her duties as a professor, she was a member of the Norwegian Scientific Academy Agder, as well as a member of the evaluation committee of the Swedish Church’ Research Assembly and the Swedish Scientific Counsel.

Her doctoral thesis concerned the work of Simone Weil emphasizing life’s tragedy and its beauty. Her whole academic carrier, Catherina was interested in the topic of mysticism, amongst others she studied the life of Catharina of Sienna, Thomas Merton and Emilia Fogelklou, all being persons who went their own way looking for the secrets of life. Also Catharina was a free person, honest, never hid herself behind the masques of society. She was a warm and lovely person, always ready to help others, always honest and fair.

As a philosopher she tackled the big questions that surround life and death. She was concerned with human existence in all its variations. Questions concerning love, evil and death were at the core of her investigations. Needless to say, religious and mystic experiences were subject matters of her heart. With her intuition and sharp intellect she showed, not only the way to philosophy, but also the way to a good life, which, again, can only be achieved through honesty towards the self and the other. She showed the way but she did not dictate it. As head of the Department of Philosophy of religion, she opened for choice, variety and diversity of research topics.

We are many who have lost a dear colleague, a supervisor, a teacher and a dear friend. She will always be remembered for her loyal friendship and kindness, for her humour and laughter, and her honesty. Our prayers are with her and her family.

Catharina has a long list of publications. Most of them are, however, in Swedish. Hence besides naming her monographs, only the English articles are selected.

Monographs and editorial books

- P. Fridlund, L. Kaennel and C. Stenqvist (eds.), *Plural voices. Intradisciplinary perspectives on interreligious issues*, in *Studies in Philosophical Theology*, Leuven, Peeters Publishers, 2009.
- C. Stenqvist, *Simon Weil: om livets tragis – och dess skönhet*, Prorius, Stockholm, 1984.
- C. Stenqvist, *NU - är verklig. Thomas Merton och kontemplativa erfarenheter*, Studiekamraten förlag, Stockholm, 1996.
- C. Stenqvist, *Förundran och förändring. Mystikens teori och livssyn*, Förlagshuset ÅSAK, Hudiksvall, 1994.

Articles

- C. Stenqvist, *The God Question*, Existenz: An International Journal in Philosophy, Religion, Politics, and the Arts, 7 (2013) 49-51.
- C. Stenqvist and A.L.C. Runehov, *Philosophy of Religion*, in *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religions*, Springer, Dordrecht, 2013, 1691-1696.
- C. Stenqvist, *Mystical and Religious Experience*, in *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religions*, Springer, Dordrecht, 2013, 1379-1380.
- C. Stenqvist, *Mysticism*, in *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religions*, Springer, Dordrecht, 2013, 1380-1381.
- C. Stenqvist, *The God Question*, International Journal in Philosophy, Religion, Politics and Arts, 7(2) (2012) 49-51.
- C. Stenqvist, *Ultimate Situations as a Prerequisite*, in *Plural Voices. Intradisciplinary Perspectives on Interreligious Issues*, P. Fridlund, L. Kaennel & C. Stenqvist (eds.), 2009, 165-183.
- C. Stenqvist, *Is there Something – or Nothing: Towards a Feministic Approach*, Temenos, 31 (1995) 215-222.

Dr. Anne L.C. Runehov

Colleague and friend of Catharina