

deliberately by the subject. It is a question of unconscious events . . . we are not the masters of our mind. (82)

As elsewhere, he supports this claim with practical science: “What is known as will, currently the subject of great discussion by neuroscientists, seems to concern only a very small part of mental activity.” (82–83)

Imbasciati’s greatest shortcoming – his own occasional inflexibility and preconceptions – includes his depiction of a graceless universe where relations in early infancy determine lifelong mental processes. Like other psychoanalysts, he has absolute faith in the analyst–analysand relationship without ever explaining why it is so miraculous. A second weakness is his overemphasis on affect and relations on the development of the brain, minimizing the roles of reason and the brain’s physical structure. Nurture vastly outweighs nature for Imbasciati. Each individual’s totally unique experience prompts the author to emphasize each person’s extreme uniqueness: “Each person has their way of ‘knowing’, their cognitive strategies” depending on “the individual problem to be solved” and “on the interpersonal context in which it takes place.” (20) Readers are left wondering: What links us together? How can one unconscious interact and so deeply influence another unconscious without there being certain crucial commonalities? Despite all this, the book’s strengths, particularly regarding learning theory, outweigh any weaknesses for pastoral psychology.

**Shurley, A. K. (2017). *Pastoral Care and Intellectual Disability. A Person-Centered Approach*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2017. 147pp. \$29,95, ISBN 978-1-4813-0169-5**

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Historically, religion is highly focused on rationality and cognition. At least, from an enlightened and reformed protestant tradition, thinking and reflecting on faith, God, and humans is deeply rooted in religious communities. Yet, our ability to think is only one part of our existence. Much more, as human beings, we are embedded in a community in which we seek for emotional encouragement, we aim to develop our own selves and to follow various dreams and needs. Therefore, the issue of inclusion is important in contemporary theology—most of all in practical theology and pastoral care.

Anna Katherine Shurley’s book is written for all of those who work with intellectually disabled people. Even more, it is an inspiration for all professionals who are engaging in a religious or theological context to see disability,

intelligence, and the human being as such in a different light. Being published in the series “Studies in Religion, Theology, and Disability” (edited by Sarah J. Melcher and Amos Yong), the book is aiming at an interdisciplinary context that enables scholars and practitioners from different backgrounds to discuss and explore new developments in the field of inclusion. Shurley, who is a Baptist minister and has been working with disabled people in pastoral care for a long time, points out the importance of mutuality in a Christian environment, and especially in pastoral care. Also, she holds a PhD in pastoral care from Princeton University. In her book she enthusiastically shares these experiences, broad insights, interdisciplinary ideas, and examples from her own practice in pastoral care. The person-centered approach of Donald D. Winnicott and the theology of Karl Barth are brought together by mingling them and getting different ideas and perspectives on the issue of pastoral care with disability.

In five chapters, the author leads the reader to her vision of an empowering, person-centered pastoral care that offers a safe space to be creative in playing and interacting with few, or beyond, words. She introduces two concepts embedded in her interdisciplinary understanding of pastoral care and points out the unique advantages of a psychologically and theologically intertwined perspective—a challenging experience, since psychoanalysis and dialectical theology have not always gone well together—but nevertheless a fruitful combination. According to the author, people with intellectual disabilities need a free and safe environment where they are acknowledged as their real self and therefore are able to discover their calling and purpose given by God. By providing such a space, the carer does not follow a functional setting within the health system but, on the contrary, offers a sphere to freely discover, play, and interact in mutual friendship.

Whereas the first three chapters offer the theoretical basics for pastoral care with disabled people, the author shares her own experiences in the fourth chapter through vividly described examples, giving an insight of how theory is brought into practice. Shurley shows how she deals with difficult situations in which verbal expressions are not, or are rarely, possible, by using art and coloring, poetry, and sharing secrets. The reader can grasp the idea of friendship and mutual exchange between caregiver and care recipient by following the unique examples. It becomes obvious that pastoral care in this special context can be much more than verbal communication. In the fifth chapter, Shurley offers her inclusive thinking as an ecclesial model for the church as a “body of Christ” (1. Cor 12:12) by giving practical examples of how we can create a welcoming atmosphere for “all of Gods people, regardless of ability or disability” (p. 87). She points out that there should be no distinction between “us” and “them” or “normal” and “unnormal.” Rather, we all are parts of one body in Christ, brothers and sisters with “unique gifts and

needs” (p. 93) and dreams. This vision is vividly presented against a reality in which stigmatization of disabled, mentally ill, or otherwise impaired persons is present every day.

A new and broad definition of pastoral care in the context of disability is offered in the book. Shurley understands pastoral care as a friendship in mutuality in which carer and recipient are not as clearly distinguished as in other pastoral care approaches, but rather share their needs and ideas in creativity and the attempt of mutual understanding. She defines pastoral care as interdisciplinary practice (p. 62), a creative art of understanding and being understood (p. 63), and also on a spiritual level as an “act of faithfulness in God” (p. 62). This invites readers to think about their understanding of pastoral care, and it is useful and inspiring for pastoral care theory in general, not only in the context of disability. It reminds us of the complexity and richness of pastoral care regarding methods, theoretical approaches, interdisciplinary contexts, and professional systems. Nevertheless, Shurley makes sure that the Christian standpoint is always the dominant one. All other theories and disciplines must therefore necessarily be subordinated—this might possibly be a problem for a mutual interdisciplinary exchange. Also, intercultural or interreligious aspects are not mentioned, which is a deficiency especially in a more secular and interreligious context.


As a publication predominantly for practitioners, the book also leaves out wide parts of the theoretical implications it employs—primarily the psychoanalytical perspective of Donald D. Winnicott and the reformed theologian Karl Barth. As the book aims to be practical and concise, this is reasonable; however, from a scientific perspective, this eclecticism sometimes makes it difficult to see the whole theoretical context and furthermore distinguish the author’s ideas from the theoretical background. This weakness becomes a strength, since the book is short and precisely written, thus encouraging the reader to keep on reading.

Shurley also uses a language particularly spoken in a Christian environment, and sometimes she comes close to giving a sermon in her passion for the topic and the aim to convince her audience. From the perspective of non-Christian reader or a person with a different cultural and/or religious background, this could be a little trying to follow. Another challenge arises while reading the book, as it almost completely omits any problems and conflicts arising in inclusion-related pastoral care. Conflicts, it seems, can be almost eliminated if the care giver has the right attitude, knowledge, and finally the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, problems between the care giver and receiver in the context of the vulnerable system of religion and pastoral care, and their mutual relationship, are left out or barely mentioned. It would have been helpful if the author had at least sometimes pointed out the difficulties of caring for a disabled person, such as misunderstandings, problems of wanting to understand but being unable to, or

trying to support but reaching their and one’s own limits. Theology, particularly the theology of Barth, offers a way to interpret those problems in the light of failing but regardless of sins and failure being forgiven by God—or as Martin Luther said: we are sinners and justified at the same time. This could have been a relieving thought to all those who experience difficulties within the work with people with intellectual disabilities.

In the end, the book offers a lot to think about: a pastoral care concept fully concentrated on the individual (as it is clearly person-centered), but which also challenges us to develop an inclusive ecclesial understanding and highlights the importance of pastoral care for the religious community. Therefore, it encourages us to see care for others not only at a functional level but also as a creative space, where caregiver and care recipient are acting in a mutual friendship. It also draws the reader’s attention to the possibility of practicing pastoral care differently, thus creatively, and not always being focused on intellectual conversation and discussion. Finally, it leads the reader to withdraw from thinking in a stereotypical and stigmatizing manner, and more in terms of individuality and community—thus, combining postmodern thinking with a Christian worldview that is more than 2000 years old.

**Reineke, M.J. & Goodman, D.M. (Eds.). (2017). Ana-María Rizzuto and the Psychoanalysis of Religion: The Road to the Living God. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.**

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Ana-María Rizzuto is a researcher of towering influence in the field of pastoral theology whose name, if you were trained after the 1980s, may be entirely unfamiliar to you. Yet, if you have ever heard the theory that our mental images and representations of God are deeply formed by our earliest experiences of our parents and primary caretakers, then you know about the significance of her contributions to both pastoral theology and the psychology of religion. Rizzuto’s book, *The Birth of the Living God*, first published in 1979, was a milestone in the psychoanalytic study of religion, drawing on but also critiquing, extending, and far surpassing Freud’s views of religion. This work was enthusiastically received by the fields of theology, pastoral care, and counseling in the 1980s, even while it was mostly ignored or outright rejected by the psychoanalytic community at the time of its publication. In the intervening decades since its publication, Rizzuto’s research on God imagoes has been cited and elaborated by both pastoral theologians and psychologists of religion.