

INTRODUCTION

It is the mark of the richness of religious scholarship today that conceptual analyses arising out of a multidisciplinary environment are informing religious discourse...much of the material in this issue reflects this sophistication. From psychology, history, literary and post-colonial contexts, the following articles incorporate a wide range of tools to elucidate religion and its shapes. Interestingly the first two articles focus on the notion of self and the way it is characterized in theological discourse, while the last two examine mystical themes.

In Mark Scott's "God as Person: Karl Barth and Karl Rahner on Divine and Human Personhood" the theological conception of God is used as a means to examine two great thinkers in Christian tradition. Out of this comes the insight that in each thinker the very notion of the personhood of God informs and shapes perceptions attributed to the human self.

Thomas Merton has had a profound effect on late twentieth century spiritual thought in Christianity. Neil Pembroke probes his work to explore the way in which the notion of "dialogical self" is related to the concept of the "true self" in "Merton's True Self and the Psychology of the Dialogical Self."

Bringing literary skills to bear on the corpus of writers such as Rumi and Donne is a weighty task, and especially when trying to unearth philosophical similarities and differences. Manijeh Maneri takes us inside the writings of these two great religious personages to point out that despite their historical and cultural differences, they do have things to say that show remarkable contiguity in their perception of belief. Her "The Philosophical Fundamentals of Belief in the Mystical Poetry of Rumi and Donne" reflects much of this symmetry.

Finally, Elliot B. Gertel's exploration of the Zohar indicates that, despite the aura of conceptual fixedness around the Sefirot, Kabbalistic thought also was aware of the role of evolution and development. His "Zoharic Hints at the Historical Development of the Sefirot" gives suggestive evidence to these historicizing elements.

As is sometimes the case, the text we wish to publish eludes us. Please

note an *erratum* from Gertel's article of Vol.21.2; here he provides references that somehow went astray in the original.

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