

Editorial

Umberto Eco (of *The Name of the Rose* fame) has said that the subject of all books is other books. What we write is one way or another commentary on the writings of others. The field of religion-and-science could well qualify under Eco's rubric. It is true that research scientists respond to the phenomena they are observing, and religious persons do experience the spirituality and ecstasy of the Holy. They also respond to what others have told them about the phenomena and about the Holy. Consequently, it is often impossible to extricate firsthand experience from the overlay of what learning has decreed for that experience. For many within scientific fields and religious communities, as well as for those who count themselves in neither, what we know about science and religion rests chiefly on what others have written.

There is an enormous amount being written about religion-and-science today. The mountain of books, articles, and media pieces arising out of this interface is impossible for any person to read or journal to comment on. This issue of *Zygon* devotes itself, however, to writing about a few of the most important writings that have emerged in the recent past. In this sense, this is a fully dialogical issue of our journal—and we hope that the writing contained herein will prove useful for others to write about, in turn. Our intention, in other words, is to contribute to the process that Eco has described.

The guiding theme of our “writing in response to others’ writing” is stated in the generic question, What shall we make of———? That seems to be the overriding concern today. There is so much being discovered in the sciences and so much being written about it that the urgent question is, What shall we make of it all? Theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg (with whom this issue deals) put it in terms of attempting to “take the measure” of the sciences. Taking the measure is what this issue is about.

What shall we make of the human brain? No interdisciplinary journal has published more on this question than *Zygon* (note most recently, the entire thirty-first volume, 1996), and there is no end in sight to the attention we will devote to the neurosciences and their significance. Since I have written a special introduction to this section of the issue, I will simply note here that our six authors on the brain include James B. Ashbrook† (theologian and psychologist), Carol Rausch Albright (scholar and writer),

James Nelson (theologian), Mary Lynn Dell (psychiatrist and theologian), William Rottschaefer (philosopher), and Jeffrey Kurland (evolutionary anthropologist). Kurland's piece doubles as our Teachers' File selection.

What shall we make of complexity science? In the September 1998 issue Niels Henrik Gregersen presented a programmatic article on the theology of creation and the sciences of complexity. In this issue we present substantial commentaries on his proposal by biologist Rudolf Brun, philosophers Robert Deltete and Richard McClelland, and theologian Langdon Gilkey. These three pieces, together with Gregersen's response to the responders, will stand, we believe, as a baseline for further discussion of the complexity sciences.

What shall we make of Wolfhart Pannenberg? In a symposium on a recent book that reports a discussion between Pannenberg and scientists, theologians, and philosophers, we focus on the single theologian who has devoted more fundamental thinking to the religion-science interface than any other theologian of his generation. The symposiasts are Gregory Peterson (religious studies), John Polkinghorne (physics and theology), and Stanley Grenz (theologian and Pannenberg scholar). At several points they ask our question, What are we to make of this thinker's monumental theological contribution to the field? It is not a question of making disciples or of perceiving strengths and weaknesses in his intellectual edifice; it is a question of what impact his work can make in future thinking about religion-and-science.

Finally, what shall we make of Henry Margenau? Margenau came from nowhere, so to speak. As a young boy he emigrated from Germany, grew up on a Nebraska farm, and at mid-century became a distinguished physicist-philosopher at Yale. Few persons situated themselves more strategically on the territory of religion-and-science. Historian William Durbin charts Margenau's course and notes both the accomplishments and ambiguities that surround Margenau's life and work.

Writing about writing, intertextuality, dialogicality. Call it what you will, it is all here as *Zygon* enters its thirty-fourth year. Please join the company of those who think and write about other people's writing about religion-and-science.

—Philip Hefner