

This book emphasizes the features of Bhakti and teaches the reader that Bhakti is an intrinsic strand within Hinduism practice. Mirabai is one of its venerated saints who practised this devotion throughout her life. Their songs, written in their mother tongues rather than Sanskrit or Hindi, convey their devotion to the holy. The devotee can only become closer to the divine through that language. By this, the author informs the reader that Mirabai composed all her devotional songs in her mother tongue, Bengali or Hindi (p. 23). The composed songs, sung in one's native tongue, convey a devotion that includes all known facets of human love, such as the entirety of parental love for their offspring and the love of friends, siblings, rulers, subjects, and lovers. There is also reverence, submission, adoration, and loyalty (p. 22). The author tells the reader that Mira's Bhakti Marga is a means of bringing freedom from all societal constraints and caste prejudice by concentrating on it. Ultimately, Bhakti surpasses the bonds, limitations, joys, and dreams of this Samsaric existence. Although her extraordinary miraculous existence, ordered and supported by the Divine, makes her different from ordinary women, her intense dedication demonstrates that she is no slave to the social order (p. 99-101).

I recommend to readers, as I have done, that they read this book as it provides a comprehensive account of Mirabai's life and commitment. The author hopes to demonstrate to the readers that not only does Mirabai have a place in Indian history but that she is still held in high regard as a Hindu mystic by providing hagiographical readings of her life. To achieve a singular experience and unity with God, individuals are motivated to practice Bhakti Marga through her thoughts and poems. I recommend Nancy Martin's book *Mirabai: The Making of the Saint* to everyone who wants to learn more about this Hindu mystic from the sixteenth century.

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King, Andrew M. *Social Identity and the Book of Amos. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 706.* London: T & T Clark, 2021. pp. 156. ISBN: 978-0-5676-9529-1.

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When John Donne (1572-1631) expressed in the fragment of his poem: *No man is an island*, it seems he wanted to say that human beings do bad things when isolated from others and need to be part of a community to develop. Therefore, being part of the social community in John Donne's "dream" would be a good place for self-actualization. Henri Tajfel paraphrases the fragment from the poem above by saying, *No social group is an island*. These two fragments appear in Andrew M. King's *Social Identity and the Book of Amos* monograph.

This monograph, published in 2021, is an exploratory effort to construct the social identities contained in Amos' book. King believes that Amos' book is at "some level attempting to shape the identity of its readers" (p. 4). According to the author, the primary interest of his work is "to explore the embedded notions of identity in the text of Amos." He further said, "Amos as a text seeks to reconfigure the audience's sense of self wherever they may be situated. Yet a purely cognitive understanding of one's group membership is not

the goal. A proper understanding of social identification produces corresponding behavior” (p. 24). To achieve its goals, the author uses a psycho-social approach known as the Social Identity Approach (SIA), which was initiated by a social psychologist, Henri Tajfel.

After the introduction in the first chapter, the author covers the Social Identity Approach in the second chapter. He discusses essential identity-related issues that lead to the specific social identity framework used in this research and how Social Identity theory has been applied to biblical studies. King works based on the categorization of members of certain groups in Amos’ text to define their identity, whether they are ingroup or outgroup members.

The third chapter contains the author’s investigation of applying the Social Identity Approach in cases of intergroup conflict. The author examines the text of the oracle against the nations (Am 1:3-2:16) and the confrontation at Bethel (Am 7:10-17). In the case of oracles against nations, King highlights two critical points. First, the oracles allow no ethical distinction between each nation. Indictment against the nations has placed them, including Judah and Israel, as outgroups because it is contrary to expectations (p. 44). Second, there is no distinction within a particular foreign nation between the actual agents of violence and the general population. Israel, which has the potential to be an ingroup since the manifestation of social injustice, is no more favored than every other outgroup (p. 45). Meanwhile, in the case of the confrontation at Bethel, according to King, both Amos and Amaziah did not just stand as individuals but as prototypical representatives of their respective groups, Amaziah the outgroup and Amos the ingroup (p. 47).

The fourth chapter contains an investigation of historical elements or past experiences that appear in the text of the book of Amos. King believed that “in the hands of the Prophets, the past is used to construct Israel’s social identity” (p. 67). He assumes that social memory has a purpose, although one cannot confidently reveal its meaning. For Amos’s audience, memories construct a sense of self at individual and social levels (p. 71).

The fifth chapter contains an analysis of the concept of eschatology, which includes the day of Yahweh, the notion of a remnant, and the restoration of Israel, which appears in the book of Amos. According to King, the Day of YHWH in the book of Amos would bring devastation upon the outgroup (p. 106). Meanwhile, although the remnant can refer to ingroups and outgroups, in the context of Israel’s restoration, the idea refers to ingroup members. Furthermore, according to King, regarding the future of Israel, for readers of the Amos text who desire a positive social identity, the hopeful call voiced by the remnant and the utopian vision in Amos 9:11-15 provides motivation to pursue ingroup membership (p. 121). Finally, the author dedicates the sixth chapter to a conclusion containing the main ideas outlined in the previous chapters.

King’s monograph is interesting, and imagining his ideas in our contemporary context is relatively easy. In addition, King has demonstrated an impressive ability to articulate the psycho-social dimensions in interpreting these biblical texts. Therefore, this monograph is worth reading because it offers a new and fresh perspective on the treasures

of interpretation in reading the Hebrew Bible text, especially the book of Amos. From the reviewer's side, the same approach can also be applied when reading other texts, both Old Testament and New Testament texts.

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McNamara, Robert. *The Personalism of Edith Stein: A Synthesis of Thomism and Phenomenology*. Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2023. pp. 297. ISBN: 978-0-8132-3747-3. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55997/3010pslix180br3>

The book is the printed form of the author's doctoral dissertation under Mette Lebeck and Marian Maskulak, two of the world's recognized experts on St. Edith Stein. The doctoral examiners are also top of the line Edith Stein scholars: Fr. Christof Betschart, OCD and Stephen Yates. Knowing these facts help prepare the reader that the book in hand is a heavyweight.

The language is clear and accessible to the readers but without sacrificing accuracy and scholarship. Those whose interests are high level Steinian study will not be disappointed. But the book is also for those who are seeking deeper insights into the thought of Edith Stein on the personhood beyond those which are already in print. The author displays his mastery of the thought of Stein and converses with the latest development in Steinian studies. His knowledge of the German language is a plus factor. The reader can also sense the excellent guidance of the author's mentor/s as he writes his doctoral thesis.

The footnotes show the author's erudition and scholarly output. The bibliography is arranged properly without tiring the readers. The methodology is clearly explained and the flow of each chapter is lucidly enunciated. We congratulate the CUA press for once again deciding to print a top-notch scholarly book.

A solid contribution to Steinian studies in the Anglophone world, CUA press continuously offers substantial publications in furthering the studies on Edith Stein that shows she is a high caliber philosopher worthy of being placed side by side with the great masters of Catholic thought. As a possible Doctor of the Universal Church, petitioned formally by the Discalced Carmelites Superior General Fr. Miguel Marquez Calle, OCD to Pope Francis last April 18, 2024, this work on Edith Stein's personalism can be considered a serious reason why Edith Stein should be given the title for the glory of God and service to the church.

How does the book further the cause of Edith Stein's ecclesiastical doctorate? In the context of the pandemic and the wars in some parts of the world, the Church needs someone who can be considered a *Doctor Humanitatis* even while she can also be called *Doctor Veritatis*. Stein experienced the horrors of the two world wars. During the first, she volunteered as a