

## Editorial preface

Ronald L. Hall

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The philosophy of religion lost a great friend when D.Z. Phillips died. Thankfully, his death did not rob us of the great body of words he bequeathed to us. His books and articles continue to generate thoughtful discussions that challenge philosophers and non-philosophers alike to pay attention to the concrete religious practices that fund religious language with its meaning. But sadly, his death did rob us of his presence. And what a lively presence it was; he managed to combine philosophical seriousness and insight with a cheerful and entertaining manner. Seldom have we had such a spirit among us.

And so we continue to be inspired by this great teacher in the way he was inspired by his teacher Rush Rhees and both by Wittgenstein. And what was it that Phillips learned from his mentors and so wanted to teach those of us who profess to be philosophers of religion? Many things of course; but there is one thing that I think he was particularly invested in teaching us. He was passionate about his conviction regarding the proper task of the philosopher of religion. This was the theme of his book *Philosophy's Cool Place* (Cornell 1999). What he thought that philosophers ought always to keep in mind is that they are not preachers. Following Wittgenstein, he thought our task was the investigation of the depth grammar of religious language. He thought that when it comes to religious faith—to what we might call matters of appropriation—we should defer to personal decision. But as philosophers of religion we must remain cool (philosophically neutral) so that we can understand what people mean when they use religious language. And for Phillips this standpoint of contemplative coolness was worth preaching to philosophers who don't, or won't, see the difference.

Phillips was a long time member and regular participant in the Society for Philosophy of Religion. And so, it was fitting that we honored this cool philosopher

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R. L. Hall (✉)  
Stetson University, DeLand, USA  
e-mail: ronhall@stetson.edu

of religion in an SPR sponsored symposium (February 2011). An edited version of the presentations by the four participants in the symposium is presented as our lead article.

The second article by Mikel Burley takes up Phillips' challenge to the philosophy of religion to take contributions in literature seriously as philosophically relevant and not merely as illustrations of philosophical points that could be made independently. Phillips did this himself. However, what Burley worries about and explores is the question of whether Phillips' reading of the religious significance of literary works was untrue to his own pretention to philosophical coolness.

A persistent critique of Phillips is that he has reduced the interests of the philosophy of religion in the nature of religious reality to nothing but an interest in religious language. Phillips fought charge in almost everything he wrote. Patrick Horn takes up this defense in his essay regarding Christian immortality. He tries to show that Phillips can be credibly read as trying to understand the religious reality of immortality, something that Phillips thought modern analytic philosophy had distorted.

And finally, we go back to Phillips' teacher, Wittgenstein. Brad Kallenberg challenges the idea that Wittgenstein was a fideist on the grounds that such charges fail to take notice of the fact of Wittgenstein's background in engineering. If his argument succeeds in establishing that Wittgenstein was not himself a fideist, this might help Phillips' own case that neither he, nor his teacher Rush Rhees can justly be accused of not being interested in reality.