Editorial preface

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With the publication of this issue, which features a wide array of topics, I am happy to welcome our new Book Review Editor, Andrei A. Buckareff of Marist College. Our thanks are owed to Scott Davison for his excellent work in this capacity.

Our lead article by Mikel Burley, explores the positive hermeneutical promise that the narrative turn in philosophy offers as a point of entry into the philosophy of religion. He applauds this interest in narrative, that is, this interest in exploring the philosophical relevance of stories in literature and film, and salutes and appreciates Eleonore Stump's pioneering work in bringing our attention to the importance of this narrative turn to the philosophy of religion. Yet Burley, worries that her approach is needlessly one-sided. As he explains, her use of narrative is narrowly apologetic. Such an approach does not do justice to alternative interpretations of the stories it explores. To remedy this, Burley suggests what he calls a pluralistic form of narrative philosophy of religion. This approach does not seek to defend religious faith but to provide a fuller range of possible interpretations, both religious and non-religious, of the narratives it explores.

In the next article, Kathern Rogers discusses the relation between classical theism and the multiverse hypothesis regarding their respective approaches to the problem of evil. Rogers argues that the acceptance of the classical principle of plenitude makes it plausible that classical theists such as Augustine, Anselm and Aquinas would likely have embraced the multiverse hypothesis had it been available. Even though the traditional principle of plenitude entails a different view of good and evil than that common among contemporary analytic philosophers of religion, the multiverse hypothesis can help classical theists address the perennial issues of the problem of evil and the question of whether or not there can be a best creation.

William Bell addresses the import of Christ's puzzling last words from the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" One thing this may suggest is that this cry of dereliction shows his complete identification with the darkest of human suffering. Yet, given Christ's divine nature, some might wonder whether his suffering is truly comparable to the sufferings of human beings. Bell argues that the comparison is apt. He claims that Christ's death cry indicates

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both an attentional and epistemic break in the relations shared between Christ and God. On his view, Christ's epistemic and attentional capacities were overwhelmed by the horror of his suffering and thus rendered functionless. As such, in this moment of agony, Christ, as fully human, experienced a profound break with his own divinity. In this human, all-too-human moment, he could no longer grasp the divine significance of his own suffering and death. At the same time, this may be the point of the cry of dereliction. Indeed, we may take heart in the fact that this divine figure who suffers and dies with a "why" question as his final words is nothing less than a profound revelation of his full humanity.

As Sandy Boucher argues in the next article, neither the defenders of supernaturalism nor the defenders of scientific naturalism are proposing positive metaphysical theories. The former is actually an epistemic confession of ignorance not a positive metaphysical proposal. As she says, the supernatural is simply something we know not what. On her view, it is a mistake to think of the supernatural as a metaphysical category since it is in fact merely a negative epistemic confession of a lack of positive knowledge or understanding. As such, the supernaturalism is simply admitting epistemic defeat, even though it is often disguised as a positive metaphysical theory. When creationists decry evolution, they are simply pointing out the supposed inadequacies of Darwinian evolutionary theories. Likewise, scientific naturalism is not a metaphysical theory and does not pretend to be. Rather, scientific naturalism is simply a positive epistemic expression regarding what can be understood, known, and the explained. Of course, we might be left wondering if we can disconnect epistemology and metaphysics as neatly as Boucher contends.

In the next essay, Michael Hemmingsen argues that John Hick's soul-making theodicy is committed to opposing any social progress that is designed to eliminate or reduce human suffering. On his view, God is justified in having made the kind of world that we now have even though it is a world that permits widespread horrendous suffering. God is justified in deciding to create such a world since his overarching purpose was to design a world that was perfectly suited for soul-making. Hence, it would appear that we have no incentive to seek to reduce or eliminate suffering. The only way to avoid this conclusion is for Hick to deny that the current amount and distribution of suffering is justified. But if Hick were to do that, then the entire purpose of his soul-making theodicy would collapse.

Mylan Engel Jr. discusses several versions of the ontological argument and concludes that all have proven to be worthless in establishing the rationality of theism. He concludes by saying that, "Since these specific arguments seem to be representative of ontological arguments in general, the collective failure of the specific arguments we've examined provides a presumptive case for thinking that ontological arguments in general are worthless in establishing the truth of theism."

The final article in this issue is "Identity, Incarnation, and the Imago Dei" by James Turner. The focus here is on what it means for human beings to be the bearers of God's image. Building on an argument by Andrew Jaeger about identity, Turner argues that Oliver Crisp's thesis about the imago Dei is mistaken. He argues that Crisp fails to see the difference between the image of God in Christ

and other human bearers of God's image. With Crisp, Turner agrees that all human beings are made in the image of God. Nevertheless, Turner insists that the New Testament teaches that Christ is the archetype of the image of God, the exemplar after which all humans are fashioned.

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