



## Preface

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In the first article in this issue, the lead author Matyáš Moravec, together with other contributing authors, focus on Yujin Nagasawa's Maximal God thesis, according to which God possesses the maximal consistent set of the divine attributes of knowledge, power, and benevolence. This is an alternative to traditional theism according to which God is thought to possess fixed, absolute, and unsurpassable attributes that cannot vary in degree over time. Nagasawa believes that by replacing the traditional omni God with a maximal God, we can undercut many existing arguments for atheism. The authors of this paper claim that we can strengthen the maximal God thesis by incorporating the idea that God's knowledge, power, and benevolence fluctuate over time. In this way, they argue, we can develop stronger responses to atheistic arguments such as the argument from evil. Against static traditional omni views, the authors argue that God's love and power may vary in degree over time and in response to contingent circumstances. That is, they suppose that at some time, God's love can and does constrain God's power. As the authors put it: "...contingent facts independent of the nature of God can affect God's attributes at one time, but they act as temporary metaphysical constraints on any being. So, at any time, God refers to the axiologically best being in that world." Moreover, the authors maintain, the proposed fluctuating maximal God thesis is compatible with biblical passages and Christian doctrines.

In the next essay by Marshall Naylor, we return to the question of God's attributes, specifically his focus on God's goodness. Being perfectly good, God necessarily created the best possible kind of world. Multiverse theorists provide a controversial account of such a creation that professes to resolve some seemingly intractable problems in the philosophy of religion. Naylor argues that the multiverse account of creation does not resolve these problems to any greater degree than alternative non-multiverse accounts. Consider the problem of evil. Multiverse theorists hold that because God necessarily creates a multiverse, creation necessarily entails the existence of evil. On alternative accounts of creation, not all evil is necessary. The advantage of this alternative over multiverse theories is that it allows for the possibility that some evil can be eliminated.

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In our next essay, Daniel Kodaj, along with other authors, explores how the existence of a morally indifferent god would affect fine-tuning arguments against the evidential problem of evil. They give this indifferent god the name Moloch, the biblical name of a Canaanite god associated with child sacrifice, through fire or war. Using a Bayesian framework, the authors show that if the only alternative to classical theism is naturalistic atheism, then fine-tuning can render theism virtually certain, even in the face of evil. But if the alternatives include the hypothesis of a morally indifferent creator, theism is defeated even if the fine-tuning premise is accepted.

Jeffery Jordan considers the ancient claim that God's sovereignty exempts God from any justified moral condemnation. This exemption is taken to save God's goodness, and hence his existence, in the face of pointless evil. Jordan claims that such arguments that God's sovereignty exempts him from the force of arguments from evil are flawed. He contests the usual point of such defenses of God based on sovereignty, namely, that, qua sovereign, God does not owe his creation anything, that he is morally unbound to it; that is, as God, he can do anything he wants with moral impunity. This fails to consider the traditional claim that God has an unflinching love for his creation. Because the Creator's love for his creation is strong and unwavering, it is inconsistent for God to be indifferent to the pointless suffering of his creatures. So, God does owe his creatures something; call this, at a minimum, an account for why he created the world as he did. Theism demands such an account of why his creation has involved such a great quantity of horrific and gratuitous suffering. It will not do, as some political debates argue these days, that one's office exempts one from moral judgment.

Dylan Balfour does not agree with the view that we should just give up on theodicy because it turns out to be a useless pretention built upon an inflated opinion of our human capacity to formulate rational justifications for God's existence in the face of evil. He calls this view "anti-theodicy". Balfour is anti-anti theodicy, but with a twist. He thinks that theodicy is viable and clearly not pretentious if it is based on second-person encounters, what he calls a personal knowledge of God. He draws on the work of Eleonore Stump to circumvent the temptation of hubris that may be implied in analytic philosophy's preferred reliance on propositional knowledge. The key to avoiding such pretensions is to embrace the framework of second-personal knowledge. As he says: "What matters is that the theist, when asked if God could have a morally justifiable reason to permit suffering, can answer yes; not because they know the reason, but because they know God."

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