



## Editorial preface

Ronald Hall<sup>1</sup>

Published online: 17 November 2022

© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to The Associates for Philosophy of Religion 2022

92.3 December

Editorial Preface

R.L. Hall

In our opening article, Bruce Reichenbach, marks an interesting distinction between a logical and a pragmatic assessment of the cosmological argument. In a logical assessment, the criteria of a good (sound?) Cosmological argument are confined to questions regarding the formal relationship between its premises and its conclusion. This assessment, however, is not a good measure of the pragmatic effectiveness of the argument. As Graham Oppy suggests, the pragmatic effectiveness of the cosmological argument can be measured by nothing less than the persuasive power of the argument. Oppy claims that the cosmological argument does not pass this test. But, as our author suggests, measuring the goodness of the cosmological argument is a complex matter. It involves not only its persuasive power but also new information and prior beliefs, and a whole host of other social, rhetorical, and environmental factors. That is, it is important to note that arguments have numerous functions, and their goodness cannot be reduced to persuasiveness. Because arguments like the cosmological argument have functions other than persuasion, we need to expand our criteria for assessing this goodness. The author concludes by sketching out such an expansion of our criteria for assessing arguments as good ones.

The second article by Thomas Oberle, challenges arguments for the claim that infinite regresses that exhibit a certain pattern of ontological dependence are vicious. Such arguments have been offered by several Thomists. This argument maintains that an infinite regress of causes, which exhibits a certain pattern of ontological dependence among its members, would be vicious and so must terminate in a first member. The author claims this argument is unsuccessful. As such, the author argues that this

---

✉ Ronald Hall  
ronhall@stetson.edu

<sup>1</sup> DeLand, United States

negative result gives us indirect reason to grant plausibility to the view that chains of ontological dependence or grounding can descend indefinitely.

The final article in this issue is by Mohammad Saleh Zarepou. The essay discusses an objection to Craig's Kalām cosmological argument. The focus of the objection is on Craig's 'successive addition argument' (SAA). According to SAA, a temporal series of events is a collection formed by successive additions, and it is impossible that this collection formed by successive additions is an actual infinite. This leads to the conclusion that the temporal series cannot be an actual infinite, and thus must have a beginning. The objection to SAA, drawn from an argument by Fred Dretske, denies the impossibility of an actual infinite. According to Dretske, it is logically possible to count to infinity. As such, a collection formed by successive additions constitutes a counterexample to Craig's claim that an 'actual infinite' is impossible.

The present author argues that Dretske's so-called counterexample does not succeed in showing that an actual infinite is possible. Dretske supposes that it is logically possible for George to start counting now and never stop. But does this show that the counting had no beginning? We can imagine that someone starts counting at some moment of time and never stops counting. But we cannot easily understand what it means to be always counting without ever starting to count. Our intuitions about the possibility of beginningless counting are not as robust as our intuitions regarding the possibility of an endless counting process. We can easily affirm the latter possibility. But our intuitions are resistant to the endorsement of the former possibility.

**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.