

## Editorial preface

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The four articles in this issue deal broadly with morality and freedom, human and divine.

In our first essay, Anders Kraal argues that Plantinga's burial of Mackie's argument from evil is a bit premature. Mackie of course tried to show that the fact of evil is inconsistent with a set of theistic presumptions, not the least of which is the belief in God's moral goodness. Kraal concedes that most have taken Plantinga as having put Mackie's logical argument to rest once and for all. But he thinks that Plantinga may not have succeeded in such a coup de grace. It is not that such a death blow cannot be provided, but Plantinga may not have delivered it. The mistake that Plantinga made, according to Kraal, was to assume that Mackie's claim (that God, being morally perfect would have eliminated all the evil that he could) was put forth by Mackie as a necessary truth when in fact it is simply a report on what the theist likely believes about what a morally perfect God would do. If this is right, Plantinga's freewill defense is undermined.

It has always been a haunting problem for theists to reconcile God's moral goodness with a concept of hell, at least if hell is conceived of as a place where sinners undergo eternal punishment. One way to escape this problem of hell would be to adopt a form of universalism which would entail that hell is finally empty. A recent alternative proposal for an escape from the problem of hell is what Benjamin Matheson calls the open door policy. Buckareff and Plug proposed such a solution. They argued that we can escape the problem of hell if we conceive of hell as "a place" that in principle can be escaped, that is, where its inhabitants, some at least, may freely choose to leave. Matheson does not find this plausible. Making much of a distinction between direct and derivative freedom, Matheson argues that if hell has an open door then heaven

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should have one as well. But he thinks that this would imply an incoherent concept of heaven. He concludes that the escapist solution to the problem of hell is inadequate.

The third paper by Christopher Jay is a fascinating exploration of Kant's moral hazard argument for religious faith. He argues that for Kant faith in God is a non-doxastic fiction that requires acceptance if morality is to count as fully rational. He claims that moral action, on Kant's view, is not an epistemic project, a project regarding one's knowledge or beliefs about God's existence. For Kant it is a good thing that God is beyond knowledge, and so beyond belief as well since beliefs aim at knowledge. This non-fiction approach is the wrong way to think about faith because if God were a matter of knowledge, or even belief, this would produce a hazard for moral action. If we knew that God existed, or we were justified in believing it, then we might find that our proper deontological motivation for moral action would be compromised by desires for getting rewards and avoiding punishment. This hazard can be avoided only if God cannot be known, that is, only if God is hidden or is a fiction of the sort that noumena, freedom and immortality are.

The fourth essay by Timothy Pawl continues the discussion of freedom. The focus here is on the freedom of Christ. The question is whether or not Christ could have been free as human beings are given the fact that as God he was presumed to be omniscient. The general assumption of orthodox Christology is that Christ was God incarnate which is taken to mean that in some mysterious way, Christ was fully God (that is, morally perfect and omniscient) and also fully human, (that is, vested *inter alia* with the power of deliberative freedom). But if Christ were omniscient (and being God he had to be) and if this entailed that he knew the future (quite a big if), then he could not have been fully human. The assumption here is that to be a human being, in any full sense of the term, requires being invested with libertarian freedom. However, we do not possess this freedom if we are not also vested with the power of deliberating among real (live) options. If Christ were not vested with such a deliberative freedom then he could not have been fully human. But if he were fully God, that is, omniscient, Christ could not be vested with such freedom. That is, omniscience would preclude the possibility of deliberation because it would eliminate real options, real alternate possibilities. We might conclude, well so much for Caledonian Christology. But Pawl seems to leave it open to find a way of preserving Christ's freedom and his omniscience. He considers several such proposals but finds them wanting.