

## ABSTRACTS

### Michael Scott, *The Morality of Theodicies.*

Kenneth Surin has argued that theoretical theodicies of the kind associated with Swinburne and Hick face two major moral criticisms: first that they tacitly sanction evils; second that they display moral blindness in the face of unconditional evils. The paper upholds Surin's criticisms in the light of recent defences of theodicy. It concludes by considering and criticizing Wetzel's arguments for saying that theodicy is unavoidable for those who believe in God.

### Mark T. Nelson, *The Principle of Sufficient Reason: A Moral Argument.*

The Clarke/Rowe version of the Cosmological Argument is sound only if the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) is true, but many philosophers, including Rowe, think that there is not adequate evidence for the principle of sufficient reason. I argue that there may be indirect evidence for PSR on the grounds that if we do not accept it, we lose our best justification for an important principle of metaethics, namely, the Principle of Universalizability. To show this, I argue that all the other justifications of the Principle of Universalizability on offer, including Richard Hare's, are inadequate.

### Tim Chappell, *Why is Faith a Virtue?*

A virtue is a disposition of character which instantiates or promotes responsiveness to one or more basic goods – where a basic good is one which in itself can provide an agent with a sufficient motivation, and an observer with a full explanation. The basic goods to which faith is a responsiveness are truth and practical hope – the latter being the belief that action according to deliberate choice is not ultimately pointless for me. Now these goods are often in tension for an agent; indeed if there is no God, they will eventually come into irresolvable tension. If God does not exist, there is no single coherent disposition which is a responsiveness to both goods; that is, there is no virtue of faith. So faith is only a virtue if God exists.

### David Werther, *Leibniz and the Possibility of God's Existence.*

Toward the end of 1676 Leibniz met Spinoza a number of times. In one of those meetings Leibniz presented a proof of the possibility of God's existence. In his proof Leibniz presupposed that a proposition is necessarily true only if its truth is either demonstrable or self-evident and that the divine perfections are simple and affirmative qualities. I contend that Leibniz's presuppositions undermine, rather than establish, the necessary existence of 'a God of the kind in whom the pious believe'. My assessment is based upon a consideration of Leibniz's argument in the context of other early papers, works written before the *Discourse on Metaphysics* in 1686.

David P. Hunt, *The Compatibility of Omniscience and Intentional Action: A Reply to Tomis Kapitan.*

The paper that follows continues a discussion with Tomis Kapitan in the pages of this journal over the compatibility of divine agency with divine foreknowledge. I had earlier argued against two premises in Kapitan's case for omniscient impotence: (i) that intentionally A-ing presupposes prior acquisition of the intention to A, and (ii) that acquiring the intention to A presupposes prior ignorance whether one will A. In response to my criticisms, Kapitan has recently offered new defences for these two premises. I show in reply why neither defence succeeds in rehabilitating the case against omniscient agency.

Douglas Hedley, *Pantheism, Trinitarian Theism and the Idea of Unity: Reflections on the Christian Concept of God.*

Modern analytic philosophy of religion has become increasingly interested in the dogmatic substances of Christian theology. I argue that the doctrine of the Trinity provides an instance of the importance of dogmatic formulation for an appreciation of the philosophical aspect of the Christian concept of God. The starting point of my discussion is the recent defence of pantheism by Michael Levine, and his discussion of Neoplatonist and German Idealist models of deity. Both metaphysical theism and the alleged Neoplatonic metaphysical genealogy of pantheism are considered with particular reference to St Augustine's account of creation in the *Confessions*. Just as it is impossible to distinguish the purely philosophical from the purely dogmatic concept of God, one cannot give an adequate modern account of theism without a rigorous and sensitive treatment of the historical models. The issue of pantheism shows how a misunderstanding of the meaning of concept of 'unity' can distort our view of theism as a model of deity.

Mark S. Cladis, *Rousseau's Soteriology: Deliverance at the Crossroads.*

Rousseau, I argue, held both the belief that humans are not naturally corrupt and the belief that humans do inevitably corrupt themselves. I explore these two outlooks by locating Rousseau at the crossroads of Enlightenment optimism and Augustinian pessimism – a juncture from which Rousseau could remind us of our responsibility for ourselves and our powerlessness to transform ourselves radically. In opposition to the standard interpretations of Rousseau, I show that Rousseau held that human wickedness springs not solely from social structures but from the human breast. Lodged within the human heart is a natural, fallen condition that makes our failures empirically inevitable, yet not ontologically necessary.

George Behrens, *The Order of Nature in Pious Self-Consciousness: Schleiermacher's Apologetic Argument.*

The aim of this paper is to explore the apologetic strategy in Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith* on behalf of the conclusion that no authentic expression of Christian self-consciousness can contradict the results or presuppositions of natural science. This strategy is reconstructed in six stages. It aims to show that the very character of self-consciousness entails that authentic, developed monotheism (as opposed to 'fetishism') cannot contradict our consciousness of ourselves as members of an order

#### ABSTRACTS

of nature. Scientific enquiry is in some sense a prerequisite for mono-theistic piety, so there can be no clashes between monotheism and the implications of science.

Julius J. Lipner, *Ancient Banyan: An Inquiry into the Meaning of 'Hinduness'*.

This paper suggests, against a comparative horizon and in broadly philosophical context, a fresh approach to the study of Hinduism. After indicating how religion in general and 'Hinduism' in particular are plural phenomena both internally and externally, the paper goes on to define a (if not, the) distinguishing property of Hinduness (or *hindutā*) in terms of an approach that is based on a re-centring system of equilibrating and interactive polarities called 'polycentrism'. This is described further as a calculated paradoxicality, which is articulated in the light of possible objections.