

Editorial

This issue of *Zygon* continues papers from the 1979 Star Island conference of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science. The conference brought together scientists, philosophers, and theologians to discuss the views published by Edward O. Wilson in *Sociobiology* and *On Human Nature* and to appraise appreciatively yet critically the role of genetic factors in human behavior and the advantages and disadvantages of the "myth of scientific materialism" in relation to values and religion.

Jerre Levy advances the viewpoint of scientific materialism by describing recent work on lateralization of the brain as an example of the increasing success of the scientific method in explaining complex aspects of behavior in neurobiological terms. Philip Hefner takes up the problem of the naturalistic fallacy from a philosophic perspective, while J. Robert Nelson defends the need for transcendence. Daniel R. DeNicola, writing from the discipline of technical philosophy, strives to improve communication by clarifying ambiguities in Wilson's terminology, especially on such topics as free will. Wilson himself concludes this September and December set of *Zygon* by electing not to rebut various criticisms directly but to amplify the reasons for his confidence in scientific materialism and his hope for an effective interaction with liberal theology.

The Star Island conference produced many provocative ideas and fruitful exchanges. Not surprisingly, however, it and the papers in these two *Zygon* issues leave ample room for future discussion of a key concern: the emphasis by many representatives of religion on the human need for faith in the transcendent, and the difficulty many scientists have in reconciling that idea with an intellectually rigorous world view based on evidence.

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