# *Editorial*

Is the evolutionary narrative that emerges from contemporary scientific research capable of serving as a creation myth for our times? This is a question that is receiving a great deal of attention. Carl Sagan got it started in the early 1980s with his exciting Public Broadcasting television series *Cosmos*. Drawing from the evolutionary study of the universe, the planet, the origins and development of life, and human culture, scientists and others have constructed a story that tells us where we came from and how we got to where we are today. Since this narrative is by definition consistent with our best knowledge, is it also suited to serve a mythic function?

There is no consensus on this question; in fact, there is a great dissensus. Scientists and philosophers of science who write in a popular vein, in the style of Sagan, Loyal Rue, Ursula Goodenough, Richard Dawkins, and Daniel Dennett, seem to be making the claim that E. O. Wilson articulated some years ago when he wrote that the evolutionary epic is the best myth our minds will ever entertain. Other scientists, philosophers, and theologians—including Langdon Gilkey, Nancey Murphy, and George Ellis—consider such claims to be in violation of basic logic and a misunderstanding of what myth is and how it functions.

*Zygon* considers this discussion to be very near the front burner of its interest, and we will be following developments in this area in the months ahead. In this issue, we provide a glance at some of the facets of this conversation. Michael Crowe fills us in on historical discussions of life in the universe; Michael Cavanaugh suggests that the modeling done by scientists who study global population trends may be approaching the status of a myth; Gordon Kaufman lays some basic groundwork for the discussion of evolution as myth.

Gregory Peterson continues our reflection on the neurosciences with his probing of the question of whether God has a mind. By reporting on an astonishing discussion between two giants of twentieth-century philosophy of science—Rudolf Carnap and Kurt Gödel—Alfred Gierer not only gives us a glimpse into how they viewed the relations between science and religion but also uses their ideas as the occasion for presenting his own proposals for a metatheoretical approach to understanding these relations. Stephen Pope considers the question of whether nature ought to be considered friend or foe to humans, and offers a third alternative from the work of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Although these three articles do not address head-on the issue of science and myth, they certainly do contribute indirectly to our thinking about that issue.

The Teachers' File continues our miniseries "What One Needs to Know" with a piece on ecofeminism by Nancy Howell, while Fraser Watts provides a survey of psychological and religious research on the phenomena of emotion. We gratefully acknowledge the generous support from the John M. Templeton Foundation for funding the publication of these articles.

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Robert Schaible brings this issue of the journal to a conclusion with his insightful personal and reflective observations on a theme that we discuss too seldom: how science, religion, and literature relate to each other in our attempts to make sense of the world around us and our lives in that world.

—Philip Hefner