

Editorial

INFORMED INTELLECT AND INTEGRITY

Reflections on religion and science need intellect and integrity. Intellect that is informed by knowledge of a religious tradition, of science, of the dynamic historical interplay of these. Intellect that is able to pose challenging questions and avoid easy solutions. And moral and religious integrity so as to be someone who is willing to engage the best available knowledge of our time and the greater and smaller mistakes within one's own tradition. For me, a scholar who embodied such a rich mix of informed intellect and integrity was Ernan McMullin.

McMullin (1924) was a historian and philosopher of science at the University of Notre Dame (USA) and a Roman Catholic priest. On February 8, 2011, he died in his native Ireland. He has written many substantial essays and edited major volumes on key themes of our field such as the Galileo affair (1998); scientific realism (1984); science, rationality and values (1988b); conceptions of science (1990); and other themes in the history and philosophy of science, addressing the Kuhnian turn to history of science as a challenge to a realist appreciation of science (1988b; 1992a; 1992b; 1994; 2008). Informed by the Galileo affair, he gave sound advice on the relation of theology and cosmology, concluding that one has to be wary of easy solutions, though the Christian “*must* strive to make his theology and cosmology consonant in the contributions they make to this world-view” (1981, 52). He has been one of the strong advocates of a theological vision that draws upon Augustine and other early theologians, also in the engagement with modern (and in some sense quite ancient, classical) issues such as biological evolution (1986; 1988a; 1993a), cosmic purpose (1999), and the possibility of extraterrestrial life (1980). There is much more to be written about him; so far there is at least one substantial study on his work (Allen 2006). As Michael Ruse wrote in this journal, when challenging the lack of progress on religion and science, he wrote: “Ernan McMullin’s Augustinian reflections on the science-religion divide (. . .) are always stimulating, although I regret he has never written a systematic theology of the topic” (2007, 580). I regret this too. However, the essays and edited volumes—many more than those I had at hand when writing this editorial—provide more than enough food for thought. I find it an honor that in this issue we will have one more contribution by him, on the reception of Darwinism in Christianity—“Darwin and the Other Christian tradition” (McMullin 2011). As a recommendation, I take the liberty to quote Augustine, who according to his autobiography (*Confessiones*, the end of Book VIII) at the time of his conversion to

Christianity heard a child's voice say "tolle, lege, tolle, lege"—that is, take and read the well informed and intellectually challenging essays by Ernan McMullin.

This issue opens with an analysis by Anne Harrington of the placebo effect or, more generally, of claims and arguments about religion and health. The placebo effect has been called upon in multiple ways, as a trouble maker but also as evidence for an influence of beliefs on our well-being. The multiplicity of the interactions between scientific ideas, methodological concerns, and religious or spiritual interests makes for fascinating reading—and an ongoing issue for those who seek to understand religion in our time. Health is a strategy to legitimize religious beliefs and practices. Boundaries between religion, spirituality, and health are permeable, as practices such as yoga, meditation, and prayer may be advertised as spiritually significant and as healthy (e.g., Maxwell 2009; Stanley 2009). Harrington is a historian of science at Harvard. She is the author of various studies in the history of medicine (Harrington 1996; 2008). The essay published here was first delivered as a plenary lecture at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, November 2010.

A major section in this issue is a set of articles on the reception of Darwin's ideas in various contexts. These articles uncover approaches that may be surprising and illuminating to many of our readers, even when they have been reading extensively on the evolution-creation controversies. Ernan McMullin speaks of "the other Christian tradition," that is not a minority position, but rather the backbone of Western Christianity. Shai Cherry signals how Jewish historical experience has created conditions for a different reception of suffering as a key theme in a Darwinian natural history. Marwa Elshakry shows how discussions about evolution led to a revival of classic theological debates over exegesis and over evidence. The reception of Darwinian evolution among Muslims has been more positive than in the Western world, as the Islamic sphere was not shaped by natural theology as European, Christian theology had been. More recently, however, the appropriation of Christian creationist literature has found its way into Islamist discourse. David Gosling, author of a book on science and the Indian traditions (Gosling 2007), speaks of the Hindu tradition. Last but not least, Christopher Southgate, key author of recent essays on a semiotic approach to religion and science (Robinson and Southgate 2010; Southgate and Robinson 2010) returns to the theme of his book *The Groaning of Creation* (2008) in his Christian reflections on suffering in the natural world. These essays offer a much richer engagement with Darwin's ideas than just the visible polemic about origins. It also shows that in our global world, interactions have a strong local dimension as well—relative to tradition, social circumstances, place, and time (see Livingstone 2003).

"Judaism and science" is the theme of the three subsequent papers, by Norbert Samuelson, Noah Efron, and Brad Artson. Again, a lesson to be

learned is that interactions of religion have their global dimension as well as their very specific, situated character; Efron relates a tragic incident in space travel with the techniques used to decipher the Dead Sea scrolls.

The final section, “Voices from the next generation,” offers prize-winning essays by students who participated in 2009 and 2010 in an essay contest and conference organized by the Hyde Park Religion and Science Society in collaboration with the Zygon Center for Religion and Science, both based in Chicago. No repeat of the same questions over and over again, whether creation-evolution or the classification of positions. Rather, fresh voices in these discussions. Perhaps in a few decades, we might say that *Zygon* published one of the earliest essays of authors who have built their reputation since then. We conclude with a set of book reviews; there are books out there, but I recommend to you the articles in this issue of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*.

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