Editorial

ZYGON: 49 YEARS YOUNG

The second issue of our 49th year of publication continues with reflections on the past and future of "religion and science." The previous issue had a contribution by the late Ian Barbour, emphasizing the original interest of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* in technology, ethics, and society alongside the interest in science and theology (Barbour 2014). This time the section "Zygon @ 49" opens with a contribution by Jennifer Wiseman and Paul Arveson of the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion programme (DoSER) of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (AAAS). They report on their efforts to engage evangelical Christian communities, and their involvement in a current survey on perceptions of science, religion, and spirituality in the United States with Elaine Howard Ecklund, who previously published on similar surveys, for example, in her *Science vs. Religion: What Scientists Really Think* (2010). The Danish theologian Niels Henrik Gregersen envisions the plurality of tasks and disciplines in "religion and science" by comparing the field to an octopus with multiple arms. Though the octopus may be somewhat alien to us as mammals, it is still a recognizable unity, and so is the multidisciplinary field of "religion and science," according to Gregersen. Philip Clayton claims that advocates of science and advocates of religion have reached an impasse today, with a plurality of methodological and substantial proposals on the table, each one contested by others. But perhaps the plurality can be appreciated positively, as participants in the conversation bring with them particular commitments and concerns, while participating in a pluralist conversation, rather than seeking the single scheme that trumps all others. Ted Peters widens the horizon even further, by offering his reflections on astrotheology as a critical theological engagement with the possibility of extraterrestrial life, sentience, and intelligence elsewhere in our vast universe. There is excitement in this field, as more and more planets circling other stars have been discovered in recent years. For the Christian theologian, this provides a context to rethink ideas about the scope of creation and about Christology, but Peters also challenges the space sciences when they engage in speculation while assuming too easily that new insights are at odds with what believers think. Peters anticipates the need for "astroethics," including the ethical issues surrounding space exploration and the need to prepare for the eventuality of extraterrestrial contact. There are more immediate ethical issues, such as the risks of debris circling Earth, the scientific and public character of space exploration so far,

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the rise of for-profit private companies, and the potential weaponization of space. More than enough for those interested in religion and in science to chew on; at 49 *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* can be part of an ongoing, multifaceted, and pluriform human engagement with knowledge and values.

The universe may be interesting, but we find ourselves at least as interesting. Rightly so, for at least two reasons. Thinking and feeling give rise to special relations to the environment and to ourselves. Thus, we can reflect upon our self-reflection. And as humans, we bear responsibility for our actions, our knowledge and technology, our social structures, beliefs, and practices. In that context, our "inner lives," our self, spirituality, and consciousness, are of great interest and importance to us, also in the context of "religion and science," perhaps in particular for "Eastern" religions and their Western appropriations, with their interest in consciousness and inner experience, though this topic may also engage "Western" mystics. In the previous issue, various authors responded to Owen Flanagan's book *The Bodhisattva's Brain* (Flanagan 2011; Coseru 2014; Finnigan 2014; Flanagan 2014; Goodman 2014). In this issue of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, William Simpson considers the exceptional, religiously induced, experience of temporary self-loss in relation to Daniel Dennett's understanding of the way the self might be constructed as a "center of narrative gravity." To increase our academic understanding of spirituality, David Rousseau reviews current literature especially from the healthcare professions and offers a systems model of spirituality. David James Stewart reflects on theological anthropology and the depth psychology of Carl Gustav Jung as interpretations of the creation narratives of Genesis, treating Genesis not as a narrative about the origin of sin, but as one about the origin of consciousness in the human community.

As an icon of modern science, Albert Einstein has also been of interest for his philosophical and religious views. Some, including New Age writer Ken Wilber (1984, 5) and prolific author on religion Karen Armstrong (1993, 338 and 395), have claimed him as a mystic. Gary Bowman, from whom I took these references, offers in this issue a careful and very well-informed analysis of Einstein's views. Some of the disagreement seems to spring from a problematical translation, as the German word *Geheimnisvolle*, in a text by Einstein suggested to be the fundamental experience at the heart of true art and true science, occasionally has been translated as "mystical," rather than as "mysterious." Bowman brings to the light an interesting exchange, spanning the period 1930–1954, between Einstein and someone who considered himself a mystic, William Hermanns, and reflects upon Einstein's understanding of Spinoza.

Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science has been one of the places where a science-inspired religious naturalism has been advocated (Stone 2012; Peters 2013). Thus, it is very appropriate that we publish a critical

analysis by a Ph.D. candidate from Boston, Stefani Ruper, that considers religious naturalism as advocated by Jerome Stone and Donald Crosby. The metaphysically less minimalist approach of Crosby has, according to Ruper, for that reason more "soteriological potential." Thus, in her opinion, metaphysics is relevant for religious function and depth. A persistent theme in the modern understanding of natural order, both for naturalists and for those who seek to think through a meaningful notion of divine action or even miracles, has been the understanding of laws of nature (Stanley 2011; Reichard 2013), and more broadly, the understanding of science (McMullin 2013). In this issue, Steven Horst considers contemporary empiricist and causal accounts of scientific laws and their implications for the concept of "miracle"—the causal one being more "miracle friendly" than the empiricist one, according to his analysis.

Human suffering has been a persistent theme of theological reflection, and in some versions of Christianity death has been seen as a consequence of human sin. However, animals can suffer as well, and death was there long before humans came into being. Joshua Moritz, Ph.D. candidate at Berkeley, offers reflections upon animal suffering in the context of a theistic understanding of evolution. Another classic theme at the intersection of religious and scientific approaches has been morality, exemplified by "the golden rule" that one should treat others as one would like to be treated oneself (e.g., Pope 2013). In this issue, British graduate student Jonathan Goodman offers a fresh analysis of this topic. Biological altruism seems to be limited to reciprocal altruism, situations in which one may expect to receive something back from the other in which one invests, whereas moral altruism should not regard such benefits. This has been made into a strong contrast by some philosophers. Goodman argues that this need not be construed as such, if one makes appropriate distinctions such as those between (unconscious) motivations and considered intentions.

Last but not least, our octopus (Gregersen's metaphor) not only has to understand the world but also live in it. We humans make choices whether and how we use technologies that have become possible due to increased understanding. Technologies that regard human reproduction are especially of interest, as the succession of generations is a major feature of human social life, and has been a prominent theme in many religious traditions (e.g., Ghaly 2012, 2013; Shabana 2012, 2013; Alghrani 2013). Mohammed Ishak and Sayed Haneef consider the reception of reproductive technologies in Islam and Christianity.

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