

Editorial

HONORING ALISTER McGRATH

This issue of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* is devoted largely to honoring Alister McGrath, who is retiring from the Andreas Idreos Chair in Science and Religion at the University of Oxford later this year. I have gotten to know Alister in October 2014, just after he had returned to Oxford, as a prospective doctoral supervisor for my third doctorate, this time in theology (part-time). Such a trajectory would provide me with an incentive and guidance structure (needed while being heavily involved in setting up a new department at University College London) for writing a book that expanded on my first *Zygon* article, on “Uncertainty and God,” published earlier that year. Alister quickly took me under his wings and after I had started in October 2015, I was able in six years to write the book that I had always wanted to write. At the moment of writing this Editorial, I am awaiting my final viva examination of the doctoral dissertation (on February 24, 2022; the title of the dissertation is: “Uncertainty, Climate, and God: A Transcendental Naturalistic Approach to Bruno Latour”) and I hope that soon it will find its way into print as a book.

It was then-*Zygon*-Joint-Publication-Board-member Michael Ruse who during a pleasant conversation over coffee in a London hotel in October 2019 suggested to me that we should develop a *Festschrift* for Alister in the pages of *Zygon*. By then being a year into the role of Editor-in-Chief, I happily took up that suggestion and I was able to secure the help from Bethany Sollereder as a co-conspirator in deciding on who to ask as contributors. She did a tremendous job as guest editor for this thematic section, and I am referring the reader to her introduction for more information about the contributions that we received from Alister’s two predecessors on the Andreas Idreos Chair, respectively, John Hedley Brooke and Peter Harrison, and from Helen De Cruz, Michael Ruse, Donovan Schaefer, Andrew Pinsent, Andrew Davison, and Victoria Lorrimar. When all articles had been accepted, we asked Alister to read all of them and prepare a response, which concludes the section.

OTHER ARTICLES

The “Articles” section contains five articles. In the first article, Holmes Rolston III (who first published in *Zygon* in 1981) confronts us humans with the risks that we pose to ourselves, our fellow human beings and to the planet: “We humans are the best and the worst” and in the Anthro-

pocene the survival stakes could not be higher; still, he sees a glimmer of spiritual hope in a secular future. In the second article, Neil Spurway engages with “apophatic theology,” emphasizing the impossibility of gaining certainty on specific knowledge of God; he develops his argument using evolutionary epistemology and he concludes that there is danger in any more positive theological position that is held more strongly than only on an “as if” basis. In the third article, Humberto Schubert Coelho revisits the objectivity of aesthetics; he argues that new discoveries in science run against the anti-teleological turn of the past few centuries and outlines the implications for aesthetics, metaphysics, and science and religion. In the fourth article, Flavius Raslau endeavors to develop a non-Whiteheadian process philosophy with a “panentheistic” articulation of divine presence; he argues that nature’s power can be equated with God’s energies but that within the philosophy proposed God can be conceived as more. Finally, in the fifth article, Andrew McFarlane discusses new tools for theological reflection derived from computer science; he makes the case that computer authentication “trust systems” offer analogical ways for addressing the problem of divine self-authentication (“Are You Who You Say You Are?”).

The issue ends with a book review. Madeleine Ary Hahne reviews *Climate Politics and the Power of Religion*, edited by Evan Berry, which is due to be released this spring.

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