

ABSTRACTS

Paul R. Noble, *Hermeneutics and Post-Modernism: Can We Have a Radical Reader-Response Theory? Part II*

The flaws in Fish's hermeneutics that were diagnosed in Part I (it is now argued) are consequences of his underlying epistemology. This is a version of anti-foundationalism which claims that facts are the product of interpretation; but a careful study of how this issue is handled by N. R. Hanson and Thomas Kuhn shows that Fish's epistemology is fundamentally unsound. An alternative account of the fact-interpretation relationship is then proposed, and the outline of an objectivist, reader-independent hermeneutics are sketched. This is further developed by showing how a common argument against objectivism (based on the historical situatedness of reason and knowledge) may be refuted.

David Werther, *Leibniz on Cartesian Omnipotence and Contingency.*

Leibniz contrasted his views of necessity, possibility, and impossibility with those of Descartes and Spinoza. On the one hand, he argued that Descartes erred by allowing that God has the ability to make contradictory claims true. On the other hand, Leibniz found Spinoza's commitment to fatalism to be counterintuitive. I show that, given his *in-esse* account of truth, Leibniz could not have avoided a commitment to fatalism, without affirming one of the most objectionable features of Descartes' divine voluntarism, the contingency of the law of noncontradiction.

Dirk-Martin Grube, *Religious Experience After the Demise of Foundationalism.*

In this article, I argue that foundationalist reconstructions of religious experience lose on all counts: First, philosophical defences of foundationalism are untenable. Second, the theological benefits that can be reaped from foundationalism come at too high a price. I show that both William Alston's and Alvin Plantinga's foundationalism leads to sceptical conclusions. Third, I argue that the epistemic implications of foundationalist reconstructions of religious experience are incompatible with Christian ontology. Criticizing the account Plantinga develops in his books on warrant, I suggest that it is preferable to reconstruct religious experience in antifoundationalist, i.e., coherentist, terms and develop the model of a mobile for these purposes.

Michael L. Czapkay Sudduth, *The Prospects for 'Mediate' Natural Theology in John Calvin.*

In the present paper I consider the plausibility of a mediate natural theology in John Calvin. First, utilizing Robert Audi's distinction between 'episodically' and 'structurally' inferential beliefs, I show that a plausible case can be made for the compatibility of a mediate theology corresponding to both these forms of inferential

belief with salient features of Calvin's theology. Second, I apply Calvin's view on arguments for Scripture to theistic belief and suggest a way of construing natural theology as an intra-faith practice aimed at satisfying the cognitive desideratum of reflective nationality – a calvinistic project of *fides quaerens intellectum*.

Michael McGhee, The Turn Towards Buddhism.

The paper draws on the Heideggerian distinction between *Bildung* and *Besinnung* to locate a discussion of theological strategies in the face of Nietzsche's pronouncement that God is dead, and sketches what should be an epistemologically vigilant (and thus properly sceptical) Buddhist response to that pronouncement. The theological options that are mentioned or discussed include naive and critical theological realism, anti-realism and a nontheistic 'spiritual realism'. Buddhism is discussed in terms of its naturalistic sources and their development in the expression of states of mind rather than in terms of belief.

J. William Forgie, The Cosmological and Ontological Arguments: How Saint Thomas Solved the Kantian Problem.

Let us call the Dependency Theses (DT) the view, first stated by Kant, that certain versions of the cosmological argument depend on the ontological argument. At least two different reasons have been given for the supposed dependence. Given the DT, some of Aquinas' views about God's essence, and about our knowledge of God's existence, can seem, at least at first, to be inconsistent. I consider two different ways of defending Aquinas against this suspicion of inconsistency. On the first defence, based on a widespread understanding of his notion of 'necessary being', Aquinas' views fall outside the scope of the DT. The success of this defence is doubtful. There is, however, another defence to be found in Aquinas' work, one directed not to avoiding, but actually to rejecting, the DT. In this second defence, the DT is not a correct assessment even of those views that *do* fall within its scope. Its success means that Aquinas had available a principled refutation of the DT some five hundred years before it was first formulated.

L. Nathan Oaklander, Foreknowledge and Time: A Critique of Zagzebski

One problem facing those who attempt to reconcile divine foreknowledge with human freedom is to explain how a temporal God can have knowledge of the future, if the future does not exist. In her recent book, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge*, Linda Zagzebski attempts to provide an explanation by making use of a four-dimensional model in which the past, present and future exist. In this note I argue that the model Zagzebski offers to support the coplausibility of divine foreknowledge and human freedom is inconsistent with the A-theory of time she propounds.

Vincent Brümmer, On not Confusing Necessity with Compulsion: a Reply to Paul Helm.

This paper responds to Helm's rebuttal of Brümmer's account of Bernard and Calvin in *Religious Studies* 30, 4. It contends that Helm confuses *indeterminism* with *nondeterminism* and that a clear distinction between freedom from necessity and freedom from compulsion must be drawn. *Contra* Helm, there is still a contradiction between Calvin's defence of freedom from compulsion and his account of the perseverance of God's grace.