

## Editorial Preface

**R. L. Hall**

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The opening paper in this issue raises the question of what role, if any, game theory can fruitfully “play” in the philosophy of religion. Paddy Jane McShane is not surprised by the recent attempt by economist Steven Brams to apply game theory to the question of whether or not to believe in God (at least the biblical One). After discussing other related issues, she comes to a sweeping conclusion regarding the use of game theory in the philosophy of religion. She thinks that game theory cannot succeed in helping human beings assess the rationality of belief in God because it runs into the obstacle of what is called in game theory, the tuistic assumption. Tuism is the ubiquitous assumption in game theory requiring that the players in the game refuse to take an interest in each other’s preferences. When the two players are God and a human being, this assumption runs afoul since at least one player, namely God, is omnibenevolent.

There is a nice bridge between the first and second articles. Both are concerned with the issue of procedures for making rational choices. But in this case, the issue shifts to God, and to the question of whether or not God’s decision to actualize this world was rational. Myron Arthur Penner replies to Klaas J. Kraay who thinks that on the rational choice model for divine creation, God’s decision to actualize the present world was irrational. Following Leibniz, it is usually agreed that God could not be perfectly good if there were a better world (or as I like to put it, a better kind of world) other than this one that was available. And as the argument goes, God’s choice to actualize this world rather than its alternatives was a rational choice. Kraay, however, questions the rationality of God’s choice, even claims that it was irrational, since God had no axiological basis of comparison to determine that this world was a better one to actualize than its available alternatives. Penner holds that even if the “Comparative Principle,” fails, this is not sufficient to undermine the rationality of God’s choice

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R. L. Hall (✉)  
Stetson University, DeLand, FL, USA  
e-mail: ronhall@stetson.edu

to create this world. To make this case he introduces a new principle, what he calls the “Unavoidable Outcomes Principle.” On his view, adopting this principle entails that the Comparativist Principle is false and thus removes the challenge of needing to choose between incomparable alternatives.

The issue of what is and what is not rational continues in the next paper. In this case, the issue is the rationality of the belief in divine intervention. In previous work, Robert Larmer has argued that such a belief is rational. Evan Fales, however, thinks Larmer’s argument, while promising, finally rests on a false belief. This belief is that God has the capacity to add energy to the universe. This is a pivotal element in Larmer’s defense of the rationality of divine intervention. Fales however claims that Larmer’s belief that God can add energy to the universe is just another version of the old idea that intervention requires the suspension of the laws of nature. In this case, the law that intervention violates is the first law of thermodynamics: the principle of the conservations of energy. If energy cannot be created or destroyed, then (without suspending the laws of nature) God cannot add energy to the universe and so cannot intervene in the world and so cannot perform miracles. In response, Larmer thinks that Fales has conflated two distinct formulations of the principle of the conservation of energy, a conflation that confuses a scientific law with a metaphysical commitment. Once this is clear the metaphysical presumption of theism, namely, that the universe is open to the influence of God, is restored to rational plausibility.

The issue of divine intervention has of course some obvious parallels in the mind-body problem. It has seemed to many philosophers that it is just as difficult to make sense of how a disembodied God (God’s will) can exercise causal powers in the physical world as it is to make sense of how a mind (qua irreducible mental properties) can causally supervene on physical bodies. Malebranche famously worried about the former problem. In our last essay, Daniel Lim ingeniously makes the case that Malebranche’s final (and I think most would agree, unhappy) disposition on the matter, namely, to deny causal efficacy to the human will and to restrict it to God alone, is parallel to Jaegwon Kim’s argument that the attempt of non-reductive physicalism to save the causal efficacy of the human will (as an irreducible mental property) is equally unhappy. For Kim, the only way to accept the causal efficacy of the mental is to reduce it to the physical, an unhappy prospect, at least for libertarian freedom. A key element in this discussion is the role of what Kim calls (Jonathan) Edward’s *Dictum*, to wit, that vertical determination excludes horizontal causation.