

## EDITORIAL

Since the early 1950's philosophy as practiced in the English-speaking world has had as its ideal to investigate the truth of central philosophical claims with the aid of very clear and rigorous arguments sensitive to empirical data and the ambiguities of language, and sceptical of traditional philosophical positions. This movement subsequently called 'analytic philosophy' had its origins in Central and Eastern Europe in the work of Frege, Schlick, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Tarski, Lukasiewicz, and Popper. It went through a stage of 'logical positivism' and then a stage of 'ordinary language philosophy', in both of which metaphysical views were dismissed as 'meaningless'. But since the 1970's it has undergone a 'metaphysical turn' in which most philosophers have come to see it as their central task to construct (as before, by means of clear and rigorous arguments) a well justified metaphysics and epistemology, responsive to the latest discoveries of science. It was appropriate to describe this philosophical movement in its earlier stages as 'analytic philosophy' since it is concentrated on analysis of the constituents of the world or of the meaning of sentences. But that seems an inappropriate name these days for what is a basically metaphysical enterprise. Ignoring its origins, we could describe it simply as 'Anglo-American' philosophy. But this style of philosophy (though now written mostly in English) has spread far beyond the confines of the English-speaking world. So, for the present (despite the confusion) we may still have to call it 'analytic philosophy'.

When analytic philosophers first applied their techniques and results to the phenomenon of religion, most of them were totally dismissive of the worth of religious belief and practice – most religious claims, philosophers asserted, are either meaningless or obviously false; and philosophy of religion has no place in a philosophy syllabus. But with the 'metaphysical turn', all this has changed. There has been an enormous growth of careful rigorous argumentation applied to the phenomenon of religion which has led to a widespread recognition of philosophy of religion as a proper part of a philosophy syllabus, and to a great growth in the number of students studying it in English-speaking universities and more widely. From initial work on whether religious claims are meaningful, it proceeded to consider what the central claim of theistic religion – that there is a

God – means; whether there are good arguments which support or refute this claim, and whether it needs arguments in order for someone to be justified in believing it. This enterprise of investigating the meaning and justification of religious claims then extended more widely to considering the other claims of most theistic religions – that there are miracles, that God answers prayers, and that there is life after death; and now it is being applied to the particular claims of the Christian religion, and to a lesser extent to the claims of other theistic and non-theistic religions. This discipline relies to an enormous extent on theories about meaning, justification, probability, explanation, knowledge and ethics developed in other branches of philosophy.

In the last two decades there has been a growth of interest, not merely in analytic philosophy in general, but in particular in analytic philosophy of religion in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where it has begun to interact with the post-Kantian philosophy of Continental Europe. It is to meet this new interest in philosophy of religion, stimulated by analytic philosophy, that the *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* has been founded. We hope that the journal will be one useful means of encouraging the development of the philosophy of religion in Central and Eastern Europe, and that it will promote fruitful exchange between different traditions of philosophy of religion. Although the journal has this regional base, we intend it to be an international journal and welcome contributions from all parts of the world. The editor and members of the editorial board all come from Central and Eastern Europe; but the journal will be supervised by a large board of editorial advisors, most of the initial members of which come from the United States and Great Britain. We hope that it will make a small contribution to the philosophical enterprise of providing well-justified answers to some of the all-important questions which have engaged the attention of the greatest minds for the last 3000 years.

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