Statement of Policy

The Journal of Religion is one of the publications by which the Divinity School of The University of Chicago seeks to promote critical, hermeneutical, historical, and constructive inquiry into religion. While expecting articles to advance scholarship in their respective fields in a lucid, cogent, and fresh way, the *Journal* is especially interested in areas of research with a broad range of implications for scholars of religion, or cross-disciplinary relevance. The Editors welcome submissions in theology, religious ethics, and philosophy of religion, as well as articles that approach the role of religion in culture and society from a historical, sociological, psychological, linguistic, or artistic standpoint.

The Editors generally take the optimal length of an article to be 20–25 manuscript pages, not including notes, but lengthier submissions of exceptional quality will receive full consideration. Manuscripts should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (15th edition). Review articles should be 8–12 pages. Submissions may not be concurrently under consideration for publication elsewhere. Authors will receive fifty complimentary offprints of their articles. For additional instructions on submitting manuscripts, see inside cover.

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Nagel, a representative realist (chap. 3). I found Janz's treatment of Putnam and Nagel too brief and too general to be convincing. His treatment of antirationalists like Derrida and Rorty is more satisfying. He argues convincingly that, however tempting antirationalism might be in other fields of inquiry, theology demands a robust realism.

I wish that Janz had not bound himself with the straitjacket of this argumentative structure, however. Had he devoted less attention to what he calls (in the titles of chaps. 3–5) "philosophy's perpetual polarities"—realism and idealism, act and being, making and finding—Janz might have been able to devote more attention to elaborating his christological solution to the problem of referring to God. As it is, Janz does not weave together the disparate strands of his central argument until the last ten pages of the book. This solution comes too late in the book, and after too much ground has been covered. As a result, I am genuinely unsure whether Janz offers "a new, hitherto virtually unexplored way of understanding the convergence (or confrontation between) epistemology and Christology" (23). I am sure that *God, the Mind's Desire* is nevertheless a commendable achievement. It is a serious book that grapples with serious questions and refuses to settle for easy and fashionable answers.

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WALKER, THEODORE, JR. *Mothership Connections: A Black Atlantic Synthesis of Neoclassical Metaphysics and Black Theology.* SUNY Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought. Albany: State University of New York, 2004. xviii+146 pp. $35.00 (cloth).

What is postmodernism? And what are its characteristics? When was the postmodern turn? And from what is it turning away? In recent decades, philosophers, literary critics, and theologians have been doing postmodern critiques and constructions with common assumptions about the modern period and the need to move beyond it. Postmodernists agree that modernity is no longer the norm for human society but rather contains errors that have destructive effects. They also agree that the problems of a modern worldview are not found in returning to a premodern age. Whether deconstructionist, like Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault, or constructive, like pragmatists and process thinkers, all postmodernists are trying to find a way to move beyond modernity.

So what is modernity, and what indicated the need for revision? The majority of postmodern thinkers describe modernity as either an economic worldview (the shift from an agrarian society to the industrial age) or a scientific worldview (developing out of the mechanistic theories of Galileo, René Descartes, and Isaac Newton). In *Mothership Connections,* Theodore Walker Jr. makes the simple, yet profound, argument that there is a different account of modernity that will completely alter the constructive postmodern agenda. Walker takes a deeper look at the economic definition of modernity.

In part 1, Walker looks at the work of black Atlantic scholars W. E. B. DuBois, Charles Long, and Paul Gilroy and asserts that the transatlantic slave trade, with its commodification of human cargo and land, is the main event of modernity. He argues that modernity and its transcendence cannot be adequately articulated without drawing "mothership connections," that is, "outlining various connections . . . to the transatlantic shipments of commodified human

cargo" (25). When we make mothership connections, an adequate postmodern theology will (1) articulate a God who is the God of all creation, and the God of the oppressed, and (2) analyze and reconstruct the issues of struggle, power, and ethical deliberation.

In part 2, Walker identifies his conversation partners. He discusses neoclassical metaphysics in the tradition of Charles Hartshorne, drawing on early thinkers Alfred North Whitehead, Hartshorne, and Schubert Ogden and later interpreters including David Griffin and Franklin Gamwell. Walker emphasizes creative process, social relations, panexperientialism, panentheism, and divine relativity. He summarizes God as the God of all creation who is partly determinative of the world and partly determined by the world. Likewise, Walker describes black liberation theology through the work of James Cone, Gayraud Wilmore, Vincent Harding, and womanist religious scholars. From these sources, he concludes that God is the God of the oppressed.

In the last part, Walker describes a fully adequate postmodern theology as one that has a metaphysics of struggle, power, and ethics. He states that the struggle for freedom is a historical description and a general principle of human existence. Walker believes that oppression, as an extreme, is unnecessary and conditional, but its existence makes liberation struggle a conditional necessity. Thus God struggles against oppression and is the God of the oppressed. Walker identifies the theodical problem of black suffering in light of a classical conception of God's omnipotence. Walker's God is omnipotent when omnipotence is defined as universal and eternal creativity. When God's power is understood as relative, theodicy is no longer an issue. Finally, neoclassical metaphysics demands a social ethic because the entire process of becoming is relational. The ethic is also social in the sense of being sociohistorical. For Walker, God is required in this ethic because God functions as the ultimate reference for righteousness and love.

Walker gives succinct descriptions of black theology and Hartshornean metaphysics—no easy task. Walker's only shortcoming is his adherence to the traditional language of black theology. He insists that the God of all creation is also the God of the oppressed. Yet "God of the oppressed" suggests that God is one group's God and not another's. Walker's argument actually states that God struggles against oppression. In the end, I do not believe that this detracts from Walker's overall thesis, but it does cause him to overemphasize some of the correlations between neoclassical metaphysics and black liberation theology.

Walker takes the burden of discussing and analyzing effects of slavery out of the hands of black scholars exclusively. He asserts that anyone who considers him or herself "postmodern" must also wrestle with the legacy of slavery. He also argues for the necessity of a philosophical metaphysic in black theology and ethics. Anyone interested in philosophical theology, postmodernism, or black and womanist theologies will enjoy this book and be changed by it.

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TAYLOR, MARK LEWIS. *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001. xvi+208 pp. $16.00 (paper).

A good political street performer aims to provoke as much as enlighten, and, in *The Executed God,* so does Mark Lewis Taylor. Indeed, political street performers