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INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Big Question Short Essay Competition

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To mark the sixtieth anniversary of *Religious Studies*, we recently launched two new initiatives: a series of interviews with leading philosophers of religion and a set of panel discussions on emerging topics in the field. To initiate the first panel discussion, we organized the 'Big Question' Short Essay Competition, inviting 500–1000-word submissions in response to the following question:

In what ways can rapid advancements in artificial intelligence and/or the possibility of the technological singularity challenge or reshape traditional debates in the philosophy of religion?

We were delighted by the enthusiastic response and the high quality of submissions we received from around the globe. Following an anonymous review process, we selected Joshua Brecka's essay, 'Creatures and Creators: God, Humanity, and Artificial General Intelligence', as the winner.

The essays listed below were chosen as runners-up:

- Nesim Aslantatar, 'A New Problem of Evil?'
- Kimberly Madero, 'The Algorithm and the Almighty: Rethinking Omniscience, Suffering, and Salvation'
- Robert H. Wallace, 'Artificial Intelligence and the Alienness of God'
- Lawrence A. Whitney, 'How Much Like Us?'

We are deeply grateful to all contributors for their essays, and to the anonymous reviewers for their assessments.

The articles included in this collection represent the winning entry and the runners-up, with the exception of Whitney's piece, which is not yet ready for inclusion. We hope they encourage further reflection and dialogue on how emerging technologies intersect with perennial questions in the philosophy of religion.

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