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CJR is committed to promoting diversity (racial, sexual, ethnic, etc.) and fostering an environment of respect and compassion. We encourage submissions from minorities and marginalized groups.

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Editor's Introduction

Suddenly everyone becomes a philosopher when a controversial concern strikes a societal nerve; queer issues (those that deal with sexual orientation and gender identity, specifically centered around the LGBTQIAA community) are certainly no exception. Ancient texts and modern scientific studies get thrown around in attempts to present sound philosophical standpoints that sometimes are thoughtful and rational while other times are designed to justify uncomfortable gut-feelings and emotional reactions. All kinds of different people define and debate over what is biologically natural, what is moral, what is fair, and what is realistic. The result is refreshing since it means countless people join in on the philosopher's lifestyle, but it is also frightening because so few people do their homework before confidently launching their arguments into public conversations. Combine all of these challenging issues of morality, civil rights, and biology with political motivations and religious fervor and it is not hard to see why queer issues are erupting in every news outlet, every provocative television show, and every other Facebook status. Since much of the controversy regarding queer issues is explicitly grounded on religious beliefs, we at the Claremont Journal of Religion (CJR) want to engage with the topic. We do not endorse any particular viewpoint (as best we can) but rather encourage honest philosophical discussions of how religion and queer issues are related—whether in the past, present or future—and we hope that our readers, regardless of their viewpoints, will find this publication to be intriguing and thought-provoking.

To kick off this issue, entitled “Queer Studies and Religion,” is a highly relevant interview with David Hayward (aka the Naked Pastor), which focuses on issues of sexuality and modern Christianity. Following the interview are four articles and a book review that deal with a variety of topics including queer studies, gender issues, ascetic practices, homosexuality in Islam, connections between Christianity and Buddhism, and revolutions. To wrap up this issue is a recently published Huffington post article written by Claremont Graduate University (CGU) student and previous CJR contributor Matthew Zaro Fisher on queer issues and defining marriage in the United States, along with a compelling lecture given by CGU graduate John Dewis on Spinoza and same-sex love. We hope you enjoy these works as much as we do, and we hope they spark many new thoughts and conversations!

I would like to first thank Kile Jones for again guiding me through the editing process; he is a patient and wise man who is always seeking to produce the best content for this journal even when he is communicating with me from across the country. I would also like to thank Richard Hankins for his support in editing and his dedication to the work he takes on. I am also indebted to John Erickson, our guest editor, who edited excellently and also proved to be integral in spearheading this issue of the CJR. Next, I would like to thank our Editorial Advisory Board, as well as Richard Amesbury, Tia Carley, Brooke Nelson and all of the hard-working referees. Also, a special thanks goes to artist Kelsey Kimmel for her contribution to the cover art. And lastly, I thank my wife and CJR Media Coordinator, Jessie Lyn Thompson, for her unconditional love, patience, and support.

(Kyle Thompson, Editor, Claremont Journal of Religion)