

Call For Papers

Why Middle Sized Matters to Science & Religion

William Simpson & Christopher Oldfield

June 2024

Call for Papers

Submissions are invited for a special issue of the journal, *Scientia et Fides* (Q1 Scopus), entitled 'Why Middle-Sized Matters to Science and Religion'. This Special Issue is concerned with the nature, reality and significance of things in nature that exist between the microscopic and the cosmic scale: the 'Middle-Sized Things'. Why do they matter for science and religion? And what kind of philosophy (or theology) of nature best upholds their reality and significance?

In contemporary philosophy, there has been a tendency to look to the microscopic or the cosmic scale for the building blocks of reality and meaning, and to treat Middle-Sized Things as having secondary status. Marilynne Robinson once quipped that much popular and philosophical writing on science and religion seems to operate on the assumption that if something is very small or very large it must somehow have to do with the meaning of life. In his 2015 book, *After Physics*, David Albert imagines being afforded the opportunity of an audience with God and being invited to ask questions about reality, but then being subjected to a very long story about microphysics or cosmology.

The field of science and religion has also largely developed in consideration of scientific images of the world focused at the microscopic or the cosmic scale. Whilst this special issue is neither seeking to foster scepticism about the reality of the microscopic nor disregard for the significance of cosmic visions, it aims to broaden our focus by asking *why* Middle-Sized Things matter for *both* science *and* religion. After all, the majority of working scientists are not concerned with things at microscopic or the cosmic scale, but with probing the properties of middle-sized things using middle-sized scientific instruments. And the majority of religious practitioners are not concerned with cosmological narratives about how the world came into being, but with the transformation of their own lives within the middle-sized communities in which they participate. From the extreme perspective of Carl Sagan's "distant vantage point", however, the middle-sized matters of interest to the majority of working scientific and religious practitioners seem out of place, left out of the picture. So, how should we think about the nature, reality and significance of Middle-Sized Things?

Suggested Topics

- the possibility of integrating viewpoints on what is not fundamental or familiar - ways of thinking about the priority of middle sized matters in the natural order - the revival of hylomorphism in contemporary philosophy and its capacity to accommodate middle-sized things within a fundamental ontology of nature - the practical necessity of faith in middle-sized systems, scientists, instruments - the presence of the divine in the manifest image and/or the scientific image;
- the openness of systems, modes of engagement, participation, process, activity - ways of valuing middle sized subjects, objects, affordances, agencies, operations - the accommodation, appearance, hiddenness, and discernment of divine things;
- the history of inattention to middle sized matters in science and religion studies.

Suggested Reading

Ellis, George F. R. 2023. "Efficient, Formal, Material, and Final Causes in Biology and Technology." *Entropy* 25 (9): 1301. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/e25091301>

Koons, Robert C. 2022. *Is St. Thomas's Aristotelian Philosophy of Nature Obsolete?* St Augustine's Press.

Simpson, William M. R. 2023. *Hylomorphism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Submission

Papers of no more than 8,000 words (or 30 000 characters, spaces included), should be anonymised and prepared to be submitted for double-blind peer review by **30th December 2024**.

Papers should be submitted online:

<https://apcz.umk.pl/SetF/about/submissions#onlineSubmissions>.

The method of citing and writing a bibliography according to Chicago Style:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

Scientia et Fides is an open-access journal published twice a year, classified as Q1 in Philosophy and Q1 in Religious Studies journal rankings according to Scimago. (For more details, see the website: <https://apcz.umk.pl/SetF/index>)

Guest-Editors

1. William M. R. Simpson, Research Assistant Professor in Philosophy at the University of Durham
2. Christopher Oldfield, Research Associate, University of Cambridge, Faraday Institute

Invited Contributors

1. William Simpson (editorial), Durham
2. Chris Oldfield, Cambridge
3. Hans Halvorson, Princeton
4. George Ellis, Cape Town
5. Robert Koons, UT Austin
6. Howard Robinson, CEU
7. Marta Bielinska, Oxford
8. Robert Verrill, Oxford
9. Emily Qureshi-Hurst, Oxford

Important Dates

Deadline for submissions: 30th December 2024