

Science, Religion and Culture: New Beginnings

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Abstract | The relationship between science, religion, and culture has been a subject of profound interest for philosophers, scientists, theologians, and cultural historians for centuries. In fact, as far back as the ancient Greeks, when Thales of Miletus and other pre-Socratic philosophers began to offer scientific explanations of the natural world, questions about the relationship between science and religion began to emerge. Given that science and religion are two great manifestations of human culture, and that the scientific and religious worldviews dominate our understanding of the cosmos and our place in it, it is no surprise that these issues are of profound importance to many of us. It is vital, therefore, that we ask ourselves: Are science and religion compatible when it comes to understanding *cosmology* (the nature and origin of the universe), *biology* (the origin of life and of the human species), *ethics*, and the *human mind* (minds, brains, souls, and free will)? Do science and religion occupy non-overlapping magisteria? How do science and religion support, oppose, and/or inform each other? What is the relationship between religion and modern culture? What is the relationship between science and modern culture? How do the various faith traditions view the relationship between science and religion? What, if any, are the limits of scientific explanation? And what are the most important open questions, problems, or challenges confronting the relationship between science, religion, and culture, and what are the prospects for progress?

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The relationship between science, religion, and culture has been a subject of profound interest for philosophers, scientists, theologians, and cultural historians for centuries. In fact, as far back as the ancient Greeks, when Thales of Miletus and other pre-Socratic philosophers began to offer scientific explanations of the natural world, questions about the relationship between science and religion began to emerge. Given that science and religion are two great manifestations of human culture, and that the scientific and religious worldviews dominate our understanding of the cosmos and our place in it, it is no surprise that these issues are of profound importance to many of us. It is vital, therefore, that we ask

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Science, Religion & Culture (SRC) aims to explore these and related questions in an interdisciplinary, inclusive, and fruitful manner. As founder and inaugural Editor-in-Chief of SRC, I am honored and humbled to be at the helm of this new venture, and I will work hard to see that SRC becomes one of the premier peer-reviewed journals in the field. My hope is that SRC will usher in a new beginning, fostering constructive dialogue between philosophers, scientists, theologians, religious studies scholars, cultural historians, and all others interested in the mutual interaction between science, religion, and culture. And while there are other journals that concern themselves with science and religion, few give equal weight to considering the complex ways these issues are shaped by and give shape to cultural factors as will *Science, Religion & Culture*. Furthermore, most limit access to their articles behind paywalls and subscription fees—which has the result of limiting the very interaction and dialogue they seek to prompt. SRC, on the other hand, is an open access journal committed to making all its content available to readers free of charge. Seeing as this is the first issue of *Science, Religion & Culture*, I would like to briefly lay out the aims and scope of the journal, explain SRC's commitment to open access, and acknowledge my team of Associate Editors and Editorial Board Members.

Aims and Scope

Science, Religion & Culture is a peer-reviewed, open access, interdisciplinary journal focused on bringing together research and theoretical analysis from the physical, biological, and social sciences with ideas from philosophy, theology, and religious studies. It aims at exploring the unique relationship between science, religion, and culture, and it welcomes submissions from all perspectives and religious traditions—including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, secularism, humanism, and naturalism. Special focus is given to the various ways modern science—including the disciplines of physics, cosmology, biology, psychology, neuroscience, mathematics, sociology, and anthropology—support, oppose, inform, or are informed by religious, theological, and cultural perspectives. Additional focus is given to perspectives on science, religion, and culture from different geograph-

ical regions, cultures, religions, and historical epochs. *Science, Religion & Culture* is dedicated to: publishing the highest-quality, peer-reviewed work on the relationship between science, religion, and culture; driving and shaping the conversation by ensuring high standards and by encouraging attention to the entire range of scientific, religious, cultural, and philosophical issues; raising the standards of discussion by promoting interdisciplinary research, which is empirically well-informed and philosophically sophisticated; keeping readers up-to-date on relevant developments in the sciences—including, but not limited to, physics, cosmology, biology, psychology, neuroscience, mathematics, sociology, and anthropology—and exploring how these developments support, oppose, inform, or are informed by religion and theology; providing useful and informative reviews, including extended critical reviews and short summaries; and publishing papers from workshops, symposia, and conferences that SRC will collectively encourage and/or organize. The journal will be highly inclusive in its scope: it will seek contributions from a range of different perspectives, traditions, and academic disciplines. As such, it will seek to promote fruitful dialogue between all communities interested in the intersection of science, religion, and culture.

Commitment to Open Access

The traditional model of academic publishing, especially with regard to journals, has had the unintended consequence of creating gatekeepers to the great storehouse of knowledge contained within the peer-reviewed writings of scientists, academics, and scholars. While these gatekeepers—for example, JSTOR, Elsevier, and Project Muse—provide important services to the academic community, they have also had the negative effect of limiting access to those that can afford to pay article or subscription fees, preventing scholars from disseminating their work as widely as possible. In an attempt to protect their product—which is understandable given the current model of academic publishing—some content providers have even been known to remove articles from websites like academia.edu and request authors to remove PDFs of their own work from their personal websites. This is unfortunate given that most academics want to share their work with as many people as possible.

Smith and Franklin Academic Publishing Corpora-

tion, the publisher of *Science, Religion & Culture*, offers a different publishing model. Smith and Franklin Academic Publishing Corporation is committed to the open access movement. With open access publishing, authors retain the copyrights of their papers and all open access articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided that the original work is properly cited. All content is made available to readers free of charge. To help keep its costs down, *Science, Religion & Culture* will publish its articles in electronic form—including PDF, HTML, ePUB, and eDIGITAL. If, however, one wants a print copy of SRC, or if a library wishes to subscribe to the journal and receive hardcopies, Smith and Franklin will make that option available.

This commitment to open access was one of the main reasons, perhaps the main reason, I agreed to partner with Smith and Franklin Academic Publishing Corporation and become Editor-in-Chief of *Science, Religion & Culture*.

The Team: Associate Editors and Editorial Board Members

What Hilary Clinton (1996) said about raising children also holds true of running a journal: *It takes a village*. This first issue of *Science, Religion & Culture* would not have been possible if it were not for the assistance of my Associate Editors: Andrei Buckar-

eff, Robin Collins, Owen Flanagan, John Symons, and John Teehan. While I had hopes of surrounding myself with the smartest and most capable team possible, I could never have wished for a more impressive and diverse group of Associate Editors than the one assembled here. As we begin this new adventure together, I look forward to working with my Associate Editors closely to make SRC a success.

I would also like to thank all the Editorial Board Members who have supported SRC from its inception: Francisco J. Ayala, Randall Auxier, Justin L. Barrett, Rev. Joseph Bracken, S.J., Warren S. Brown, Steven Cahn, J. Caleb Clanton, Thomas W. Clark, Celia Deane-Drummond, Paul R. Draper, John M. Fischer, Carl Gillett, Ursula Goodenough, Hans Halvorson, Mark Harris, Michael Hogue, Nancy R. Howell, Nicholas Humphrey, Muzaffar Iqbal, Brian Leiter, George L. Murphy, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Mike Parsons, Ann Milliken Pederson, Derk Pereboom, Robert Pollack, Varadaraja V. Raman, Bruce R. Reichenbach, Alex Rosenberg, Michael Ruse, Tamler Sommers, Victor Stenger, Robert B. Talisse, Roger Trigg, Robert L. Trivers, Jennifer J. Wiseman, and Rabbi David Wolpe.

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