

Newton's scientific work can we see the same degree of combined textual scholarship and experiment that we encounter in his alchemy" (p. 498).

What may we learn from reading *Newton the Alchemist*? One thing for sure: that our contemporary scientific textbooks and enlightened culture celebrating Newton's "positive" results—the astronomical "System of the World" and his three laws of motion in mechanics—are a one-sided picture of Newton's work and life. By blithely neglecting his interests in alchemy, cabbalism (number mysticism), theology, chronology, and biblical prophecy, as well as Newton's deep sense of vocation (calling), they all too frequently divide his work into two predetermined categories: science and pseudo-science. It is certain that Newton's alchemy is not pseudo-science. History, and scientific practice as well, are never, if ever, so tidy. Newton's passionate pursuit of a coherent worldview is a reminder to us of the rich context in which science is embedded. Newman's book underscores the fact that science, our science too, is impelled by deep commitments, social and political factors, and personal ambition and motives.

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NEGOTIATING SCIENCE AND RELIGION IN AMERICA: Past, Present, and Future by Greg Cootsona. New York: Routledge, 2020. 206 pages + index. Paperback; \$44.95. ISBN: 9781338068537.

In *Negotiating Science and Religion in America: Past, Present, and Future*, Greg Cootsona examines the history of religion and science in America in the context of emergent adulthood. He begins with Alfred Whitehead's claim that religion and science are the two strongest cultural forces within American culture, with the future of America being dependent upon the cultivation of a positive relationship between them. Much of the book is a historical exploration of the relationship between religion and science in American culture framed by the categories put forth in Ian Barbour's *Issues in Science and Religion*: conflict, co-existence, dialogue, and integration—although Cootsona chooses to collapse dialogue into integration. While he finds Barbour's typology helpful, Cootsona sees the need for new categories to better reflect the experience of millennials living within the pluralism of the twenty-first century.

Cootsona argues that Protestantism, as the dominant religious force within American culture, contributed to the conflict/co-existence approaches to science and faith throughout much of American history. This situation has now given way to a religious pluralism that makes new forms of integration possible. However, given the increased secularity of millennials and emergent adults, which Cootsona supports with Pew research, the National Study of Youth and Religion, as well with his own qualitative research, this new form of integration is less about a robust dialogue between science and

religion, and more about the manifestation of a tolerant individualism seeking to avoid conflict. According to Cootsona, "As Americans become less conventionally religious, they also become less personally conflicted with science" (p. 163). This explains why Barbour's typology needs to be reworked—as emergent adults disassociate from organized religion, the categories that frame the relationship between science and religion must change. For Cootsona, emergent adults are "religious bricoleurs" who need better maps to frame the conversation in order to discover new trajectories.

The first two-thirds of the book represent the author's version of the map. He divides American history into sections, tracing the relationship between religion and science from Newton to Barbour, with a final chapter focusing on future possibilities. In this way, he models the mapping needed for the future of the religion/science discussion. He provides an insightful historical narrative that describes developments within the religion/science relationship, ending with contemporary models of Barbour's typology—Stephen Jay Gould (co-existence), Richard Dawkins (conflict), and Francis Collins (integration). The final chapters explore the shifting religious experience of contemporary American culture that has seen a decline in religious affiliation, the rise of spirituality, and a new cultural and religious pluralization. Cootsona's historical narrative provides a helpful snapshot of the complicated relationship between religion and science in America. His interdisciplinary focus offers an important lens for interpreting the historical events and movements, providing a helpful model of the mapping that he believes is necessary for emergent adults living in a pluralistic culture, to better engage the conversation. There are, however, a few critiques to consider.

Cootsona's portrayal of Barth's theology follows a predictable, but unfortunate, trajectory. He refers to Barth's opposition to "natural theology" in a way that suggests a lack of concern for science. A close reading of *Church Dogmatics* Book III, however, shows how Barth views the incarnation as the basis for affirming and encouraging scientific exploration. For Barth, this is not merely co-existence, as Cootsona seems to suggest; instead, it is the instance that the revelation of God's love for the world in Jesus Christ affirms every opportunity to learn more about God's good creation through scientific inquiry. Barth writes to his niece,

Thus one's attitude to the creation story and the theory of evolution can take the form of an either/or only if one shuts oneself off completely either from faith in God's revelation or from the mind (or opportunity) for scientific understanding. (*Karl Barth Letters: 1961–1968*)

Barth embraces evolutionary theory, but he strongly opposes any form of human knowledge morphing into a dominant ideology. Cootsona's dismissal of Barth misses an opportunity for a much more robust theological engagement of science that moves beyond

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a “two books” paradigm, to an integrative approach. Barth’s concern with natural theology is in opposition to ideology wherever it is found—be it religion or science. Both liberal theology and fundamentalism are guilty of fostering unhealthy ideological paradigms that short-circuit dialogue. This is central to the conflict with science within contemporary white evangelicalism as they are much more concerned with maintaining political power and social status than having honest discussion about faith and science. The evangelical opposition to science—including issues related to the current pandemic—has less to do with theology or science, and more to do with ideological forces that maintain the cultural status quo. The politics of science and religion, which Cootsona alludes to in his account of the Scopes trial, deserves much more attention.

Finally, there is the absence of contemporary scholarship that might support his project. While Charles Taylor is Canadian, his monumental work *A Secular Age* provides important insight into the rise of secularity in the West, including American culture. Taylor demonstrates how the shift in social imaginary that results from the Reformation creates the cultural conditions in which the scientific revolution and the rise of fundamentalism are possible. A primary focus of his work is to explore the conditions that lead to the current emphasis of spirituality over traditional forms of religion, which is the experience of emergent adulthood. Similarly, both J. Wentzel van Huyssteen (*Alone in the World? Human Uniqueness in Science and Theology*) and Ilia Delio (*The Unbearable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution, and the Power of Love*) offer important insights for the faith and science conversation that address the contemporary experience of emergent adults in America.

Overall, Cootsona’s book is an important contribution to the conversation about science and religion. He provides a creative interdisciplinary approach that helps religious communities as they engage scientific questions. As a practical theologian, this interdisciplinary approach, along with his desire to articulate new models for an increasingly pluralistic and secular American culture, provides important steps toward the cultivation of meaningful conversations between religion and science.

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SCIENTISM AND SECULARISM: Learning to Respond to a Dangerous Ideology by J. P. Moreland. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018. 224 pages. Paperback; \$16.99. ISBN: 9781433556906.

Early in his new book, *Scientism and Secularism: Learning to Respond to a Dangerous Ideology*, J. P. Moreland relates a story of a hospital stay. After telling his nurse that he earned his BS in physical chemistry, his ThM in theology, his MS in philosophy, and his PhD in philosophy,

she observes that he “had taken two very unrelated, divergent paths” (p. 23).

Before she could explain further, I asked if this was what she meant: I started off in science, which deals with reality—hard facts—and conclusions that could be proved to be true. But theology and philosophy were, well, fields in which there were only private opinions and personal feelings ... (p. 23)

In response, Moreland’s nurse looks surprised and acknowledges this “was exactly what she had in mind” (p. 24). Rather than supposing his interlocutor is simply a kind nurse hoping to move on to her next patient, Moreland instead interprets the position he articulates for her as illustrating that “scientism” is “the intellectual and cultural air that we breathe” (p. 24).

Scientism is the nemesis in Moreland’s book. He loathes it. But the precise definitional target of his loathing is not always clear. Early in the book, Moreland distinguishes “strong scientism” and “weak scientism.” Strong scientism claims “something is true, rationally justified, or known if and only if it is a scientific claim that has been successfully tested and that is being used according to appropriate scientific methodology” (p. 27). Weak scientism, by contrast, “acknowledges truth apart from science,” but “still implies that science is by far the most authoritative sector of human knowing” (p. 28). That’s a helpful distinction, even if it is doubtful whether many accept strong scientism (Moreland provides no examples), and depending on how one defines “authoritative,” it is also doubtful whether many people *reject* weak scientism. Having thus introduced the distinction, however, this nuance is often lost in the pages that follow, even in places where the clarity could have proved useful. More problematically, we never get a definition of what Moreland means by “science.” To his credit, Moreland defends the omission, claiming that science cannot, in principle, be demarcated from nonscience (pp. 160–63). Still, it is difficult to follow the implications of Moreland’s argument—effectively, an extended argument against scientism—without a working definition of what science is. Do only the hard sciences count? Or do the so-called soft sciences count as well? Or might empirical-leaning philosophy and theology and history count too? These distinctions are not readily available, and so it isn’t clear precisely what position Moreland is arguing against. It is clear only that Moreland really dislikes it.

When Moreland offers data to support his argument, the results are also disappointing. For example, while reflecting on the supposed conflict between science and religion, Moreland estimates

that 95% of science and theology are cognitively irrelevant to each other ... in that other 5% or so of science, there is direct interaction with Christian doctrine. Within this category, I would say that 3% of science provides further evidential support for Christian teaching ... that leaves 2% of current scientific claims that may seem to undermine Christian theology. (pp. 173–74, emphasis Moreland’s)