Chapter 9, "Skeptics in the Age of Aquarius," is one chapter where I found myself, as a traditional evangelical, to be in nearly complete agreement. This chapter describes how New Age beliefs, along with an ascending occultism, came under fire from the scientific humanists under the leadership of Paul Kurtz. Weldon even cites a *Christianity Today* article that makes common cause with the secular humanists in their resistance to the growing occultism of western culture. I found this chapter to be a useful critique of New Age thinking.

"The Fundamentalist Challenge" (chap. 10) and "Battling Creationism and Christian Pseudoscience" (chap. 11) recount the clash between secular evolutionists and fundamentalist creationists, especially regarding the public-school science curriculum and the teaching of evolution. Here the author clearly demonstrates his prosecularist/anti-fundamentalist inclinations. On a more personal note, the mention of Francis Schaeffer, R. J. Rushdoony, and Cornelius Van Til, strikes at my own history. While some elements of this conservative Presbyterianism were clearly anti-evolutionist, others in the conservative Reformed camp were open to the proscience (including evolutionary biology) views of Warfield and Hodge, even in the early days of anti-evolutionism among fundamentalists. While some in the ASA would count themselves among young-earth creationists or flood geologists, the majority are open to old-earth geology and even to evolutionary biology. The reaction of Weldon himself, and other critics of this era, seems more akin to a religious fundamentalism of its own—albeit a fundamentalism of naturalism. Fundamentalists are not the only ones engaging in a culture war. My own view is that old-earth geology, old universe (big bang) cosmology, and evolutionary biology should be taught as the mainstream scientific consensus even in private religious schools. But dissent and disagreement should be allowed among teachers and students alike. Sometimes it seems to me that these fundamentalist creationists and atheistic evolutionists are all more interested in indoctrination than education.

Embedded in chapter 10 is the history of the Humanist Manifesto II (coauthored by Paul Kurtz). It clearly espouses positions antithetical to traditional Christian orthodoxy, especially in the explicit anti-theistic and prosexual revolution statements. But it is striking to me how much agreement I can find with people who so strongly disagree with traditional Christian faith. This tells me two things: while fundamental religious differences may exist between people, there is something about being human in this world that brings Christians and non-Christians together on many very fundamental questions such as liberty, human dignity, friendship, and peaceful co-existence. Such values are not the unique provenance of humanists or Christians or other religious groups. The second thing is that we are much better at emphasizing differences and seeking to force others to conform to our way than we are at tolerating differences and persuading those who disagree.

The opening of chapter 12, "The Humanist Ethos of Science and Modern America," brought me once again to a personal reflection that is relevant in reviewing this book. My own love of the natural sciences can be traced to Sagan, Asimov, Clarke, Gould, Dawkins, and others who brought the wonder of science to the broader public. Without denying their a-religious, and even antireligious posture, it is noteworthy that the truths about the natural world are independent of who discovered them or communicates them. And they are wondrous whether or not you acknowledge the hand of God in creating them. The process of science works whether the world was created by God or is the result of properties of the universe that just are. It is interesting to me that a brief discussion of post-modernism appears in this chapter. Postmodernism's undermining of the objectivity of natural science leads one to wonder whether this undermines the whole book by hinting that a postmodernist perspective is the consistent nonreligious/atheist view. In contrast, the ASA's faith statement states: "We believe that in creating and preserving the universe God has endowed it with contingent order and intelligibility, the basis of scientific investigation." According to Christians, natural science is possible because creation is orderly and intelligible. Atheists and skeptics simply assert the world's orderliness and intelligibility.

Like myself, readers of this journal are likely to have a different perspective on the events traced in Weldon's book. Nevertheless, the history recounted here helps us to see why there is such a divide between science and those who continue to be influenced by more conservative religious views. As such, it is a worthwhile read and of interest to those who follow the science-faith literature.

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SCIENCE UNDER FIRE: Challenges to Scientific Authority in Modern America by Andrew Jewett. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020. 356 pages. Hardcover; $41.00. ISBN: 9780674987913.

John William Draper and Andrew Dickson White's role in fueling popular ideas about conflict between the primarily natural sciences and religion has been often studied. It is now well known that their claims were erroneous, prejudice laden (in Draper's case against Roman Catholicism), and part of broader efforts to align science with a liberal and rationalized Christianity. In *Science under Fire*, Boston College historian Andrew

Jewett recounts a similarly important but lesser-known tale: twentieth-century criticism of the primarily human sciences as promoting politically charged, prejudice laden, and secular accounts of human nature.

Jewett is an intellectual historian who focuses on the interplay between the sciences and public life in the United States. *Science under Fire* follows up on his 2012 *Science, Democracy, and the American University*, which explored the role of science (or, more precisely, science-inspired thinking associated with the human sciences) as a shaper of American culture from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. As with that previous work, *Science under Fire* illustrates how science can be practiced as a form of culture building and leveraged for sociopolitical ends. While *Science, Democracy, and the American University* explored how various ideas about science came to displace the then-dominant Protestant understandings of morality in the late nineteenth century, *Science under Fire* considers how a variety of critics reacted to the growing influence of those sciences.

Throughout both historical periods, members of the public, politicians, and many social scientists did not view science as offering a neutral or unbiased account of the nature of humans and their behavior. Rather, they practiced, appropriated, and criticized various accounts in order to advance particular visions about how society should be organized. These visions were not primarily driven by scientific data but by philosophical precommitments, including some which led their proponents to deny the validity of the Protestant and humanist values which previously anchored American public life. So, *Science under Fire* addresses religious and politically conservative apprehension over "amoral" psychology and the teaching of evolution in schools. However, its story is much broader. The secular and religious liberals and conservatives, libertarians and socialists, humanities scholars and social scientists all at times lamented the dehumanizing effects of technology or worried that scientists were unduly influenced by selfish motives.

Science under Fire begins with a twenty-three-page summary of the book's main themes. This is followed by two chapters that explain the cultural developments which fostered apprehension about science's role in society. By the 1920s, some thinkers were calling on Americans to adopt "modern" scientific modes of thought, in part by dismissing religion as a source of objective values (chap. 1). Their efforts were resisted by humanities scholars, Catholics, and liberal Protestants, who focused on lambasting naturalist approaches in psychology (e.g., by Freud and John Watson) as pseudoscientific and offering classical or religious values as a bulwark against the excesses of capitalism and consumerism (chap. 2).

In the 1930s and 40s, these critiques were given new impetus as worries arose over social scientists' role in shaping Roosevelt's New Deal as well as mental associations between amoral science and Japanese and German totalitarianism (chap. 3). Post-World War II fears over science grew to encompass concerns about "amoral" scientists such as B.F. Skinner, Benjamin Spock, and others engaging in "social engineering" by training children to value social conformity at the expense of traditional religious or humanist moral guidance (chap. 4). The increasingly vehement religious opposition to scientists' attempts to address questions of morality was partly driven by opposition to "atheist" communism and featured a broad coalition of Protestant and Catholic critics decrying the effects of "scientism" (chap. 5).

There was also a postwar resurgence in interest in the humanities, as well as efforts by thinkers such as C.P. Snow, to position the social sciences as a humanist bridge between "literary" and "scientific" cultures (chap. 6). In the United States, Snow's call for greater prominence for the sciences was challenged by New Right conservatives, who regarded it as dangerously opening the door for liberal academic social scientists to portray their ideologically charged views as objectively scientific. Their efforts included supporting conservative social scientists' research, intervening in academic politics and research funding, and, somewhat justifiably, complaining about the persecution of conservative scholars (chap. 7).

Nevertheless, postwar criticism of scientism was couched in flexible enough terms to appeal to politically and theologically diverse thinkers associated with various institutes and literary endeavors (chap. 8), ultimately including many in the iconoclastic New Left counterculture of the 1960s and 70s (chap. 9). By that time, movements critical of science included religious opposition to evolution and psychology; neoconservative criticism of the "welfare state"; and feminist, Black, and indigenous critiques of science as a tool for justifying an oppressive status quo (chap. 10).

In the Reaganite era, science was targeted by pluralist, postfoundationalist, poststructuralist, and postmodern thinkers; religious conservative challenges to evolution and "secularism" in science; tighter budgets and a downgrading of blue-sky research; and worries over the implications of artificial intelligence and genetic engineering (chap. 11). After a short evaluative conclusion, sixty-two pages of endnotes help flesh out Jewett's argument.

Science under Fire helps illuminate how science and religion have interacted as culture-shaping forces in American public life. Readers will learn how debates

that are *prima facie* about science and religion are really about values and cultural authority, and will discover the origins of some of the assumptions and strategic moves that shape popular science-faith discourse. They will also be invited to enlarge their repertoire of science-faith thinkers (e.g., John Dewey, Reinhold Niebuhr, B.F. Skinner) and topics (behaviorism, debates over Keynesian economics as a backdrop, and how science's value-free ideal was invented and leveraged).

Nevertheless, readers should be aware that Jewett's near-exclusive focus on sweeping intellectual tendencies and the social sciences (with occasional forays to reflect on genetic technology and the atomic bomb) means that *Science under Fire* is not an entirely balanced account of science, politics, and religion in America. Some chapters focus on major streams of thought to the point that the story of individual movements, thinkers, and their interactions with one another is lost. Fundamentalist and conservative evangelical reactions to scientism are treated relatively perfunctorily compared to liberal Christian responses (e.g., the Institute for Religion in an Age of Science is mentioned while the American Scientific Affiliation is not). A bias toward sociological explanations occasionally leads to a degree of mischaracterization. For example, Thomas Kuhn is mentioned only in connection with the 1960s counterculture, and the Vietnam-era Strategic Hamlet Program is characterized as an attempt to "make proper citizens out of Vietnamese peasants" rooted in modernization theory (p. 181), without mentioning it as a counterinsurgency strategy inspired by Britain's successful use of "New Villages" in the Malayan emergency. Finally, although most of the book is lucid, it is occasionally meandering, repetitive, and convoluted. This is particularly true for the introduction, which readers might consider skipping on the first read.

These criticisms are not meant to be dismissive. *Science under Fire* is a unique and uniquely important book. Those who are willing to mine its depths will be rewarded with a treasure trove of insight into the social and political factors that continue to shape conversations about science, technology, and faith in the United States today.

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CREATING CONSPIRACY BELIEFS: How Our Thoughts Are Shaped by Dolores Albarracín et al. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 308 pages. Paperback; $39.99. ISBN: 9781108965026.

Conspiracy thinking is a prominent topic of discussion in American life today—and Christians, with their concern for truth, should not only be informed about, but contributing to, this discussion. This includes awareness of how scholars in the neuro-psychological and social sciences are contributing to our understanding of the nature of conspiracy thinking.

This book investigates the causes of conspiracy thinking in the United States. Its authors draw their findings from existing social scientific literature on conspiracism, general social psychology research, and six empirical statistical studies conducted during the last two years of the Trump presidency (2019–2021): three cross-sectional online surveys, a longitudinal phone panel survey on "deep state" conspiracy claims, a "manipulation" of fear experiment on the alleged relationship between the COVID-19 virus and 5G technology, and a social media study of Twitter hashtags and "fear words."

This book shares many similarities with previous academic works on conspiracy thinking—for example, Hofstadter (1965), Pipes (1997), Robins and Post (1997), Sunstein and Vermeule (2008), Barkun (2013), and Uscinski and Parent (2014)—but distinguishes itself by relying extensively on recent polling data and statistics instead of interviews, case studies, newspaper op-eds, or conspiracist media. Indeed, the authors consciously dispute psychological works that scrutinize the personality traits and life experiences of conspiracy believers, and political science works that link conspiracy fears to power asymmetries. Such approaches, they contend, insufficiently explain the process through which conspiracy beliefs are spread. They argue, instead, that psychological and political factors are themselves shaped by a mixture of personal, media, and social media contacts.

Their central aim is thus to examine how patterns of media consumption shape conspiracy beliefs, habits that are themselves affected by one's pre-existing feelings of anxiety, which is herein defined as a nonspecific

> perception of threat [that] depends on relatively stable psychological motivations of *belief defense* [the desire to maintain a coherent set of beliefs], *belief accuracy* [the desire to maintain a realistic view of the world], and *social integration* [the desire for trust, status, and acceptance within a group], as well as sociopolitical factors and situational factors like communications and media exposure. (p. 163)

When these needs are not met, anxiety rises. But whereas desire for belief accuracy produces, on its own, an increase in critical discernment—and hence a decrease in false conspiracy beliefs—the combination of pre-existing anxiety (e.g., feelings of ostracism) with shared conspiracy narratives increases one's predisposition to believe conspiracy claims. When one's need for closure and community trumps their need for belief accuracy, new information will be interpreted in ways