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# Book Reviews

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*Interpreting the Universe as Creation: A Dialogue of Science and Religion*. Ed. Vincent Brümmer. Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos Press, 1991. ISBN 90-242-3207-4. Pp. vi+148.

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Science and religion impinge upon each other, and the former sometimes forces the latter to rethink its categories and perhaps even revolutionize them. If there is no other reasonable alternative, theological categories may need to be discarded. The contributors to this volume hope to avoid this last option by cajoling theology into a position that is more amenable to the finds of the prevailing science.

Vincent Brümmer (editor), in his introduction to this topic, begins by asking whether scientific explanations of the universe are rival ones (1). He also poses the question as to whether pictures and descriptions of the cosmos generated by these two areas conflict or are complementary (2). His response, borrowed from Gilbert Ryle, is that there are important differences in the perspectives employed by each discipline and that these differences would be "smothered" if one field were to absorb the other (2). Each area goes about its own business and to encroach upon either is to disrupt its fruitfulness (2). Brümmer also holds in tension the terms *description* and *explanation* and suspects that they are not being used in the same sense in religion as they are in science (2).

Brümmer notes that pronouncements of science and religion can conflict with, as well as complement, each other, but judges both fields to be "ways of dealing with very different sorts of issues" (2). The questions may differ, but he stresses that it is the "*same world*" which is under investigation (2). Brümmer then draws on Wittgenstein's language-games to affirm that "[b]ecause of changes of the demands of life, our forms of thought can never remain adequate for all time" (8). It thus becomes the task of theology to "keep the language-game adequate for coping with the changing demands of life" (10). Having submitted all this, however, Brümmer decides that "[t]he businesses of science and religion are...[in fact]...complementary, and both are equally necessary in order to cope with these demands" (12). Religion must depend on science for information on the "factual environment," and science must rely on religion to provide the meaning of this information (12).

The essays which follow, initially presented at the Second Consultation on Science and Religion held at the University of Utrecht in Holland, cover a wide range of topics. In the order of what is traditionally known as the *hard* and *soft* sciences, but not that in which they appear in the text, they include the following.

Chris J. Isham writes a semi-technical piece on physics called "Quantum Theories of the Creation of the Universe." He discusses models which do not assume or propose a singularity as the beginning of this universe, and interacts with the work of Stephen Hawking among others. Next, a jump to a softer science is taken in Christof K. Biebricher's offering on the current shape of "Evolutionary Research." He deals with the history of Darwin's theory as well as views of the origin of life together with how they affect our understanding of creation. However, little is said here that could not already have been obtained elsewhere.

Softer still is Malcolm A. Jeeves' paper on "The Status of Humanity in Relation to the Animal Kingdom." He is a psychologist who elaborates on the "changing views of the similarities and differences between animals and humans" (114). Martin Palmer then closes out the portion of this work which deals with science proper with a piece on "The Ecological Crisis and Creation Theology." He warns of the disasters to befall humans if we do not reverse the trend of our mismanagement of creation. He often expounds on biblical texts and in so doing forms a bridge to that portion of the book devoted to concerns in the fields of the humanities. His contribution is the least scholarly in the collection and the only one to lack footnotes.

In the area of theology, Lucio J. van den Brom submits a paper on "Interpreting the Doctrine of Creation." He discusses concepts of doctrine, interacts with George Lindbeck, and treats pantheism and deism as polar opposites. There are two offerings on theology and science. The first is from Willem B. Drees on "Potential Tensions Between Cosmology and Theology." His topics include "time and matter" (66), "scientific and religious explanations of the universe" (75, 77), the nature of the divine and "Platonistic tendencies in cosmology" (86). The second piece comes from Arthur R. Peacocke, who delivers a capsule summary of his work *Theology for a Scientific Age* (1990), and calls it "God as the Creator of the World of Science." Lastly, we come to Cas J. Labuschagne's treatise on "Creation and the Status of Humanity in the Bible." He provides a commentary on the first two chapters of Genesis and focuses his attention on the relation of humanity to the creation in general and to the animal world in particular.

Unfortunately, this slender volume is also thin when it comes to breaking new ground. It provides good summaries of what has gone on before, but offers little that is genuinely new. One positive intent of the work, though perhaps not sufficiently accomplished in the final product, is its stress on the two-way shaping influence between religion and science as opposed to past tendencies which stressed the informing role of science (alone).

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***The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories.* Ed. William J. Bennett. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. ISBN 0-671-68306-3. Pp. iv+818.**

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*The Book of Virtues* is a rich compendium of some of the world's great stories, myths, poems and historical documents, designed to teach and inculcate virtues