

<sup>1</sup>Walter Gulick's (as usual) insightful piece in TAD 46.1 recommends focusing on "more precise terminology" (58) rather than quibbling over the "ambiguous ontology-epistemology distinction" (59). But lurking in the background of Gulick's "more robust" (59) recommendation is a metaphysical presumption lying at the heart of the "quibble" (55), which is revealed when he claims that there "are degrees of significance but not of reality" (59). This brings us full circle to issues raised in PN: what is experience and what are its bounds? For Gulick's focus on "significance" (59) and "intellectual traction" (58) are as much intertwined with the "metaphysics" of the ontology-epistemology distinction as this metaphysics is with conceptions of pragmatism, conceptions of naturalism, and their intimate relations to experience and its bounds. In brief, it isn't clear that Polanyi "confused matters by saying that significant things like persons and problems are more real than cobblestones" (59)—they may in fact be key quibbles worth harnessing.

**Rolnick, Philip A. *Origins: God, Evolution, and the Question of the Cosmos*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015. Pp. 264. ISBN: 978-1-60258-369-6. \$29.95.**

This work is a clearly developed exposition of the view that science and Christian faith are compatible and need not be at odds as they are sometimes presented in the media. Rolnick begins by explaining how a Christian should respond to grace by accepting the reasonable search for truth through scientific inquiry.

Next, he analyzes four issues sustaining evolutionary theory that are sometimes taken to challenge faith. Random mutations and natural selection are often

presented as sufficient in themselves to account for evolutionary development and thus eliminate the need for a divine creator. The struggle for survival over eons with many more losers than winners might challenge a view of creation as the effect of a loving God. And the acknowledgement that human and animal life are on a biological continuum might lead one to doubt whether humans are actually unique, as the belief that humans are an "image of God" might imply. Rolnick carefully disengages the scientific claims being upheld in these issues from the typically hidden naturalistic assumptions that surround them, analogous to the way Charles Taylor uncovers the exclusive humanism presumed by modernity. When this is accomplished, he argues, the scientific claims are in fact helpful ways to develop and strengthen religious faith. Regarding the issue of human uniqueness, for example, Rolnick acknowledges the biological continuities between higher animal forms and human life, but then points to the leap afforded humans by external factors, the ability to use language and develop culture. As Teilhard de Chardin pointed out over fifty years ago this "noosphere" opens human life to a realm transcending the biological and aiming toward the infinite.

Rolnick then moves on to a cosmic framework to explore the implications of current cosmological theory where the universe has been unfolding from a singularity over 13 billion years ago. Commonly called "the big bang," this event put in motion the processes that

eventually led to the human capacity to reflect back and understand this panorama. He points out how subsequent cosmological discoveries such as cosmic microwave background radiation, dark matter, dark energy, quantum effects, and inflation all have been successfully incorporated into the model. Once creation is understood to be an ongoing process, theology clearly can engage in a dialogue with this picture (Rolnick, obviously, relies on a non-literalist reading of scripture). Another intriguing discovery of this theory is that the cosmic unfolding of reality as we know it needed to be “fine-tuned” to allow for the eventual emergence of physical and chemical structures that support planetary development and carbon-based life.

To support his efforts to promote a mutually enriching dialogue between religion and science, Rolnick appeals to the traditional Christian notion of the divine Logos. If one accepts that the unfolding of the universe is continually sustained by divine creativity, then something like the big bang with its fine-tuning coheres marvelously with a loving God calling humanity to the fullness of life in salvation.

While he does not emphasize this, Rolnick’s presentation is thoroughly informed by a Polanyian outlook. His sense of reality as capable of revealing itself in the future and the way our thought unfolds through antecedent frameworks permeate his presentation. And his treatment of the authority of religious tradition is grounded in the

dynamics Polanyi explored in the process of scientific breakthroughs.

In short, this is a competent, scientifically current defense of the value and importance of dwelling in a worldview where science and religion mutually support each other. Given the cultural realities of American society where many are under the sway of popular representations of scientific theories as rendering religious beliefs superfluous, this is still a valuable work and may serve as a helpful resource in college classrooms.

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**Hodgson, Geoffrey M. *Is Socialism Feasible? Towards an Alternative Future*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing Incorporated, 2019. Pp. 272 + x. ISBN 978-1-78990-163-4, \$39.95.**

The answer to the question which is the title of this book is “It depends on what you mean by socialism.” For Geoffrey Hodgson, our prolific author, there is both “big socialism” and “small socialism,” with the former constituted by governmental centralized planning and public ownership of the means of production (the classical definition of socialism that is unknown to a largely callow Left amidst its infatuation with “socialism” during our current election season), and the latter defined by a market economy significantly regulated by active government committed to widespread social welfare programs in conjunction with