

revelation to humanity, it takes Christian doctrine outside of the Bible world, that often all the work is done on an initial definition which is undefended, and that for twenty-first century theological education analytical theology is not necessarily needed for doctrine. Having read and digested these various essays by analytical theologians I have some sympathy with one or two of these contestations. Many of the essays presuppose a high level of training in philosophy and not a few of the essays make little reference to Scripture. With the exception of the final section, the reader is left with the nagging question of who is the intended audience of this collection of essays. Often the language is so specialised that the book does little to invite readers who are not part of this world into the conversation. As a church minister and aspiring systematic theologian I was, unfortunately, often left wanting and unsatisfied in my search for good theology that connects with the educated non-specialist sitting in a church pew.

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Andy Walsh, *Faith Across the Multiverse: Parables from Modern Science* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2018), pp. x + 292, ISBN 978-1683070764. £16.99

Faith Across the Multiverse is Walsh's attempt to bring the Christian Bible into dialogue with modern science. Unlike most attempts to bring these disciplines together, Walsh also brings science fiction (SF) into the discussion. Walsh believes that 'science has the possibility to offer a rich world of metaphors for those of us who want to know God better' (p. 11). Indeed, it is at the level of metaphor that science, the Bible and SF intersect for Walsh, who also claims that nerdiness is shared by all three because they each explore 'the world, not just as it is, but how it might be, could be, perhaps should be' (p. 12). Through examining similarities between the Bible and modern science, Walsh hopes to show that they share an author, who is the God described in the Bible. Walsh uses SF throughout the book to help readers wrap

their minds around the ideas of modern science. Walsh's ultimate desire is to introduce to the reader the God that he has come to know and the science that helps him think more clearly about that God.

Because Walsh is interested in metaphors, he is aware of the role language plays in his approach to reading the Bible alongside modern science. Walsh appropriately identifies the key methodological role of translation, both in reading the Bible alongside science and in drawing concepts from different subfields of science. Walsh divides his book into four parts, corresponding with four scientific languages: mathematics, physics, biology, and computer science.

In the section on the language of mathematics, Walsh explores faith alongside the concepts of logic (claiming that 'faith represents a particular set of assumptions about the world' that 'are a matter of volition' [p. 44]), sin alongside the concepts of optimisation (claiming that we can think 'of sin as deviating from the path to an optimal version of ourselves' [p. 61]), and the balance between God's sovereignty and creation's free will alongside the concept of strange attractors (claiming that this allows us to understand that '[c]reation has the genuine freedom to choose other than God's will', but, '[a]t the same time, the system will tend toward those ends that God desires' [p. 81]).

In the section on the language of physics, Walsh explores the divine and human nature of Jesus alongside the nature of light as both particle and wave, morality alongside the concept of special relativity, and love alongside the physics of entropy (claiming that to love is to allow 'some symmetry into our own lives [increased entropy] to bring asymmetry to the lives of others' [p. 139]).

In the section on the language of biology, Walsh explores the worldwide church alongside understandings of genomics (claiming that individual Christians cannot do everything demanded of the church and that diversity arises because not everything about Christianity is fully determined), diversity among churches alongside understandings of the immune system (inspired by the biblical metaphor of the Church as the body of Christ), and what it means to be the body of Christ alongside the theory of the emergence of consciousness.

In the section on the language of computer science, Walsh explores biblically-described divine and human action alongside just-in-time

principles (such that we can plan ahead but not worry about the future) and the concept of the Word made flesh alongside the concept of compiling (during which words are translated into actions, as the Word of God, once mediated by flesh, accomplished great works through the person of Jesus Christ and the Church), the deep unity of the universal Church developing into the varied expression of local denominations alongside the concept of fractals (with their ‘simple rules generating complex patterns’ [p. 230]), and the Christian story as a whole alongside evolutionary theory.

Although Walsh does not include a bibliography, he does include an annotated further reading section, which covers reading the Bible, natural theology, science, language, mathematics, physics, biology, computer science and comics.

I must admit that I was sceptical of the value of *Faith Across the Multiverse* before opening the book, due to the low quality and unprofessional tone portrayed in the trailer video provided on the advertising webpage (<http://www.faithacrossthemultiverse.com>). However, due to my interest in the intersection of religion, science and SF, I did not dare ignore the book. I am thankful that I made this choice, for Walsh’s book is anything but low quality and unprofessional. Walsh’s ability to communicate across scientific disciplines allows him to clearly communicate complex scientific ideas to a lay audience, and, although Walsh does not engage with biblical scholarship, his hermeneutical approach to the Bible is not literalistic. Walsh takes care to explain that he is not attempting to read modern science back into scripture; rather, he is reading modern science and the Bible alongside each other to illuminate Christian theology in our scientific age.

Walsh claims two purposes in this book: first, to show that the Bible and the universe, as described by science, share an author (who is the God described in the Bible); and, second, to make Christianity more palatable to scientific nerds (and, perhaps, science more palatable to Christians). I do not think Walsh achieves his first goal, primarily because I think he does not account enough for the human role in composing and interpreting the Bible and in conducting the scientific enterprise. The Bible and scientific descriptions could still share metaphors even if God did not exist, because the power of metaphors lies within human language and understanding, which inform biblical

hermeneutics and scientific investigation/description. However, I think the great success of *Faith Across the Multiverse* lies in Walsh's second goal. The book proves itself to be an apology for both the Bible and science. The apologetic value lies in the message that our modern scientific understandings can sit comfortably alongside biblical texts; science and the Bible do not have to be mutually exclusive. In this, *Faith Across the Multiverse* represents a work of theology, articulating Christianity for a society informed by modern science.

The greatest disappointment for me was Walsh's use of SF. Although the inclusion of SF made the book a great joy to read (especially for someone who knows the references), Walsh could have written the same book about reading modern science and the Bible alongside each other without any reference to SF. SF was merely a way to gain the reader's interest or help the reader understand a scientific concept. I could not help wondering if SF could offer something more (one might consider the work of James McGrath).

It must also be noted that the book includes no citations or bibliography and, therefore, renders itself less beneficial for an audience interested in research. If I were to identify the implied audience for Walsh's book, it would be young scientists and SF fans who have been exposed to American conservative evangelicalism. Whilst I suspect the book speaks well to this audience and can serve as an apologetic resource for them, it may be less beneficial to audiences within different contexts.

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Love L. Sechrest, Johnny Ramírez-Johnson and Amos Yong, eds.,
Can “White” People Be Saved? Triangulating Race, Theology, and
***Mission* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2018), pp. xii + 336,**
ISBN 978-0830851041. £23.99

Springing from the 2017 Missiology Lectures at Fuller Theological Seminary's School of Intercultural Studies, *Can “White” People Be*