and are willing to fight for it. The present War on Terror is really a continuation of those battles fought long ago for the principles of the Revolution. For me, the book was a reminder of the real cost and meaning of the Fourth of July and our obligation to keep the Revolution’s vision alive. Thank you, Mr. McCullough.

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Stephen Barr’s Modern Physics and Ancient Faith has demonstrated that the cosmological sciences of the last century have overturned the view of scientists, dominant for three centuries, that reality is all and only material. While many thinkers offer arguments from contemporary scientific data on behalf of a cosmic Designer, Barr only says that science has found so much order behind and beneath every level of order they have found earlier that materialism simply has no grounds anymore. Reality, above all, man’s mind and consciousness, is not reducible to the material, the empirical, the quantifiable. Modern science has made room for faith (and for metaphysics).

What Barr calls order, and some call design, Schroeder calls information, and then Wisdom. His first paragraph reads as follows: “A single consciousness, an all-encompassing wisdom, pervades the universe. The discoveries of science, those that search the quantum nature of subatomic matter, those that explore the molecular complexity of biology, and those that probe the brain/mind interface, have moved us to the brink of a startling realization: all existence is the expression of this wisdom. In the laboratories we experience it as information first physically articulated as energy and then condensed into the form of matter. Every particle, every being, from atom to human, appears to have within it a level of information, of conscious wisdom” (xi). Information is non-physical, of course. “Science itself has rediscovered the confluence between the physical and the spiritual,” the metaphysical.
The perspective is distinctive. He does not look at information within the physical as its explanation, or the order behind a system as the source of its design. He sees the physical universe as the expression of what is metaphysical, of wisdom. Scientific research wants “access to the consciousness within which we are embedded.” He speaks of a spiritual unity we naturally seek in a “theory of everything,” and the unity of the original speck from which, in the big bang, the universe began its exploding.

All scientists presuppose a philosophy. This scientist does more. He asks philosophical as well as scientific questions. Chapter One is about existence. He asks, “Why is there anything at all?” as if it’s a normal logical question even for a scientist.

Schroeder casually takes you by the hand into and through quantum physics, and then the microbiology of human cells, nerves, senses, and our brain. On almost every page he lifts his head up from the trail and expresses a dazzling reflection.

Let me share some of these delights.

“The molecular workings that underlie life [reveal] a complexity so extreme, so overwhelmingly elaborate, that it outdoes science fiction by a league” (2). “Ask a physicist what electrons or the quarks of a proton are made of . . . . The reply will be along the lines of ‘Huh?’” (4). “Every particle, every body, each aspect of existence appears to be an expression of information . . . .” (7). “The more deeply matter is probed, the more bizarre it seems” (38). “[E]verything with no exception . . . is a manifestation of something as ethereal as energy. And . . . below the energy lies information, a totally nonmaterial basis for existence” (17). “Physics has entered the metaphysical, the realm beyond the physically perceivable, in the fullest sense of the word” (20).

He quotes de Duve, the Nobel laureate: “If you equate the probability of the birth of a bacterial cell to chance assembly of its atoms, eternity will not suffice to produce one” (51). Chance may have been involved, “But it is not . . . the whole answer, for chance did not operate in a vacuum. It operated in a universe governed by orderly laws and made of matter endowed with special properties” (51). “Order is known to appear spontaneously in chaotic systems via random reactions . . . . However, unless this order is somehow locked into place, the system reverts to chaotic disorder. This is the demand of the second law of thermodynamics. In any situation where order is not imposed [from beyond it], momentary order always degrades to chaos” (53). “Thermodynamics favors disorder over order” (58).

Schroeder contends that the “emergence of the specialized complexity of life, even in its most simple forms, remains a bewildering
mystery”: “life has somehow gotten hold of wisdom, of information, that taught it to take energy from its environment, to concentrate that energy, and with it to build and maintain the meaningful complexity of the biological cell” (58-59). Accordingly, he contends that “[g]oing inside the body and then inside the cell is a journey to wonderland” (60). But his whole book is a wonderland, because his contemporary science discloses that everything is a wonderland. Waking up in the morning is a wonderland. Our nervous systems, then our brains, and finally our minds only multiply the wonders.

No review can do justice to this work. It is no wonder, on the one hand, that this book converted England’s most famous atheist in his eighties to theism. On the other hand, any high-schooler can read it.

Dick Rolwing


As Walker Percy often observed, any satisfactory social science must account for man as a languaged being, man as homo symbolicus, to use Percy’s witty locution. Aristotle held that logos—a word translated as both speech and reason—is the distinctive human faculty, and the prologue of the Gospel of St. John famously describes Jesus as the Logos that became flesh. But what is the relationship between the divine Logos and that of man, made in His image and likeness? This question deserves serious attention, and Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity is an excellent place to start.

The Catechism denounces lying unambiguously: “By its very nature lying is to be condemned” (2485). Yet this simple and clear proscription conceals a surprisingly complex problem of moral inquiry that has its own rival traditions both without and within Christendom: What is a lie? It is through this inquiry that Paul J. Griffiths takes his readers in Lying, wherein he attempts with elegant prose and balanced argumentation to “seduce” (his word) his readers into adopting the Augustinian definition of lying, which is as follows: lying is any intentional, duplicitous speech, that is, any speech that is directly contrary to what one knows to be true. (Griffiths is ambiguous on the status of misleading, as opposed to contradictory, speech). As in Kant