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Book Review: The Scientific Legacy of Fred Hoyle

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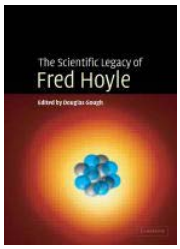
The Scientific legacy of Fred Hoyle



ed. by Douglas Gough Cambridge, 2004

249p, 0521824486 $75.00
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Hoyle is most often remembered for coining the term "big bang," originally meant as a derogatory term for the main competition to his steady state model of the universe. In addition to being one of the 20th-century's foremost astrophysicists, Hoyle was a well-known popularizer of science and author of science fiction. Gough memorializes Hoyle's 60-plus years of scientific achievements. This heartfelt tribute by more than a dozen of Hoyle's closest friends and collaborators is full of personal glimpses, and each contributor is a world-class scientist in his or her own right. The book spans most of astrophysics, from the nature of the interstellar medium, star formation, and stellar evolution, coming full circle to how stars drive the evolution of galaxies and the universe as a whole. Especially interesting is Chandra Wickramasinghe's account of their most controversial area of research: panspermia, the hypothesis that microbial life is ubiquitous in the universe, even in the near vacuum of space. Not intended for casual readers, Gough's book offers a rigorous account of Hoyle's far-reaching contributions to modern astrophysics. Nevertheless, astronomy and history of science buffs will find it hard to put down.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through professionals.

Reviewer: T. D. Oswalt, Florida Institute of Technology
Recommendation: Highly recommended
Readership Level: Lower-division Undergraduates, Upper-division Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Researchers/Faculty, Professionals/Practitioners
Interdisciplinary Subjects:
Subject: Science & Technology - Astronautics & Astronomy
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