



Beyond Physicalism: Toward Reconciliation of Science and Spirituality

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The rise of modern science has brought with it increasing acceptance among intellectual elites of a worldview that conflicts sharply both with everyday human experience and with beliefs widely shared among the world's great cultural traditions. Most contemporary scientists and philosophers believe that reality is at bottom purely physical, and that human beings are nothing more than extremely complicated biological machines. On such views our everyday experiences of conscious decision-making, free will, and the self are illusory by-products of the grinding of our neural machinery. It follows that mind and personality are necessarily extinguished at death, and that there exists no deeper transpersonal or spiritual reality of any sort.

Beyond Physicalism is the product of an unusual fellowship of scientists and humanities scholars who dispute these views. In their previous publication, *Irreducible Mind*, they argued that physicalism cannot accommodate various well-evidenced empirical phenomena including paranormal or psi phenomena, postmortem survival, and mystical experiences. In this new theory-oriented companion volume they go further by attempting to understand how the world must be constituted in order that these "rogue" phenomena can occur. Drawing upon empirical science, metaphysical philosophy, and the mystical traditions, the authors work toward an improved "big picture" of the general character of reality, one which strongly overlaps territory traditionally occupied by the world's institutional religions, and which attempts to reconcile science and spirituality by finding a middle path between the polarized fundamentalisms, religious *and* scientific, that have dominated recent public discourse.

Contributions by: Harald Atmanspacher, Loriliai Biernacki, Bernard Carr, Wolfgang Fach, Michael Grosso, Michael Murphy, David E. Presti, Gregory Shaw, Henry P. Stapp, Eric M. Weiss, and Ian Whicher



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Editorial Review

Review

The Sursem project has been, in recent times, the longest lasting and most intellectually substantial enquiry into rogue phenomena. It has resulted in [a] mammoth work . . . *Beyond Physicalism* – a volume that not only provides much food for thought but is in itself a feast of thinking. (*Network Review*)

Beyond Physicalism presents a serious challenge to physicalism from psychologists, neuroscientists, physicists, philosophers, and Eastern scholars. This volume is no 'New Age' pap with easy answers, but it carefully considers so far intractable issues; and, it demands careful and repeated readings. . . . *Beyond Physicalism* should interest readers who are willing to consider the intricacies and extraordinary nature of consciousness, rather than dismissing them offhand. No doubt some of the ideas covered in the book will be shown to be limited . . . but they seek to provide a comprehensive explanation of mind and matter that has been lacking in most discussions until now. *Beyond Physicalism* does not offer a definitive theory, but it describes serious alternatives to materialism. The appropriate reply by the holders of the latter position should be not to ignore the phenomena explained by these alternatives, as they have usually done so far, but to advance a better materialist position to explain them. Will they take up the gauntlet? (*PsycCRITIQUES*)

Beyond Physicalism heralds an impending shift of epic proportion in humankind's efforts to understand the nature of reality, and potentially the most significant advance in the recent history of the mind-body debate. This landmark book provides an unprecedented synthesis of science, psychology, philosophy and theology, approaching the deeper truth of all existence. (Eben Alexander III, MD, Neurosurgeon and author of *Proof of Heaven* and *The Map of Heaven*)

Finally, a book that conclusively demonstrates that it is possible, in fact preferable, to reconcile genuine science with spirituality. Drawing upon a massive amount of compelling empirical data, and weaving together several interrelated and extremely thoughtful theoretical perspectives offered by a range of highly respected scientists and humanists, *Beyond Physicalism* articulates a cogent and compelling alternative to the distorted "all or nothing" dichotomy between a narrow-minded religious fundamentalism and an equally dogmatic and rigid scientific mentality. (G. William Barnard, professor of Religious Studies, Southern Methodist University)

Beyond Physicalism lays several stones for the foundation of a new world-view. No book has gone further toward reconciling science and spirituality. (William Eastman, former director of SUNY Press)

In this wonderful sequel to *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century*, "rogue" phenomena that are the essential facts denied by psychology too long mired in varieties of physicalism are rightly accepted as empirical fact. Abandoning neither the truths of science nor those of religion, evolutionary panentheism provides the tertium quid that can steer us safely home. This is a must read book. Marvelous! (Ralph W. Hood Jr., professor of Psychology, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and former editor, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*)

Dogmatic materialists, sometimes called skeptics, claim that to accept the possibility of any non-physical force or entity requires that we sacrifice all of modern science. No matter the apparent evidence, we are told, the future of scientific progress and rationality are at stake. Creationism and the flat Earth lie in wait. *Beyond Physicalism*, however, presents both solid empirical evidence and fully rational theoretical views

demonstrating that the materialist's dichotomy is false. This book offers a third way, reconciling science and spirituality without diluting either. Robust and evidence-based, this work by highly respected scholars and scientists demolishes orthodoxies right and left, allowing the reader a way forward past the Scylla and Charybdis of religious and scientific fundamentalisms. (David J. Hufford, professor emeritus, Penn State College of Medicine.)

Beyond Physicalism is much more than a book. It is the intimate expression of a decade and a half of critical but collegial conversations between established scientists and professional humanists around some of the most important but still unsettled questions facing humanity: those involving the nature of mind or consciousness—that is, the nature of us. (Jeffrey J. Kripal, J. Newton Rayzor Professor of Religious Studies, Rice University)

Beyond Physicalism is an eye-opening (perhaps one might be permitted to say “soulful”) collection of essays by disciplined researchers who seek to develop a credible conception of the spiritual nature of human beings. The authors are hard-nosed scientists and humanistic scholars who believe it is possible to reject the “old man in the sky pulling the strings” version of theism without embracing dispiriting contemporary versions of materialism. (Richard A. Shweder, Harold Higgins Swift Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Comparative Human Development, University of Chicago)

Some of the philosophical problems that occupied William James longest and deepest, along with solutions he thought most promising, have literally been written out of history. This volume presents the first serious collective attempt since James' death to revive his project. Its chapters are characterized by an intellectual ethos reminiscent of the ‘father’ of modern American psychology himself: sympathetic open-mindedness made fruitful through disciplined, calm and penetrating rigor. (Andreas Sommer, junior research fellow in history and philosophy of science, Churchill College, University of Cambridge)

If you are personally content thinking of yourself as a meaningless byproduct of accidental chemical reactions, what I've called the Total Materialism view of reality, and think you're superior for being so “scientific,” you don't want to read this book, not that you can actually freely make a choice, because it will upset you and you'll need some tranquilizing drugs to calm your agitated brain. But if you believe facts are more important than currently fashionable scientific theories and wonder about the spiritual side of human nature, you will find this volume fascinating! (Charles T. Tart, professor emeritus of psychology, University of California, Davis)

I see this book as a landmark publication that may help to catalyze two urgently needed, radical transformations in modern civilization. The first is the first true revolution in the mind sciences, which is bound to have profound repercussions all the way down to the foundations of physics. The second is a renaissance in the world's great contemplative traditions. Both science and spirituality need to return to a spirit of open-minded, radical empiricism, casting off the shackles of dogmatic metaphysics, whether materialistic or religious. (B. Alan Wallace, physicist and Buddhism scholar, president of the Santa Barbara Institute for Consciousness Studies)

When I first encountered Kelly and colleagues' first book, *Irreducible Mind*, I enthusiastically read all 800 pages, excited to see a book that so carefully documented the research that supports the notion that consciousness is not simply a product of neural activity. When I completed the book, I wanted to know more. I wanted to know details of a theoretical framework they had alluded to, which might include both mystical experiences and scientific understanding of consciousness within one “big picture.” Their second book, *Beyond Physicalism*, brings together key scholars in the areas of quantum physics, psychology, Asian philosophy and mysticism to thoughtfully explore ways that mystical and psi experiences can fit into an

expanded scientific worldview. (Marjorie Hines Woollacott, professor, Department of Human Physiology and Institute of Neuroscience, University of Oregon)

About the Author

Edward F. Kelly is a research professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences at the University of Virginia, with interests in psychical research and functional neuroimaging. He is lead author of three previous books: *Computer Recognition of English Word Senses*; *Altered States of Consciousness and Psi: An Historical Survey and Research Prospectus*; and *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century*.

Adam Crabtree is a psychotherapist in private practice and on the faculty of the Centre for Training in Psychotherapy in Toronto, with interests in the history of animal magnetism and hypnotism, as well as the history and practice of psychodynamic psychology. He is author of six books including *From Mesmer to Freud: Magnetic Sleep and the Root of Psychological Healing*; *Multiple Man*; and *Memoir of a Trance Therapist*.

Paul Marshall is an independent researcher with interests in mysticism, philosophy and psychology of religion, science-religion relations, and consciousness studies. He is author of two previous books, *The Living Mirror: Images of Reality in Science and Mysticism*; and *Mystical Encounters with the Natural World: Experiences and Explanations*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jennifer Handler:

This Beyond Physicalism: Toward Reconciliation of Science and Spirituality book is absolutely not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you get by reading this book is actually information inside this e-book incredible fresh, you will get information which is getting deeper you actually read a lot of information you will get. This kind of Beyond Physicalism: Toward Reconciliation of Science and Spirituality without we recognize teach the one who reading through it become critical in pondering and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry Beyond Physicalism: Toward Reconciliation of Science and Spirituality can bring whenever you are and not make your case space or bookshelves' grow to be full because you can have it inside your lovely laptop even mobile phone. This Beyond Physicalism: Toward Reconciliation of Science and Spirituality having good arrangement in word in addition to layout, so you will not really feel uninterested in reading.

Leigh Brown:

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Joyce Tower:

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