



Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century

By Edward Kelly, Emily Williams Kelly

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Current mainstream opinion in psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy of mind holds that all aspects of human mind and consciousness are generated by physical processes occurring in brains. Views of this sort have dominated recent scholarly publication. The present volume, however, demonstrates empirically that this reductive materialism is not only incomplete but false. The authors systematically marshal evidence for a variety of psychological phenomena that are extremely difficult, and in some cases clearly impossible, to account for in conventional physicalist terms. Topics addressed include phenomena of extreme psychophysical influence, memory, psychological automatism and secondary personality, near-death experiences and allied phenomena, genius-level creativity, and 'mystical' states of consciousness both spontaneous and drug-induced. The authors further show that these rogue phenomena are more readily accommodated by an alternative 'transmission' or 'filter' theory of mind/brain relations advanced over a century ago by a largely forgotten genius, F. W. H. Myers, and developed further by his friend and colleague William James. This theory, moreover, ratifies the commonsense conception of human beings as causally effective conscious agents, and is fully compatible with leading-edge physics and neuroscience. The book should command the attention of all open-minded persons concerned with the still-unsolved mysteries of the mind.

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Editorial Review

Review

pp. 153 of *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife*, Simon & Schuster, 2012

For those still stuck in the trap of scientific skepticism, I recommend the book *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century*, published in 2007. The evidence for out-of-body consciousness is well presented in this rigorous scientific analysis. *Irreducible Mind* is a landmark opus from a highly reputable group, the Division of Perceptual Studies, based at the University of Virginia. The authors provide an exhaustive review of the relevant data, and the conclusion is inescapable: these phenomena are real, and we must try to understand their nature if we want to comprehend the reality of our existence.

(Eben Alexander III, MD, Neurosurgeon and author of *Proof of Heaven* and *The Map of Heaven*)

The authors have not only plausibly argued that the empirical and conceptual horizon of science, particularly the science of the human mind, is both capable and in dire need of expansion, but—and I use this strong term deliberately—they have proven it. (Andreas Sommer, junior research fellow in history and philosophy of science, Churchill College, University of Cambridge *Journal Of Mind and Behavior*)

[A] comprehensive review of empirical evidence that questions the assumption that 'properties of minds will ultimately be fully explained by those of brains.' . . . Kelly et al. deserve to be praised for their courage and scholarship in dealing with such a controversial topic. (Alexander Moreira-Almeida Harold Koenig, Duke University *Journal Of Nervous and Mental Disease*)

Thoroughly scientific, systematically reasoned and courageous. . . as exciting and enjoyable as it is provocative and profound! (David J. Hufford, Professor Emeritus of Humanities and Psychiatry, Penn State College of Medicine)

Irreducible Mind is an enormous and daring enterprise. Its scholarship is impressive. . . and made me think long and hard about many issues. (Etzel Cardeña, Professor of Psychology, Lund University *PsycCRITIQUES*)

[A] must-read for anyone working in consciousness studies, psychology and the history of science. (Jonathan Edelman, Oxford University)

[A] monumental work. . . Only a very resistant observer will remain unpersuaded that a proportion, as least, of all this carefully evaluated data presents a significant challenge to conventional views. (Paul Marshall, scholar of religion, and author of *Mystical Encounters with the Natural World Journal of Consciousness Studies*)

[A] sustained, sophisticated, and empirically based critique of contemporary cognitive psychology and mainstream neuroscience. . . the implications for the study of mind, consciousness, and religion border on the unspeakable. (Jeffrey J. Kripal, J. Newton Rayzor Professor of Religious Studies, Rice University *Religious Studies Review*)

[B]rilliant, heroic and astonishing . . . a scientifically rigorous and philosophically informed critique of

various contemporary orthodoxies in mainstream psychology, especially the idea that the human mind (including consciousness and our sense of free will and personal agency) is nothing more than a material entity and can be fully explained in terms of brain processes. (Richard A. Shweder, Harold Higgins Swift Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Comparative Human Development, University of Chicago)

Irreducible Mind [is] yet another book on the mind-body problem. However, this book is different, very different, from all the rest... In the future history of the science of mind, *Irreducible Mind* may well prove a book of landmark significance, one that helped spark a revolution in the scientific investigation of the nature of consciousness... In the arena of neuroscience of mind, it is the most exciting reading to have crossed my path in years. (David E. Presti, Professor of Neurobiology, University of California-Berkeley, Professor of Neurobiology, University of California-Berkeley)

Irreducible Mind is well written, detailed, and passionately argued, and should be central to parapsychology for some years to come. Its great value is that it helps to close the gap between the conventional view of mind on the one hand, and on the other, responsible research into phenomena which are utterly antithetical to that view. In that sense, it greatly advances the process that Myers began more than a century ago, but was so rudely interrupted by behaviourism and the virtual outlawing of consciousness as a scientific entity. (*Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, July 2009)

The author's sincerity and the extent of their labors are beyond question. (*American Journal of Psychology*, Summer 2010)

About the Author

Edward F. Kelly is currently research professor in the Department of Psychiatric Medicine at the University of Virginia. He is author of *Computer Recognition of English Word Senses and Altered States of Consciousness* and *Psi: An Historical Survey and Research Prospectus*. His central long term interests revolve around mind-brain relations and functional neuroimaging studies of unusual states of consciousness and associated cognitive phenomena. **Emily Williams Kelly** is currently research assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatric Medicine at the University of Virginia. **Adam Crabtree** is currently on the faculty of the Centre for Training in Psychotherapy, Toronto. **Alan Gauld** is a retired reader in psychology, School of Psychology, University of Nottingham, as well as past president of the Society for Psychical Research. **Bruce Greyson** is the Chester F. Carlson Professor of Psychiatry and director of the Division of Perceptual Studies at the University of Virginia. Michael Grosso, though nominally retired, is currently teaching at the University of Virginia's School of Continuing Education. He is currently a director of the American Philosophical Practitioner's Association and Review Editor of the *Journal of Philosophical Practice*.

Users Review

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Shari Villa:

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