

## **Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century**

Introductory extracts about the book Irreducible Mind are derived from pages of the Amazon website promoting the book

Quotes:

“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.

### **Editorials reviews**

Quotes:

1] 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)

2] 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, University College, London 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)

3] 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. (Etsel Cardeña, Professor of Psychology, Lund University PsycCRITIQUES)

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

5] 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 Journal Of Consciousness Studies)

6] 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)

7] Brilliant, 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)

8] 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)

9] 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)

10] 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 Psychological 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.

### **Extracts from customer reviews**

By Dr. Richard G. Petty on January 9, 2007

I think that it was Carl Sagan who said, "You want to be open-minded, but not so open-minded that your brains fall out." This marvelous book shows that open-mindedness is entirely compatible with scientific rigor.

For the last century, the vast majority psychologists, psychiatrists and neuroscientists have believed that thoughts, emotions and consciousness are the product of physical processes in the brain. Just recently the editor of popular psychology magazine expressed the opinion that the whole of human behavior could be reduced to reflexes.

This book provides comprehensive and detailed empirical proof that this reductive, materialistic belief is not just incomplete but false. Sagan also said that extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence and this book is full of it. But far from being a catalogue, each piece of evidence and every idea is examined critically.

The book is broken into nine sections followed by an introductory bibliography of psychological research and exactly one hundred pages of references.

Chapter 1: A View from the Mainstream: Contemporary Cognitive Neuroscience and the Consciousness Debates

Chapter 2: F. W. H. Myers and the Empirical Study of the Mind-Body Problem

Chapter 3: Psychophysiological Influence

Chapter 4: Memory

Chapter 5: Automatism and Secondary Centers of Consciousness: -

Chapter 6: Unusual Experiences Near Death and Related Phenomena

Chapter 7: Genius

Chapter 8: Mystical Experience

## Chapter 9: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century

It begins with a short history of 20th-century psychology from behaviorism to present-day cognitive neuroscience. This section emphasizes the inability of these theories to account for many important aspects of mind and consciousness. [Read more >](#)

By [Kristen](#) on April 30, 2007

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the "mind-body" or more precisely, "mind-brain" problem. It is quite an undertaking at close to 700 pages of writing but in my opinion it was well worth the effort. The authors did well in providing a contextual history and background for those not familiar with the field of psychology and its history.

The main premise is that mainstream psychology has not yet provided a satisfactory theory of mind. Particularly, the relation of mind to brain has been largely ignored because it has been dominated by a purely materialistic view of the brain which posits that consciousness is generated by processes occurring purely in the brain. The objective of the book is to "provide justification for revisiting the broader and deeper framework of psychology" and the authors use the contributions of F.W.H. Myers, in particular his book *Human Personality* (1903), as a guide. The first chapter of the book provides relevant background in modern cognitive science. The next chapter summarizes the contributions of Myers to empirical investigation of the mind-body relation which provides the framework for the rest of the book.

The authors state that much of the available empirical evidence (such as that of psi phenomena) is ignored because it is assumed a priori impossible and caution that scientists must look at all the relevant facts, not just those compatible with current mainstream theory. They argue that it is precisely the valid scientific evidence that seems to conflict with current theory that should "commend the most urgent attention."

By [Ben Bendig](#) on November 1, 2010

As an advanced graduate student in cognitive psychology, and one very much interested in expanding academic psychology's rather limited approach to the mind (yes, irony), I find this book to be, well, quite amazing. I've read a number of other books on similar topics, but nowhere have I found such an even-handed, fair, and thorough commitment to the truth.

Chapters 3 and 5-8 are wonderful for truly fascinating phenomena, though that is not to say the other chapters are uninteresting. The whole book is exceptional.

There is a consistent emphasis on supporting F.W.H. Myer's views--the book is a tribute to his work, and modeled after Myers's Human Personality--which at times might seem a little much, but shouldn't. Myers is indeed a neglected genius, and deserves to be far more well-known than he is. Re-establishing him is an important task and aspect of the book.

It should definitely be required reading for anyone in or near psychology. For those not in academia, I think it's still worth reading, though is certainly not paced like a popular science book. But this is because it is far more rich and densely rewarding than most popular science books.

By C. L. Vash on January 5, 2010

I belong to both the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Association for Psychological Science (APS). When the more scientifically oriented psychologists abandoned APA and established APS, I considered going with them but was too busy with my work to have time to be active with either association so I just stayed put. After I retired (from administering both clinical and research programs for many years), I joined APS out of curiosity and found that I admire and despair over aspects of each organization, and maybe should have belonged to both for the whole 20 years in which both have existed.

In 1958 when a couple of my psychology professors at UCLA mentioned this book's deep! mentor ... FWH Myers, and they quickly tossed him aside as way too far out ... I thought he sounded ver-ry interesting. But, as a sensible grad student, I bought whatever they told me and went on without a word of protest. Probably a good idea because I got a couple of really good jobs later on that I might not have been offered if I'd been on record as admitting I liked that dead guy who'd started the Psychic Research Society in England!

All along I've been a non-theist who finds only "esoteric" religions interesting or useful because they are predominantly psychological and view Gods as simply personifications of natural, not supernatural, energy/matter/informational systems. Now the entire range of unusual, often "paranormal" phenomena analyzed in this book ... an amazing

documentation of more than a century of philosophical speculations and respectable investigations ... has shown me that its six authors outrank the rest of us in their care, skill, precision, and ability to avoid slipping into personal belief preferences when they analyze phenomena most others want to cling to or deny.”

<http://www.amazon.com/Irreducible-Mind-Toward-Psychology-Century/dp/1442202068>