
Consciousness Unbound

LIBERATING MIND FROM THE
TYRANNY OF MATERIALISM

Edited by
EDWARD F. KELLY
and PAUL MARSHALL

Properly advanced science and spirituality serve to strengthen
each other, and this *magnum opus* leads the way!

—EBEN ALEXANDER, MD

PRAISE FOR CONSCIOUSNESS UNBOUND

“Properly advanced science and spirituality serve to strengthen each other, and this *magnum opus* leads the way! This third book in a trilogy (so far!) offers a well-supported consolidation of empirical data and theoretical frameworks to help usher our world from the bleak and paltry fiction of physicalism into a far better-supported model of the universe in which mind is primordial and human will influences the universe-at-large. This masterpiece illuminates a rational path forward that will favorably support the best of human potential.” —**Eben Alexander**, MD, neurosurgeon and author of *Living in a Mindful Universe*, *Proof of Heaven*, and *The Map of Heaven*

“In this lucid and thought-provoking text (the third volume of a series initiated under the auspices of Esalen’s Center for Theory and Research), a stellar group of scholars from a multitude of different fields not only offer compelling empirical data that underscore the urgent need to radically reenvision the taken-for-granted metaphysical stance of physicalism/materialism that currently undergirds most scientific work but also provide a series of interrelated, and theoretically satisfying, metaphysical alternatives to ‘the tyranny of materialism.’ Read this book if you want to discover an intellectually rigorous middle ground between the fundamentalisms of both religion and science and believe that it is not only possible but also important to reconcile science and spirituality in a way that is thoughtful and empirically grounded.” —**G. William Barnard**, professor of religious studies, Southern Methodist University

“*Consciousness Unbound* is an ambitious and bold sequel to the pioneering volumes, *Irreducible Mind* and *Beyond Physicalism*. It both complements and successfully extends the earlier works’ assault on empirically and conceptually myopic physicalist efforts to account for the role of mind in nature. Acknowledging sensibly that no science is thoroughly empirical, it offers an intriguing buffet of alternative worldviews or metaphysical approaches. And it presents a thoughtful and multifaceted case for adopting some form of idealism. This book should be mandatory reading for those wrestling with these venerable issues.” —**Stephen Braude**, emeritus professor of philosophy, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

“Darwin offered his epoch-making hypotheses as a way of rendering intelligible a panoply of unexplained facts. Similarly, Edward F. Kelly, Paul Marshall, and their colleagues continue to develop, in this the third volume of a very important series, an impressive foundation for a nonmaterialistic view of mind and the universe. If you are a committed materialist, you should read this book to discover how much of what you take for granted should be questioned. If you are a committed nonmaterialist, you should read it for the same reason.” —**Etzel Cardeña**, Thorsen Professor of Psychology, Lund University

“I met Ed Kelly at an Esalen conference over twenty years ago. I was excited by his views on consciousness and have followed his project ever since. I now know many of his colleagues, and the more time I spend with them, the more I become convinced that mind and consciousness are not manufactured by brain processes and may therefore be capable of surviving bodily death. This is anathema to many scientists, despite their inability to explain many proven anomalies. But as the great epistemologist Count Korzybski wrote, ‘The territory is primary to the map.’” —**John Cleese**, writer, performer, “useful idiot”

“This is the third volume of an increasingly influential series. Its hallmark has been the contributors’ realization that the future of psychology and the neurosciences requires ditching many hitherto-favored assumptions, empirical and theoretical, and investigating certain ‘rogue’ phenomena and the new avenues to which they lead. Those who have read the preceding volumes will certainly wish to travel further with this one, and those who have not will find it an excellent starting place for some exceedingly interesting new explorations.” —**Alan O. Gauld**, emeritus professor of psychology, Nottingham University

“This marvelous read should stop all who continue to explain away the simple irrefutable fact that the universe is in some fundamental sense awakening to itself through the choices enlightened persons make. The rich documentation provided is the best critical overview of the scope and depth of the empirical and conceptual options for those who recognize this fact from their own experience.” —**Ralph W. Hood**, professor of psychology and LeRoy A. Martin Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

“Brains are not mindless. Mental causation and the ‘unmoved mover’ (free will) are not illusions. Human beings have a spiritual aspect. There is more to ultimate reality than just physical particles in fields of force. In *Consciousness Unbound*, a collection of disciplined scholars—scientists

and humanists—defend those propositions and argue that the scientific materialist account of what is really real is incomplete. If you have ever pondered the mysteries of the mind–body problem, *Consciousness Unbound* is the book for you.” —**Richard A. Shweder**, Harold Higgins Swift Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Comparative Human Development, University of Chicago

“*Consciousness Unbound* continues a potentially revolutionary interdisciplinary collaboration initiated by Esalen Institute’s Center for Theory and Research and scientists with the Division of Perceptual Studies at the University of Virginia. Showing us how to separate the wheat from the chaff in disputes concerning science and spirituality, this book tackles issues unjustly marginalized by Western psychology and philosophy and takes another step toward a robustly evidence-based transcendental framework of mind–matter relationships. *Consciousness Unbound* is mandatory reading for those tired of dogmatic assertions by theology, scientific orthodoxy, and popular New Age ideologies.” —**Andreas Sommer**, historian of scientific naturalism, curator of www.forbiddenhistories.com

“*Consciousness Unbound*—a rather grand title, yes, but it delivers on its promise. One of the major depressing parts of modern life is that we think science, our powerful system to advance knowledge, has somehow ‘proven’ that all spirituality and religion is nonsense and we are nothing but physical accidents, with no inherent meaning. Yet there is, unknown even to most scientists, excellent evidence that yes, the physical is important, but there is something more, something pointing at the spiritual, that we must take into account if we really want to be reasonably rational and scientific in the way we approach the world and our lives. Here’s an excellent overview of that evidence.” —**Charles T. Tart**, professor emeritus of psychology, University of California, Davis

“The unquestioning allegiance of mainstream science to the materialistic reduction of mind to brain has caused researchers to ignore empirical evidence that challenges this metaphysical belief. But the eminent physicist Richard Feynman reminds us that experimenters who remain true to the self-critical, open-minded ideals of science ‘search most diligently, and with the greatest effort, in exactly those places where it seems most likely that we can prove our theories wrong.’ The contributors to this book deserve great respect for adhering to this noble ideal and thereby embracing the theme of ‘truth prevailing over power.’” —**B. Alan Wallace**, physicist and Buddhism scholar/teacher, president of the Santa Barbara Institute for Consciousness Studies

“Consciousness Unbound provides a thoughtful and thorough examination of modern theories about the nonmaterial nature of the universe that are compelling alternatives to the reductive nature of scientific materialism. Each of these theories offers answers to conundrums that materialism cannot explain, such as the nature of near-death experiences, mystical experiences, cases suggestive of reincarnation, and psi phenomena such as precognition. Each chapter offers very engaging reading, and I found myself for the first time receiving a clear explanation of the roots and scientific bases of metaphysical theories such as idealism and dual-aspect monism, as well as their relevance for understanding the nature of the universe. I applaud the authors for making a heady subject accessible to persons of all disciplines. I highly recommend this book to all readers who see the real limitations of materialism, but who also want to know more about the scientific evidence and practical benefits of alternative worldviews regarding the nature of reality.” —**Marjorie H. Woollacott**, professor, Department of Human Physiology and Institute of Neuroscience, University of Oregon

Published by Rowman & Littlefield
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

6 Tinworth Street, London SE11 5AL, United Kingdom

Selection and editorial matter © 2021 by Edward F. Kelly and Paul Marshall.
Copyright in individual chapters is held by the respective chapter authors.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote passages in a review.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Kelly, Edward F., editor. | Marshall, Paul (Paul David), editor.

Title: Consciousness unbound : liberating mind from the tyranny of materialism / edited by Edward F. Kelly and Paul Marshall.

Description: Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield, [2021] | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "Building on the groundbreaking research of previous books, Edward Kelly and Paul Marshall gather a cohort of leading scholars to address the most recent advances in the psychology of consciousness"— Provided by publisher.


Identifiers: LCCN 2020047783 (print) | LCCN 2020047784 (ebook) | ISBN 9781538139424 (cloth) | ISBN 9781538139431 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Consciousness.

Classification: LCC BF311 .C6565 2021 (print) | LCC BF311 (ebook) | DDC 153—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020047783>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020047784>

 The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

CONTENTS

Preface	xi
<i>Michael Murphy</i>	
Acknowledgments	xiii
Background and Overview	I
<i>Edward F. Kelly</i>	
PART I. FURTHER EMPIRICAL HORIZONS	
1 Near-Death Experiences	17
<i>Bruce Greyson</i>	
2 Cases of the Reincarnation Type	57
<i>Jim B. Tucker</i>	
3 Precognition	89
<i>Bob Rosenberg</i>	
PART II. FURTHER THEORETICAL HORIZONS	
4 Mystical Experience and the Scope of C. G. Jung's Holism	139
<i>Roderick Main</i>	
5 Is the Universe Conscious? Reflexive Monism and the Ground of Being	175
<i>Max Velmans</i>	
6 A Neo-Hegelian Theory of Mystical Experience and Other Extraordinary Phenomena	229
<i>Glenn Alexander Magee</i>	

7	Analytic Idealism and Psi: How a More Tenable Metaphysics Neutralizes a Physicalist Taboo <i>Bernardo Kastrup</i>	257
8	Consciousness Comes First <i>Federico Faggin</i>	283

**PART III. FURTHER HORIZONS IN SCIENCE,
THE HUMANITIES, AND PHILOSOPHY**

9	Expanding a Science of Consciousness <i>David E. Presti</i>	323
10	The Future of the Human(ities): Mystical Literature, Paranormal Phenomena, and the Contemporary Politics of Knowledge <i>Jeffrey J. Kripal</i>	359
11	Mind Beyond Brain: Surveying the Metaphysical Landscape <i>Paul Marshall</i>	407
	Epilogue: Our Emerging Vision and Why It Matters <i>Edward F. Kelly</i>	483
	Index	489
	About the Editors and Contributors	511

PREFACE

Michael Murphy

Since its founding in 1962, Esalen Institute has regularly sponsored research fellowships in fields that mainstream scientific and religious institutions typically neglect or avoid altogether. The present volume is the third major output of one especially productive fellowship of this sort that I initially organized in 1998 with the specific aim of presenting and discussing empirical evidence suggestive of postmortem survival—the persistence of aspects of human mind and consciousness following bodily death. It will probably surprise many, if not most, readers to hear that a large body of such evidence already exists, much of it of very high quality. Literally hundreds of thousands of pages have been published by able investigators, both in book-length treatments and in scientific reports in refereed journals, on topics such as children who seem to remember aspects of previous lives, near-death experiences occurring under extreme physiological conditions, crisis apparitions and hauntings, and apparent communications from deceased persons through the agency of mediums.

This fellowship became known to the Esalen community as “Sursem” (from “Survival Seminar”), but it soon evolved into something much broader in scope—essentially undertaking a systematic reassessment of the physicalist (or “materialist”) metaphysics that emerged over the past several centuries in conjunction with the rise of modern science and that has become the received wisdom of the opinion elites of all of today’s “advanced” societies.

A first book, *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century*, sought mainly to assemble in one place large amounts of evidence for a variety of “rogue” psychological and physiological phenomena that resist or defy explanation in conventional physicalist terms (including a number of topics previously visited in my own *The Future of the Body*). The next

book, *Beyond Physicalism: Toward Reconciliation of Science and Spirituality*, took a more theoretical turn and drew on a wide variety of historical and contemporary sources in an initial attempt to present and compare a sampling of richer metaphysical systems (or worldviews or conceptual frameworks) that specifically seek to accommodate phenomena of the sorts cataloged in *Irreducible Mind*.

This third volume of the series continues to develop the main themes of its predecessors, presenting new information regarding some of the most theoretically challenging empirical phenomena and a variety of additional worldviews or metaphysical positions potentially capable of making sense of them, plus reflections on what all this work may mean for contemporary scholarship in the humanities, science, and philosophy as well as for human affairs more generally.

I am hugely proud of this work, both for the light it has brought to its subject matter and for the way it does so. These explorations have necessarily relied on methods and discoveries from many fields, among them physics, neuroscience, depth psychology, dynamic psychiatry, metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, cultural anthropology, the history of science, the sociology of knowledge, comparative religion, meditation research, and the systematic collection of shamanic and contemplative lore provided by living spiritual teachers. As much as anything Esalen Institute has ever sponsored, I believe, this work contributes significantly to our understanding of human nature's higher reaches and destiny. I cannot resist an analogy between this body of work and the exploration of the Louisiana Purchase by Lewis and Clark and their "Corps of Discovery." Please join me in savoring this exciting new report from the undiscovered countries of human consciousness!