

PART I: BEYOND PHYSICALISM

BEYOND PHYSICALISM: TOWARD RECONCILIATION OF SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY, edited by Edward F. Kelly, Adam Crabtree, and Paul Marshall. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. Pp. xxix + 602 (hardback). \$60.07. ISBN 978-1-4422-4338-9.

THE ELUSIVENESS OF SOULS: AN ESSAY REVIEW OF *BEYOND PHYSICALISM*

By Douglas M. Stokes

Beyond Physicalism (BP) is a 631-page tome reporting the findings of a 15-year effort by an Esalen-based group of philosophers, scientists, and theologians to find a middle path between currently po-

larized scientific and spiritual approaches to the study of mind and consciousness. *BP* is a successor to an 831-page tome entitled *Irreducible Mind (IM)* published by the same group, which calls itself the Sursem group (E. F. Kelly et al., 2007).

At the beginning of his Introduction to *BP* and again in Chapter 1, Edward F. Kelly asserts that an overwhelming body of evidence supports the existence of psi phenomena that is “more than sufficient to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt to open-minded persons who take the trouble to study it that the sheer existence of [psi phenomena] is a fact of nature with which we must somehow come to scientific terms” (p. 4).

In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. The evidence strongly suggests the opposite, namely that psi phenomena do not exist or at the very least have not been experimentally demonstrated to exist. I consider myself to be a fair-minded person and am intimately familiar with the evidence. I have read the parapsychological literature for over four decades. I reviewed the *Proceedings* of the annual Parapsychological Association conventions for the *Journal of Parapsychology* for decades, until the *Research in Parapsychology* series ceased publication. For over three decades I have served as an “internal critic,” debating both psi skeptics and psi proponents, but never coming to a firm conclusion regarding the existence of psi.

What finally pushed me over the edge and into the abyss of psi-denialism were recent revelations regarding the massive rates of experimenter misconduct and incompetence among researchers in orthodox psychology and biomedical research. If similar rates of experimenter malfeasance occur in parapsychology, one would expect to find nonzero overall effect sizes in meta-analyses, due to the presence of fraudulent researchers in the sample as well as the selective reporting of data. These small effect sizes would be expected to occur in the absence of psi and would be expected to reach statistical significance as more and more studies are added to the sample. Any meta-analysis that assumes that none of the researchers in the sample are fraudulent is based on an untenable fantasy. The same is true for any estimates of the size of the “file drawer” of unreported studies that assume that the average effect size in the unreported studies is zero. In fact, the average effect size would be expected to be negative, as significantly positive results would have been included in the meta-analysis sample and hence would never enter into the file drawer. Thus, the size of the file drawer of unpublished experiments needed to reduce the aggregate psi effect to nonsignificance is greatly overestimated in many if not most parapsychological meta-analyses. See Stokes (2014, 2015) for the details of this analysis.

Finally, if psi does not exist, one might expect to see a pattern in which initially flamboyant fraudulent investigators report novel and highly significant psi effects, establishing a new “paradigm.” This aggregate effect would then be expected to decline to nonsignificance as more and more honest and competent researchers attempt to replicate the study. I would submit that this is precisely the pattern we observe in parapsychology. For the record, I have always been attracted to the study of psi phenomena, and I am deeply disappointed by their seeming nonexistence.

If psi does exist, one might reasonably expect that in over a century of research, psi investigators would have discovered a technique for reliably eliciting psi phenomena. Alas, no such technique has been found.

Parapsychologists can take heart in the fact that a large proportion of the findings of mainstream psychologists and medical researchers are in many cases just as dubious as those in psi research and for the same reasons. For instance, in a nationwide attempt to replicate the findings of the top (most-cited) cancer experiments, the company Amgen could replicate only 11% of the papers, the company Bayer could only replicate 21% of cancer studies, and the MD Anderson Cancer Center could replicate only 45% of prominent cancer studies (Kaiser, 2015).

In an attempt to replicate 26 key psychological experiments, Brian Nosek and his coworkers were only able to replicate 10 of the original effects, a success rate of 38% (Saey, 2015).

Returning to the main theme of Kelly’s Introduction to *BP*, he states that the Sursem group is seeking a *tertium quid* (middle way) between scientific and religious approaches to the study of consciousness. He hopes that such an expanded science would recognize the genuine empirical realities underlying traditional forms of religion. He notes that a sizable fraction of the members of the American Academy of Religions appear to have embraced the current scientific orthodoxy of physicalism and are intent on explaining away most, if not all, religious experiences.

Kelly notes that the chapters in *BP* are roughly ordered from the more scientific to the more metaphysical. He suggests that the findings in *BP* point to some form of idealism (all is mental) or dual-aspect panentheism (all things are suffused with the consciousness of God, which extends beyond the physical universe) as the basis of the ultimate nature of reality.

Chapter 1 is also by E. F. Kelly, who reviews theoretical challenges to theory construction in the area of consciousness research and summarizes the arguments in the Sursem group's previous anthology (*IM*). Not one to be afraid of jumping right into the deep fray, he cites the levitations of St. Joseph of Cupertino as evidence for macro-psi.

He reviews the phenomena exhibited by mediums. It should be noted that very few methodologically sound studies of mediumship have been reported by parapsychologists. Remote viewing is another area in which sound methodology is rarely employed. Adoption of ganzfeld-like procedures would eliminate most of these deficiencies.

Kelly goes on to discuss the evidence for reincarnation, crisis apparitions, placebo effects and other psychosomatic phenomena. He states that, "for the theoretical purposes of this volume [*BP*] we will therefore assume the empirical reality of both [personal] survival and rebirth without any further discussion or argument" (p. 13). This is a pretty big first bite to swallow without any discussion, and it might require the cognitive equivalent of a Heimlich maneuver to put things right.

It should be noted that Sursem is not the only group to publish a massive tome in 2015. A group of skeptics have published a 706-page behemoth entitled *The Myth of An Afterlife: The Case Against Life After Death (MoA)*, in which they debunk the notion of personal survival.

There is an intimate relation between brain states and mental states that makes it difficult to conceive of how personal survival (survival of one's thoughts, memories, emotions, skills, etc.) could take place after destruction of one's brain. This evidence is reviewed extensively in *MoA*. Survival researchers in parapsychology for the most part ignore this evidence (or are ignorant of it), rendering their arguments empty and unpersuasive. Survival researchers should familiarize themselves with this literature. To ignore it any longer places them in a perilous position in which they appear to be scientifically illiterate in the eyes of the mainstream scientific community.

Incidentally, on the very first page of *MoA*, Keith Augustine notes that the volume addresses only personal survival and does not address impersonal survival, such as the survival of centers of pure consciousness or absorption into a "world mind." In my own analysis of the literature relating to survival (Stokes, 2014), I have deemed such impersonal forms of survival to be the most likely to occur in reality. These forms of subpersonal, impersonal, and suprapersonal survival are difficult to refute (and difficult, but perhaps not impossible, to test given the current state of our scientific knowledge).

It is too bad that the arguments put forth in *MoA* and *BP* do not "speak" to one another, as they are addressed to separate audiences. Both volumes represent a form of "preaching to the choir." This continues the counterproductive cognitive isolation between the literature of the skeptics and that of survival proponents.

Kelly argues against the prevailing scientific view that memories are based on traces in the brain.

He notes that consciousness may be divided in both a "top-down" manner (e.g., subcortical vs. cortical regions of the brain) or side-by-side manner (e.g., left hemisphere vs. right hemisphere). As further evidence for divided consciousness, Kelly cites cases of automatic writing with two hands, as well as alien-hand syndrome. (The latter is lovingly depicted in Peter Sellers' portrayal of Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove.) Kelly notes that subconscious states may manifest higher skills that are not possessed by the primary personality, as in the case of Patience Worth and cases of xenoglossy. Kelly also cites the well-known case of the Indian mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan, who discovered a vast amount of mathematical knowledge, without much in the way of training in the field.

Kelly discusses the "binding problem," in which diverse brain activity is bound into a single conscious perception, which in his view is not achieved anatomically, but rather through a global neuronal workspace, a view endorsed by many mainstream neuroscientists and cognitive psychologists. It should be noted that the binding problem poses difficulties for all hierarchical theories of mind, including physicalism.

He attributes mystical experiences to direct knowledge of a higher mind. He notes that neurocognitive modules cannot function without homunculi, as they would otherwise lack what we possess, namely conscious minds. Finally he asserts that the theory of quantum mechanics shows that matter in the Newtonian sense does not exist, a conclusion that I wholeheartedly endorse.

Kelly's chapter is followed by a chapter by Paul Marshall on mystical states. He notes that both psi and mystical experiences are related to the psychological states/traits of transliminality, thin ego boundaries, and absorption.

He endorses the view that the brain and nervous system act as reducing valves or filters to screen out forms of higher consciousness and to focus attention on stimuli that are more directly attuned to the biological needs of the organism. These ideas are discussed by several of the contributors to *BP* (as well as several of the contributors to *MoA*, but of course from a more skeptical viewpoint). To avoid redundancy, these arguments are summarized below.

There are several versions of the "filter" theory (which are not often distinguished by their proponents):

1. The *filter model*, in which the brain is seen as limiting one's attention to the events that are most immediately relevant to one's biological survival.
2. The *transmission model*, in which the brain is seen as merely a transmitter for mental states.
3. The *instrument model*, in which the subject's mind "plays" the brain like a piano or other instrument.

Under the filter model, if the brain is damaged or destroyed, higher consciousness is no longer restricted and floods the subject's mind. One would expect brain-damaged subjects to manifest paranormal awareness, floods of memory, feats of high skills, and deep spiritual insights. Alzheimer's disease should make the mind clearer, rather than dimmer. Needless to say, this is not what is usually observed (except in some cases of deathbed apparitions and terminal lucidity).

The transmission model seems to be at odds with the findings of cognitive neuroscience, in which experimentally manipulated brain states often give rise to complex causal chains that involve mental events. Thus, the direction of causation is certainly not always top-down.

The instrument model, the transmission model, and physicalism all predict a degradation in communicated mental states if the brain is damaged or, Heavens forbid, entirely consumed by flesh-eating bacteria.

The occasionally reported phenomenon of "terminal lucidity," in which a patient suddenly manifests highly improved mental powers just before death, is often taken as supporting the transmission or instrument models. However, it actually contradicts them, unless the physical brain that acts as the transmitter or instrument of communication is somehow miraculously repaired before death, producing a sudden clarity in the patient's mental state. Such improvement would likely also be compatible with physicalism. Thus, one is faced with the problem of distinguishing between the transmission and instrument models on the one hand and physicalism on the other, on an empirical basis. Physicalism seems to be more parsimonious than the transmission and instrument models, in that it does not propose the existence of some sort of mental realm in addition to the physical world.

Marshall urges that theories of mystical states should not neglect psi, and vice versa. He notes that mystical experiences may give direct insights into the natural world (such as the structure of spacetime). They also point to the unity and timelessness of consciousness. Marshall does not cite the work of Lawrence LeShan (LeShan 1969, 1976, 1984; LeShan & Moreaneau, 1982) in this regard, a glaring omission. LeShan's name does not even appear in the index for *BP* (which is disconcertingly incomplete).

Marshall provides a very detailed summary of the types of mystical experience.

He cites idealism (the doctrine that the world is mental in nature) as being closest to his position on the mind-body problem. Similar views include panpsychism (the doctrine that all things are suffused with consciousness), pantheism (the view that God is in all things), and panentheism (the view that God

is within all physical things, and that God extends beyond the physical universe). Pantheism is the view endorsed by many if not most members of the Sursem group, almost to the extent that it becomes something of a “party line.”

The second chapter is by Michael Grosso and is devoted to the transmission theory of mind-body interaction, which has already been discussed. Grosso takes terminal lucidity as confirming Henri Bergson’s theory that memories are not destroyed by brain damage, but are merely rendered inaccessible. Please see *MoA* for a discussion of the overwhelming evidence that memories are stored as brain traces. This is another disconnect caused by the isolation of parapsychology from modern neuroscience. It would have been more illuminating if the essays in *BP* and *MoA* appeared in the same volume, or for a more long-term solution, in the same ongoing journal (see below).

Grosso cites the English philosopher F. C. S. Schiller’s argument that the brain is a “labor-saving” device that allows us to carry out automatic processes such as shoelace-tying and cutlery operation. In Schiller’s view, matter is not what produces consciousness, but rather that which limits it. Grosso provides a thorough history of the transmission and filter models, which have already been discussed.

Grosso cites favorably the philosopher C. J. Ducasse’s philosophy of hypophenomenalism, which holds that physical events are epiphenomena produced by mental events; thus, mind is primary and the physical world is merely a manifestation of mind. In a recent book, the physicist Max Tegmark (2014) has suggested that all mathematically possible universes are realized. In this view, God might be thought of as the ultimate mathematician, looking at his creations from every possible angle, much as a human mathematician may look at the magnificent graph of a fractal, zooming in and out to look at it from different vantage points. This might be thought of as a form of idealism.

Grosso reviews the work of the Hellenistic philosopher Philo Judaeus, who proposed that God is the mind of the universe, just as we are the minds of our bodies. Our physical minds are thus a part of a greater Mind. This should not be taken as implying that God has a human body, but that each mind contains a divine spark of God, which is a nonanthropomorphic interpretation of the doctrine that humans are made in the image of God.

Grosso closes with an endorsement of pantheism as an explanation of the mind-body relationship.

The next chapter is by E. F. Kelly and David E. Presti and is devoted to an analysis of the transmission model. They cite neuroscientist Christof Koch’s observation that subjectivity is too radically different from anything else for it to be regarded as an emergent phenomenon. Koch is a reformed reductionist who now subscribes to the philosophy of panpsychism. Kelly and Presti discuss the evidence linking transpersonal states to brain processes and personality traits. They also discuss the psychobiology of creativity and mysticism. Their review of these topics as well as of the instrument, transmission, and filter theories of the mind-brain relationship is very detailed, and I learned a lot from reading it.

The next chapter is by quantum physicist Henry Stapp. Stapp notes that quantum mechanics (QM) reinstates consciousness as a fundamental part of reality. The QM relation between psychological and physical events is basically top-down. If QM decisions are moved up the physical hierarchy to a suprapersonal level encompassing the universe as a whole, the observed mental events remain fixed in Stapp’s view. The mathematician and physicist John Von Neumann called such preserved aspects “abstract egos.” Stapp notes that the impassable gulf between objects and minds in Newtonian physics is spanned in QM. He observes that QM allows ontologically nonphysical minds or egos to inject logically required and causally effective inputs into the QM-described brain dynamics.

Physicalism comes in a great many varieties. Perhaps the most prominent version right now asserts that no laws of physics, including QM, are violated in mind-brain interaction. One might call this promissory physicalism, as it presupposes that the laws of physics, or some suitable future extension thereof, will be able to account for mind-brain transactions. Of course to the extent that such an advanced theory of physics partakes of novel entities, laws, and processes, it could be regarded as a defeat of physicalism (or at least of the promissory physicalism based on currently understood physical laws and entities).

If the extended physics postulates such novel entities, processes, and laws, these might be regarded as spiritual or mental entities rather than physical entities, especially if they incorporate the consciousness

of the observer (as in QM). QM may allow consciousness to inject logically required and causally effective input into the QM-described brain dynamics. As an example of how conscious observers might effect such a directive influence, Stapp cites the quantum Zeno effect. He argues that through repeated observation, a conscious observer could maintain a QM state indefinitely, as the QM state will be reset in each iteration. Thus the observer may delay QM vector collapse until a propitious moment, allowing top-down partial control of the brain. Stapp's argument relies on orthodox QM theory, and orthodox physicalists assert that no violations of the laws of physics will be observed in mind-brain interaction, including the statistical laws of QM. Of course, parapsychologists have amassed a vast body of evidence for psychokinetic (PK) effects on QM processes. However, as explained earlier, the existence of psi phenomena is not well supported by existing experimental evidence in view of the high rate of scientific misconduct and fraud in the scientific community at large (Stokes, 2014).

Stapp asserts that the human brain may be divided into tiny spatial regions, each containing a pure (uncollapsed) QM state. This is similar to my own theory postulating that there are likely a large number of centers of consciousness inhabiting a human (or animal) brain (Stokes, 2014).

Stapp asserts that the task of science is not to cast mental realities that are known to exist out of the scientific worldview or *weltanschauung*. Rather it is about reconciling man-the-object with man-the-subject.

Stapp notes that there are no faster-than-light (FTL) influences in classical physics, but FTL influences are required in QM (although it should be noted that such FTL influences in QM cannot be used to send a signal unless one postulates that conscious observers may psychokinetically impose a pattern on these random events). He notes that QM influence is global in nature and suggests that QM theory is akin to a form of idealistic ontology in which the primary reality is mental in nature.

He views the seemingly retroactive action of observation as eliminating records of unrealized events and alternative histories.

Stapp interprets Libet's finding of a buildup of readiness potential in the brain that precedes the subjective time of decision in voluntary choice experiments as reflecting the neural preparation that leads up to the decision to act rather than to the act itself.

Stapp then turns to the survival problem. He notes that one foundation of Von Neumann's interpretation of QM is that the thinking entity (ego) aspect of each of us is ontologically different from the QM-described physical universe. After death, such an ego could simply cease to exist. Alternatively, it could survive and have a stream of consciousness. Such an ego or center of consciousness will cease to be a factor in the physically-described world, unless some alternative mode of interaction is possible.

Stapp proposes that such egos or centers of consciousness may reincarnate or possess another human body (such as in mediumship). However, in such cases, one would need to explain how memories and personality traits could survive after the destruction of the brain.

Stapp then launches into a discussion of psi phenomena, including clairvoyance, macro-PK, and precognition, including a review of Daryl Bem's work on retroactive causation.

Stapp concludes with the observation that it is impossible for classically conceived reality to contain conscious experiences, as classical reality was purposely stripped of all conscious-like properties. He notes that QM brings mind back into the causal structure.

The succeeding chapter is by Harald Atmanspacher, a physicist and editor-in-chief of the journal *Mind and Matter*, and Wolfgang Fach, a psychologist (F&A). F&A begin by discussing the philosophy of dual-aspect theory and neutral monism, in which matter has both a physical aspect and a mental aspect, citing Spinoza as a prominent proponent of this view.

At this point, the reader's head may be spinning, trying to tease apart the philosophies of materialism, dual-aspect theory, neutral monism, panpsychism, pantheism, idealism, physicalism, and panentheism. Aren't they all the same, if observable matter conforms to the laws of physics, as it generally appears to do? There seems to be no way of empirically or even conceptually teasing them apart, at least not if the deity continues her nap. Thus, these grand theories of the mind-body problem may all be operationally equivalent to one another. Phenomena such as psi and personal survival would throw a monkey wrench into the whole

physicalist program insofar as they would violate the laws of physics or would at least be inexplicable by current laws of physics.

One form of physicalism is promissory materialism, which is the view that all mental activity will be accounted for based on current theories of physics or a suitable extension thereof. Given the current state of contradictory and muddled physical theories, I wouldn't count on this happening anytime soon. Psi phenomena are a notoriously difficult pill for promissory materialists to swallow, and that is why these phenomena have been so heavily attacked by physicalist scientists and philosophers. However, the evidence discussed above suggests that psi phenomena may not exist, or that if they do exist, they cannot be reliably elicited in experimental tests. However, if their beef is with physicalism, Sursem is correct to focus its efforts on psi phenomena and personal survival. But such phenomena are not necessary to support a belief in an afterlife. Logical arguments can be mustered in support of the survival of the soul, as shown below.

Before leaving this catalog of "solutions" to the mind-body problem, we should consider the philosophical doctrine of radical materialism, which asserts that conscious experiences and conscious selves do not exist, and epiphenomenalism, which asserts that conscious experiences and mental events are caused by physical events, but exert no influence upon them. These positions used to be widely held, for instance by Daniel Dennett and B. F. Skinner. However, these are self-refuting philosophies. The writings of radical materialists and epiphenomenalists are material events. Thus, if their theories are true, their writings cannot have been caused by mental events such as thoughts and reasoned arguments so why read them? If they have been caused by actual thoughts, this falsifies their doctrine that mental events exert no influence upon material events. Their philosophies are thus either vacuous or self-refuting. Also, mental events and conscious selves are directly experienced, and it is ontological madness to deny their existence. Most advocates of these absurd positions have abandoned them in the face of an onslaught of ridicule or have had the common decency to retire or die. These versions of physicalism are surely false. By the way, for you fledgling scientists out there, these cases illustrate that the rise to academic prominence is greatly facilitated by proposing an absurd theory and never abandoning it in the face of criticism. One's citation index and fame grow exponentially as critics pile up to attack this absurd position.

Strangely, even idealism, which denies the very existence of physical events, may be a form of physicalism, if the behavior of phenomenal objects conforms to the laws of physics as mentally implemented (presumably by some sort of mathematically sophisticated intelligence existing within a greater mind). Ditto for solipsism.

Psi phenomena would pose the greatest challenge to promissory physicalism, if they exist. However, if the behavior of ostensibly physical events conforms to the laws of physics, all the above solutions to the mind-body problem may be essentially the same for human observers and scientists. There is likely no way to test them empirically against each other at present. If new entities and processes need to be introduced to explain the phenomena of consciousness, it is possible that they may easily be assimilated into the laws of physics, and this assimilation might be taken as a victory for promissory physicalism. If such entities cannot easily be assimilated into physics, this might be taken as a strike against promissory physicalism.

This leaves out Cartesian dualism, according to which some higher cognitive functions such as thinking and memory occur in a nonmaterial mind, which in turn interacts with the physical body. Cartesian dualism would be supported over physicalism if such functions cannot be identified with brain processes or if such processes continue to be manifested after the death of the brain. Thus, the evidence for personal survival could be taken as refuting the doctrine of promissory physicalism based on the laws of physics as currently understood. However, there is overwhelming evidence that mental events are intimately dependent on brain processes, summarized in *MoA*, which renders the survival of personality elements after the destruction of the brain implausible. These comments are directed at the hypothesis that elements of one's personality survive death but leave open the possibility of nonpersonal survival of centers of pure consciousness, as discussed above.

Returning to A&F's chapter, they discuss the principle of complementarity, as proposed by Wolfgang Pauli and C. G. Jung, in which two seemingly incompatible views, such as the particle and wave theories of elementary particles, may both be valid in their respective domains.

A&F assert that measurement in QM may be seen as an intervention, decomposing a system constituting an inseparable whole into locally separable parts. They distinguish between ontic states and epistemic states. Ontic states are grounded in a holistic conception of reality that is empirically inaccessible. Epistemic states are grounded in an operationally accessible reality. A&F observe that in mainstream physics, consciousness is not involved in QM measurements. They cite Pauli's remark that the "autonomous action of the soul [is] something that is objectively psychical that cannot and should not be explained by material causes" (*BP*, p. 202).

A&F note that Jung saw reality as "psychoid in nature," placing him in or near the idealism camp. They assert that within a dual-aspect framework, it is wrong to interpret mental states as caused by material states or vice versa as mental events are simply physical events experienced from within.

A&F note that people have a model of their selves and a model of the world, which they compare to the dichotomy of mind and matter. The self-model can be accessed only internally. Although it is true that only the subject has direct access to inner events, external observers may have indirect access, such as through introspective reports.

The next chapter is by Bernard Carr and is devoted to hyperspatial models of matter and mind. Carr proposes that one's inner phenomenal world and the material world are different cross-sections of a five-dimensional space. He provides an overview of hyperspatial models, including Plato's cave, theories of higher dimensions in modern physics such as the Kaluza-Klein models and brane worlds, the theories of J. W. Dunne, C. D. Broad, John Smythies, Jean-Pierre Jordan, Targ, and Rauscher, and the dubious theory proposed by William Tiller that access to higher-dimensional realities are characterized by different rates of "vibration."

Of these theories, the most developed is the eight-dimensional spacetime model proposed by Elizabeth Rauscher and Russell Targ (R&T). As none of these hyperspace models offer any way of empirically measuring separation in the hyperdimensional spaces, these theories are untestable. R&T's theory is based on elementary mistakes in the algebra of complex numbers and a misinterpretation of space-time intervals in Minkowski spacetime (see Stokes, 2011, for a recent commentary). R&T have not corrected these mistakes, although I have pointed them out many times over the years.

Carr then discusses his own model. He notes that the experience of "time flow" is not accounted for in modern theories of physics and suggests that QM may be of help in this regard. He suggests that there may be a hierarchy of QM sensors associated with different "actuality planes."

Carr proposes that a "specious present" may be associated with 40-Hz oscillations of the brain (commonly proposed as a means of binding neural events into holistic perceptions). The concept of a specious present or "atom" of subjective time has been proposed by E. Robert Kelly as well as by William James. Multiplying the time interval associated with a 40-Hz oscillation (a "specious present" of 0.025 seconds) by the speed of light, Carr computes 10,000 km to be the distance associated with the specious present. This distance is the furthest a *classical causal signal* can travel in 0.025 seconds. Carr asserts that psi phenomena may occur within this distance (but why should psi signals be limited by the speed of light?). This gives rise to a hockey-puck-shaped "atom of subjective spacetime" with a height of 0.025 seconds and a radius of 10,000 km. He proposes that memories of physical events involve direct access to those events. This is somewhat confusing in view of the fact that Carr limits the specious present to 0.025 seconds.

Carr proposes that people's dreams occur within their own spacetimes. He asserts that apparitions may be located within normal space or may inhabit their own space, which he compares to Myers' metetherial space or H. H. Price's psychic ether.

The next chapter is by Gregory Shaw, a theologian, and is devoted to a consideration of Neo-Platonic philosophy. He notes that seemingly supernatural phenomena have been manifested by Neo-Platonic philosophers and that self-transformation is a central process in ancient philosophical traditions, as is the development of supernatural powers.

Shaw notes that Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism, recognized three levels of reality: (a) the One and the Good, which is beyond Being and is the hidden source and font of reality; (b) Being-Mind-Demiurge, the active principle of intelligence that shapes the current of divine power; and (c) the World Soul,

which is the manifestation of the Divine Mind as a living cosmos and the stream of physical reality.

Shaw states that the Plotinian procession from the One might be imagined as a series of expanding circles, originating from and returning to their source. As the One has no duality, it cannot be discursively known. This is too bad for those of us who are discursive knowers (including, one would think, Shaw, who discourses about the One).

Shaw notes that Plotinus assimilated the Gnostics' distrust of matter. The Plotinian soul deigns to never enter a material body, as the evils the soul encounters are caused entirely by matter.

Proclus viewed the gods as formless but noted the incapacity of potential viewers to imagine the formless without a form, which explains the popularity of religious icons and imagery.

Shaw notes that the physicalistic worldview under which we operate is born of Enlightenment rationalism and asserts that "the Cartesian split between mind and matter has drained the world of what the Neo-Platonists—in their imaginative-capacity—experienced as a living and breathing soul" (p. 306). He notes that unlike the Abrahamic religious traditions, Neo-Platonism does not have a Supreme Being, rather the One is the source of all being. A similar doctrine is on offer from Hinduism. Shaw's chapter provides a good, comprehensive review of these topics.

The ensuing chapter is by Edward F. Kelly and Ian Whicher (K&W) and is devoted to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. They cite the philosopher Frank Dilley's observation that in the Samkhya tradition everything is material except pure awareness. They note that the siddhis (supernormal powers) claimed in Patanjali's Sutras include psi and extreme psychophysical influences. K&W note that parapsychologists have confirmed that meditation is a psi-conducive state. They view Patanjali's denigration of psi powers as a mistake. They note that he adopted a filter theory of mind-body interaction.

They go on to discuss mystical and contemplative traditions in Catholicism, including documented psi phenomena in the lives of saints. K&W's discussion of these topics is very detailed.

The next chapter is by Lorilai Biernacki, who discusses Abhinavagupta's (A's) Tantric teachings. Biernacki is the sole female contributor to *BP*. There are no Asian or Hispanic contributors, although there are two chapters devoted to Asian religions.

Readers will need a strong stomach for Sanskrit terms to work their way through Biernacki's text in places. We will avoid most of them here.

Biernacki notes that A adopts a position of panentheism in which the Divine permeates all things in the universe, as well as some things that lie outside the universe. She reviews A's teaching regarding the subtle body, which can affect material realities in ways that are outside the agency of the physical body. Biernacki discusses Tantric doctrines relating to reincarnation and disembodied entities. She notes that the attainment of siddhis is a primary goal in most Tantric traditions. A's Tantrism recognizes the innate nature of the self. She notes that under A's Tantrism, it is the subtle body that survives death and reincarnates. The subtle body is also less limited by space and time than is the physical body, allowing the manifestation of siddhis or supernatural powers. A tells us that the basic substance of what we perceive as physical matter is a nonmaterial and fundamentally conscious principle. Biernacki states that lower regions of the mind are treated as matter in Indian philosophy. The true basic distinction is between conscious and sentient events on the one hand and insentient material events on the other. Biernacki notes that there is a blurring of the distinction between consciousness/sentience and the material world in A's philosophy. In A's philosophy, mind operates nonlocally on matter, without intervention of local physical forces or causes. Mind and matter are seen as expressions of the same impulse. It is the consciousness of the experiencing subject that creates time as well as the possibility of cause and effect. Such acts of creation in A's theory are similar to the role of the observer and the notion of "becoming" in QM. In A's philosophy, the physical world is a kind of mental reality or consciousness. The material and the mental are fundamentally convertible to one another. The impetus toward matter entails a loss of indeterminacy. The mental may have large scale effects on the physical, resulting in the manifestation of siddhis, or supernormal powers. Biernacki claims that macro-PK (macroscopic psychokinesis) requires that there is no articulated sense of self within a body. She cites the Vedanta metaphor in which the ocean (Brahman or World Mind) gives rise to waves (individual selves). She notes that A's Tantric philosophy is a form of panentheism, and she compares the view in A's Tantra to

Stapp's model of mind-matter as described above. In particular, she compares Stapp's quantum Zeno effect, which requires sustained focus on a physical process, to the meditative technique of concentration.

I should point out that I generally subscribe to the philosophy of panentheism endorsed by the majority of the contributors to *BP*, but as an amateur theologian rather than a scientist. However, you can keep the subtle bodies, in view of the general failure to detect such bodies. I would be hard-pressed to propose empirical tests or even conceptual distinctions between many of the philosophical positions mentioned above. For instance, is the God of panentheism immaterial or physical? Perhaps these categories should be dropped in favor of discussion of the roles of the deity, consciousness, and matter. I am, however, ready to jettison radical materialism into the deep abyss from which it came. Fortunately, this philosophy has largely been jettisoned by the academic community at this point. May it never rise from the dung heap again.

Biernacki's chapter is followed by a discussion of a proposed Neo-Leibnizian model by Paul Marshall. Marshall presents a theory with two components: a reservoir of events that could potentially become conscious, and a filter that determines which events will become conscious. He proposes that the reservoir may house centers of consciousness, but that these are generally subliminal or subconscious, as they lie below the threshold of everyday awareness. I too have proposed the existence of such centers, which I call microsouls, minisouls, macrosouls, and megasouls (Stokes, 2014).

Marshall notes that monist systems such as idealism, dual-aspect theory, and neutral monism are of particular interest, as they challenge materialism by taking consciousness, mental perceptions, experiences, and feelings to be characteristic of the world at large. They may shed light on the furthest reaches of the subconscious beyond the individual minds and may help to explain supernormal phenomena, in Marshall's view.

Marshall notes that, in his philosophy of monadology, the famed mathematician and philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz proposed that the world consists of monads or centers of consciousness. Marshall notes that Leibniz's monads are not composite and cannot be created or destroyed. Monads have a common origin in God. Leibniz asserted that, as well as being indestructible, monads have complete perceptions of the universe. This contrasts with the panexperiential approach of Alfred North Whitehead, who proposed that the world is composed of "occasions" or fleeting experiences. Each occasion arises from the occasions that precede it and dies upon giving rise to the occasions that follow it. There are no permanent souls in Whitehead's "process philosophy." Marshall classifies Whitehead's theory as a form of panexperientialism, and he sees his own contribution as a transformation and modernization of Leibnizian metaphysics, calling it a "Neo-Leibnizian" approach to explaining consciousness as well as psi phenomena.

In process philosophy, God is seen as creating and sustaining the universe. He does so from many perspectives within the world (each of which corresponds to a monad). Each monad has its own path of development and is associated with its own train of thoughts and perceptions, and both God and these monads see the universe from all perspectives. It is not to be supposed that monads are positioned in space or undergo changes in time. Each may be thought of as a center of pure consciousness. This Neo-Leibnizian monadology bears a similarity to cosmologist Max Tegmark's view that all mathematically possible universes are created, each of which may be explored by conscious observers (Tegmark, 2014). Each monad carries within itself something of all its past and future states.

The hierarchy of monads associated with a person may amplify and organize perceptions. Most primitive monads have basic bodies and are unconscious, giving the appearance of inert matter, although groups of simple monads are endowed with perception and appetite (desire). He notes that matter has mental properties, as opposed to the Cartesian view that matter is extended substance lacking consciousness (vs. mind, which is unextended in space).

There are causal processes associated with monads. Marshall notes that Leibniz's monadology is a form panexperientialism, "panperceptualism," or panpsychism, and he notes that monads provide a solution of the "binding problem" (how diverse sensations are bound into a single perception). Monads are complete wholes, each an expression of the universe in its totality. In Marshall's view, monads interact with one another. However, he rejects Leibniz's view that monads are placed in pre-established harmony by God (which is one of the main reasons I myself have balked at endorsing Leibniz's theory).

More sophisticated monads have sensory organs. Central or dominant monads are called “minds,” “rational souls” or “spirits.”

Marshall turns to the subject of psi phenomena. He notes that the philosopher H. H. Price referred to Leibniz’s concept of latent omniscience to explain psi. This omniscience is latent because much of this knowledge is subconscious. Only God is truly omniscient.

Marshall notes that Leibnizian monadology renders paranormal cognition normal.

He discusses H. H. Price’s distinction between the radiation hypothesis of psi phenomena and theories that appeal to direct acquaintance. He notes that Price’s theory involves a two-stage model, in which direct contact with the paranormal target is followed by the emergence of the paranormal knowledge into consciousness. This emergence is holistic. An ESP target card is not perceived atom-by-atom, but rather as the whole card. Psi perception involves direct acquaintance with the target at a subconscious level. He notes that Price proposed that this direct acquaintance takes place in the common unconscious, or shared unconscious regions of the participants’ minds.

Price asserted that the right question to ask is not how psi is possible, but why it does not occur all the time. With regard to Bergson’s filter theory of memory, we should ask not why we remember so little, but why we remember anything at all.

Price observed that clairvoyance in a monadological universe is essentially telepathy. He noted that retrocognition and precognition are explained by the fact that the present states of monads are filled with their pasts and pregnant with their futures. Marshall notes that, in a monadology, psychokinesis may be construed as a telepathic process rather than the force of “mind over matter.”

Marshall observes that monadology implies knowledge of a universal mind, as each monad has subconscious knowledge of the rest of the universe. Thus, mystical experiences are not surprising in a monadological universe; however, Leibniz was not a mystic and eschewed mystical approaches to knowledge. Marshall suggests that the Leibnizian view of the world as consisting of a few relatively distinct perceptions supported by a cosmic sea of indistinct perceptions should be overturned in favor of the view of the cosmos as composed of islands of indistinct perceptions surrounded by a sea of perfectly distinct perceptions. Marshall states that the Neo-Leibnizian approach he advocates is a form of idealism and panpsychism, and that all monads are perfect minds.

Under the Neo-Leibnizian view, phenomenal experience is already in the brain. Base matter has qualia (sensations, experiences, etc.), whereas under the radical materialist view, matter does not have felt qualities. This is in contrast to neutral monism, the philosophy embraced by Bertrand Russell, in which matter does have felt properties and qualia.

Marshall notes that the noumenal experiences reported by mystics encompass past, present and future, while phenomenal experiences have a transient quality. Each moment of a phenomenal experience is confined to a specious present. Marshall notes that while “we are fully conscious of everything in the universe at a subliminal level, we are conscious of very little at the supraliminal level because the phenomenal field of experience is very narrow” (p. 408).

Marshall then turns to the survival problem. He notes that Leibniz viewed monads as simple substances without parts, which can neither be created nor destroyed. The physical body, however, is composite and thus subject to dissolution and death. As monads are filled with the past, personality traits and memories might be expected to survive death at a subliminal level and might be reincarnated, as the monad is absorbed by another body.

The next chapter is by Adam Crabtree, who reviews Charles Sanders Pierce’s metaphysics. Pierce regarded matter as a more specialized and partially deadened form of mind. He viewed physical laws as habits a la Sheldrake or, perhaps more flatteringly, symmetry-breaking in modern physics. Pierce noted that the brain houses no central cell. He asserted that the unity of consciousness is not of physiological origin. Such unity must therefore be of metaphysical origin. Pierce contended that an evolutionary philosophy requires a personal creator. He notes that a human’s circle of society is a sort of loosely compacted person. Pierce distinguished between mind and consciousness. He asserted that mind is present in all reality, but consciousness is present only in higher animals. Crabtree views Pierce as a panentheist, which may be

difficult to square with this restriction of consciousness. Pierce contended that feeling is operative in protoplasm, as it is governed by teleological or final causes and exercises all the functions of mind. Pierce viewed death as a vacation, a time of freedom from the physical world. He accepted the existence of apparitions, but regarded them as mere shades. Souls, he asserted, are ghosts of their former selves.

I found most of Crabtree's chapter and his explication of Pierce's theory as well as the direct quotes from Pierce to be largely unintelligible.

The next chapter is by Eric M. Weiss, who explicates a view that he calls transphysical process metaphysics (TPM). Weiss asserts that psychokinesis is involved in every bodily action we take. (Please note that such "internal PK" is not generally considered to be a form of psi.) He rejects idealism, epiphenomenalism, and dualism in favor of a process-oriented Whiteheadian panexperientialism. In this, his approach is similar to that of David Ray Griffin (1994a, 1997). Weiss calls the worlds experienced in dreaming, lucid dreaming, and life after death "transphysical worlds." He views the everyday waking world as a very rigid and highly constrained dream. After death we survive in a transphysical body in a transphysical world. In the transphysical or parapsychological view, our inner activity is a direct causal expression of the thoughts and feelings of those around us in the waking world, as opposed to the isolated minds of the normal scientific view.

Weiss advocates a version of Whitehead's process theology in which elementary events, or "occasions," reflect the past and determine the future. Events are no longer classified as objective or subjective. Each of us is an actual occasion of experience. Every past event is an actual occasion.

At this point, I will state the reasons for my own rejection of Whiteheadian process theology. In Whitehead's theory the world is composed of fleeting events, with no provision for a continuing self. However, I seem to be directly aware of myself as a center of consciousness that persists over macroscopic time intervals. I would submit that this knowledge is direct and infallible. In a universe such as Whitehead's in which nothing persists for more than a nanosecond, there is no room for a self that persists for at least the few seconds it takes my brain to paraphrase Descartes, saying that "I sense this and then that, and therefore I am" (at least for a little while longer than a nanosecond or the "specious present" granted me under the Whiteheadian view). For much the same reason, I reject the Buddhist doctrine of No Soul (also called No Self or No Mind).

Incidentally, I have proposed an alternative model of consciousness based on a hierarchy of centers of pure consciousness many times over the past two decades. This theory differs from the model proposed in *BP*. See for instance my last two books (Stokes, 2007, 2014). Yet none of the contributors to *BP* cite these books or any of my other writings on the subject over the past decade. Unlike their models, mine does not rely on the existence of psi phenomena or the survival of personality elements after death, both of which are overwhelmingly rejected by modern scientists. As pointed out in Stokes (2014) and in *MoA*, the intimate dependence of mental events on brain states that has been discovered by modern neuroscientists makes it extremely implausible that personality elements could persist after the death of the brain. As shown in Stokes (2014, 2015), the experimental evidence for psi phenomena can be explained on the basis of the very high rates of fraud, data selection, and misconduct in the general scientific community. Thus, psi phenomena and personal survival provide shaky ground on which to base a general model of mental processes.

My hierarchical model involving centers of pure consciousness does not depend on the existence of psi phenomena or the survival of personality elements. What survives death in my model are centers of pure consciousness that do not carry personality traits such as memories. Thus, my model avoids the cost of appealing to phenomena that are overwhelmingly rejected by the scientific community (and with good reason). The version of pantheism I am peddling comes free of charge, as there is no paranormal price to pay. The "God" part of my pantheism is comprised of a nonanthropomorphic agent or group of agents existing in a realm that lies beyond our current ken. I am open to the possibility that the set of gods is the null set. Whatever creative agents exist, I do not believe they "keep a finger in the pie" by micromanaging what to them must be the lives of infinitesimal creatures. Thus, when it comes to God, I would more accurately be described as a deist (or atheist) than a theist. (Deist gods do not intervene in the universe after its creation.) Thus, in this respect, I might more accurately be described as a panendeist, rather than as a panentheist. We're on our own down here. For now.

The centers of consciousness in my model, unlike the occasions of Whitehead's process philosophy, extend over macroscopic time intervals. Their scope may be restricted to an elementary particle (microsouls) or may encompass the entire human race or even the universe itself (megasouls).

In my books, I suggest that these centers of consciousness may be un-soul-like in that they may be continually leaving one physical system and entering another, much like an oxygen molecule is breathed out by one person and absorbed by another. After entering a new body, such a center of consciousness may quickly fall under the delusion that it has been there all along, as it carries no memories of its former existence in the previous body. The reason that most of us believe that we are a soul embedded in our present body for life is likely due to a misidentification of oneself with the Person, which encompasses both the body and its phenomenal experiences. I have long argued that you are not your body, as the atoms that comprise your body are replaced from day to day, while you seemingly persist. Neither are you your emotions, memories, and beliefs, as these aspects of the personality change from day to day, while you persist. However, the fact that you are trapped in a physical body (if only momentarily) suggests that you are at least in part physical or are at least capable of direct interaction with matter, which brings you within the realm of matter. If an empirical theory of such interaction is developed, this could be construed as a victory for physicalists (even if the laws of physics have to be slightly modified) or a victory for the opponents of physicalism (for instance, if such laws refer to entities and principles that fall outside those known to current physicists).

Returning to Weiss' chapter, what seems missing from his account is the continuity of experience over macroscopic time intervals. Weiss reviews the work of other predecessors of his own view, including Henri Bergson, Pierre de Chardin, Sri Aurobindo, and Ken Wilber. He notes that Bergson, in contrast with Whitehead, puts greater emphasis on the continuity of, rather than discontinuities in, experience. Weiss states that through a personally ordered society of occasions, one can consider oneself to be an enduring object. However, collections or aggregations of entities are not generally considered to be enduring objects (consider a decaying body, for instance).

Weiss notes that personally ordered societies (of monads) need not trace continuous trajectories through spacetime. They may leave one location in spacetime and re-emerge at a remote location with varying degrees of continuity of memory and purpose. That's right, even though Scotty and you are dead, he can still beam you up (may you rest in peace among the stars, James Doohan).

Weiss distinguishes between high-grade and low-grade occasions, such as those reflecting an animal and those reflecting an electron. This corresponds roughly to the distinction between macrosouls and microsouls in my own ontology.

Weiss contrasts Whitehead's process theology with his own transphysical process metaphysics (TPM). He compares an atom to a cycling system of subatomic particles that cannot be actualized for any duration shorter than the cycle. He proposes that the length of time an entity may exist increases with the grade (level) of the occasion. In contrast to Whitehead, he proposes that "societies" of high-grade occasions may exist on their own entirely, in the absence of lower-grade occasions, with which they may sometimes interact. Weiss calls such higher-order worlds astral and vital worlds (if composed of medium-grade occasions), and mental worlds (if composed of higher-grade occasions). Weiss suggests that even medium-grade occasions, including those of biological cells, survive the death of their bodies. He proposes that higher-grade occasions existing apart from their physical bodies may interact, giving rise to worlds of experience that are in no way dependent on the physical world. Such worlds are creatively more powerful than the physical world. Weiss suggests that such worlds may precede the physical world and may incorporate entities that can be found nowhere in the physical world.

Weiss' TPM theory holds that medium- and high-grade occasions are not part of the physical world. For instance, the medium-grade occasion presiding over a biological cell belongs to the vital world and is not detectable by scientific instruments.

He asserts that higher-grade occasions are naturally telepathic, although this telepathic capacity is limited to images and feelings. He notes that if the participating occasions are restricted to insensate atoms, they cannot account for empathy and telepathy.

Weiss notes the parallels between his TPM theory and quantum mechanics (QM). Quantum events, like occasions, reflect the past and determine the future. Under TPM, psychokinetic events involve higher-order occasions imposing their will on lower-grade occasions outside of the body. Weiss asserts that neither vital (astral) worlds nor mental worlds are dependent on low-grade physical occasions, thus seemingly cutting mind off from matter altogether!

Weiss notes that in contrast to the process philosophy put forth by David Ray Griffin, under TPM all medium and higher-grade occasions never do exist in the waking physical world. He notes that because matter is held to have no characteristics other than those that can be mathematically expressed, there is no reason for matter to exist (kind of like short people in Randy Newman's cosmology).

He asserts that the astral and mental worlds of TPM render personal survival of death and even reincarnation possible.

The next chapter, by Ed Kelly, summarizes the book. He describes the models produced by the Sursem group as "Resonant Opening to Subliminal and Transpersonal Assets," or ROSTA. He states that the group has chosen the acronym ROSTA as it is not easily parodied and has no misleading or irrelevant connotations. This acronym is thus carefully and meticulously designed to protect the group from ridicule. (Perhaps "ROSTA-farians" is the word they were looking for.)

After rolling out the carefully-designed new acronym, Kelly discusses the observational theories in parapsychology. He notes that matter and mind can no longer be sharply distinguished in modern science and that there may be gradations between these two poles. He discusses subtle bodies and proposes that it is the subliminal self, or collective mind, of Myers that survives death. However, this is really a form of suprapersonal survival. My own hierarchical model (Stokes, 2014) provides a view closer to personal survival than this. Kelly notes that Gardner Murphy also proposed a form of survival in a collective or group mind.

Kelly proposes that consciousness may even be extended to plants. My own model (Stokes, 2014) which Kelly does not cite, also extends consciousness to plants.

He notes that William James proposed a version of "pluralistic panpsychism," which James preferred to idealism, which he called an unintelligible pantheistic monster. James resisted the interpretation that the higher self is God, preferring the view that evil originates from outside God. Instead, he embraced a form of pluralistic panpsychism, which he thought was not in conflict with science.

Kelly reiterates his support for panentheism, which he notes has been gaining traction in theological circles. He notes that panentheism is not a single, unified doctrine, and strands of it are present in all the major faiths. It is a doctrine that is more compatible with science than traditional views. In panentheism there is no such thing as matter as classically conceived. (I will note that there is no room for it in modern physics either.) Kelly notes that the Jung scholar Roderick Main has asserted that Jung's analytical psychology implicitly advances a panentheistic metaphysics. He notes that some form of idealism or evolutionary panentheism has emerged as Sursem's "central tendency." He calls for more investigation of spontaneous cases of psi. To paraphrase Smokey Robinson, I will second that promotion. However, one does not need psi to establish panentheism. Many have arrived at panentheism through philosophical and theological arguments that do not make recourse to paranormal phenomena.

The final chapter is by Michael Murphy, who presents an argument for panentheism. He sees panentheism as an emerging canon, which lurks in margins of academic science and religion. He sees panentheism as being evolutionary in nature and as an increasing manifestation of the Divine.

Murphy provides a review of the history and development of panentheism from a Christian slant. He cites Friedrich Oetinger's view that God emerges from Himself and returns to Himself. Murphy reviews the panentheistic philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Ken Wilber. He discusses some Eastern views, including those of the yogic and meditative traditions. He asserts that the cosmic evolution of panentheism has a future that stretches beyond the mind's reach. (But will it remain after the sun becomes a red giant and swallows the Earth a few billion years from now? That is like next week on a cosmic timescale.)

Murphy invokes post-rationalist deconstructionists such as Jacques Derrida, whose views help to free us from the crippling habits of rational thought. He does, however, praise the increasing rationalism across world cultures. He notes that faith is becoming increasingly fact-based. He cites psi phenomena as

supporting the pantheistic worldview. He notes, however, that psi research and the study of mystical states are still rejected by the reductionist establishment. Given the present state of psi research, basing an argument for pantheism on psi is somewhat like throwing a spitball at a tsunami. It is no doubt more reassuring to view oneself as a piece of God rather than as a temporarily existing throbbing heap of atoms. However, if we are indeed God wandering in the desert of the physical world, we've got a bitching case of amnesia.

In summary, in *BP* the members of the Sursem group are led to endorse a philosophy of pantheism after examining a wide range of scientific, philosophical, and theological evidence. Evidence for personal survival of death (survival of personality traits such as memories, emotions, attitudes, skills) include such phenomena as past-life memories, and mediumistic communications. To the extent that this evidence involves the unexplained transmission of information, it could be explained by psi (assuming psi exists, which has by no means been proven). One step that would bring us closer to personal survival without psi would be to assume that some personality elements are retained in a trace such as the psychophore proposed by Ian Stevenson (1987) or the ψ -trace proposed by the philosopher C. D. Broad (1925). Such traces may be pictured as a collection of psychic flotsam and jetsam floating in the sea of a collective mind or even in the physical world itself. However, even if the existence of such traces is thought to bolster the survival hypothesis, an anomalous flow of information would still exist, and psi by any other name may smell no sweeter to the mainstream cynic. However, one does not need to accept psi phenomena to embrace the philosophy of pantheism. Many philosophers, theologians, religious leaders, and scientists subscribe to this philosophy without basing their argument on the existence of psi. I am one of them. I am also an adherent to panpsychism, pantheism, panentheism, panendeism, idealism, dual-aspect theory, solipsism, and non-ridiculous materialism. After intensive study over many years, I can no longer clearly see the differences among these positions. Due to the lack of any compelling evidence, I do not believe in the survival of personality elements (especially in light of the overwhelming body of evidence that personality elements are intimately dependent on brain activity). I also no longer believe that the existing body of experimental evidence establishes the existence of psi, in view of the high rates of experimenter misconduct in science in general, which are sufficiently high to explain the meager body of significant results that have been reported in parapsychology (see Stokes, 2014).

Pantheism and physicalism are not incompatible. In fact, it is likely that most people who describe themselves as pantheists (a word that likely falls outside the vocabulary of the non-cognoscenti) do not believe that their philosophical stance requires that the laws of physics be violated.

The physicalism which the Sursem members reject would seem to be promissory physicalism, the assertion that the laws of physics as they are currently understood or some minor modification thereof will be sufficient to explain mental activity. Of course it is widely recognized that these laws cannot explain, and in all likelihood will never be able to explain, such elemental facts as the existence of consciousness.

This explains Sursem's focus on such phenomena as psi and personal survival, as these phenomena are inexplicable by the current laws of physics and thus would be evidence against promissory physicalism. It should, however, be recognized that even Newton's deterministic billiard-ball universe is compatible with pantheism. As for the problematic "God" part of pantheism, discard the guy with the white beard and replace Him with a nonanthropomorphic cosmos generator, or with a committee of disembodied intelligences that somehow establishes the laws of physics for a (perhaps uncountable) multitude of universes and then somehow breathes life into them, so that these cosmoses, in the words of Steven Hawking, "go to the trouble of actually existing." These creators of cosmoses might then get lost contemplating the beauty (and exquisite horror) of each of their cosmological progeny. Panpsychism and hence pantheism finesse the intractable problem of how consciousness arose from insensate matter. It didn't; it was there all along.

Although the Sursem members provide thorough (albeit repetitious) coverage of the monadologies of Leibniz, Griffin, Whitehead, and others, they strangely avoid discussing my own very closely related but distinct model of a hierarchy of centers of pure consciousness. I suspect that this is because I am extremely skeptical of personal survival based on the vast body of evidence relating mental states to brain states amassed by neuroscientists over the past few decades. I am also skeptical of the experimental evidence for

the existence of psi based on meta-analyses, as such analyses are generally based on the assumption that none of the researchers are fraudulent. Given the vast amounts of scientific misconduct recently uncovered in the orthodox scientific communities, this is a preposterous assumption.

I abhor the coining of new terms in psi research, as this provides only the illusion of progress (think of the terms for psi introduced over the years). However, the struggle of memes for intellectual ascendance is no doubt greatly facilitated by a catchy name. Despite the fact that my hierarchical model of consciousness is directly related to, although different from, those presented by Sursem and has been widely published in the “mainstream” parapsychological literature, Sursem does not cite it. Indeed, my work is likely the only such directly related material to appear in the parapsychological literature in recent years. Yet, Sursem chooses to ignore it completely. Presumably this is because the Sursem members do not like, or do not know how to address, my skeptical arguments regarding personal survival. Neither do they address the vast body of evidence demonstrating an intimate relation between brain states and mental states, as documented in detail in *MoA*.

The *BP* authors have sometimes cited Bergsonian filters in rebuttal of opposing views, but this is not an adequate argument for dismissal, as discussed above. Indeed, it would be expected that there would be a great onrush of spiritual experiences and higher thoughts if the filter (brain) is damaged: the more the damage, the greater the onslaught. But this is not what is observed. The parallel publication of *MoA* and *BP* is symptomatic of the great divide between modern day parapsychologists and skeptics. Sursem seemingly prefers to return to the 18th Century views espoused by F. W. H. Myers rather than to deal with the last century of neuroscientific research. In fact, a CD of Myers' *Human Personality and Its Survival of Death* was included in Sursem's previous tome (*IM*).

It should be noted that tremendous progress has been made in our understanding of the mind-brain relationship since the time of Myers. For instance, I was a teaching fellow in an introductory psychology course at the University of Michigan run by James V. McConnell, who was famous (or perhaps notorious) for his theory that memories are encoded in molecules rather than in the structure of synaptic connections. McConnell claimed that one can teach a flatworm a trick, such as running a maze, grind it up, and feed the dust to another (conveniently cannibalistic) flatworm. This resulted in the cannibalizing, naive flatworm learning the trick much more quickly than would be expected. McConnell was a flamboyant orator and even published his own, often hilarious, journal, the *Worm Runner's Digest*. McConnell became an academic pariah when his results proved to be unreplicable. At that point in time, it was very unclear how memories were stored in the brain or whether they were stored in a material system at all. The prominent psychologist Karl Lashley was famous for his celebrated failure to locate any physical memory traces at all (probably due to the fact that memories are distributed globally in the brain rather than in localized traces).

When I was still a graduate student at Michigan, I taught a course called Physics and Parapsychology, taking the position that memories might well be stored outside of the brain, which was based on the then-current current body of evidence. Now we know that our brains are productively filled with Jennifer Aniston cells, a fine use of neural resources if ever there was one.

There exists a vast communication gap between parapsychologists and their critics. Skeptics primarily read and publish in skeptical journals and books, and parapsychologists primarily read and publish in parapsychological journals. Each side progresses in blissful ignorance of the other. This is not a situation that is conducive to a productive dialogue. At times, it seems that it is almost a definitional requirement that parapsychologists believe in psi or personal survival. However, I still consider myself a parapsychologist because I study ostensibly paranormal phenomena. Similarly, based on the depth of his work, I would consider Ray Hyman a parapsychologist, although it is doubtful that he would welcome an embrace into the fold.

In fact I believe in life after death, which likely puts me at the extreme left wing of psychical research. However, I believe in the survival of centers of pure consciousness, a subpersonal form of survival that the *MoA* editors specifically exclude from their analysis at the outset, likely because it is difficult to refute. For those who cling to the hope that the personality will survive death, I should tell you that I have found the prospect of nonpersonal survival to be exhilarating, and yet at the same time counterintuitive. Try it on, you may like it.

The same situation occurs within established academic fields. Theologians, religious leaders, philosophers, neuroscientists, psychologists, shamans, and laypersons have largely produced isolated islands in the sea of knowledge, with little in the way of communication among them. Indeed, the specialized jargons of their academic specialties often render the writings in one academic discipline to be cognitively impenetrable to those in another. For instance, the New Atheists may be ignorant of higher-level esoteric religious doctrines and thus devote their efforts to debunking arguments based on a literal interpretation of the Bible, which may be the equivalent of flogging a dead horse (at least for the Christian intelligentsia). A general-interest magazine aimed at the survival problem would explore diverse approaches, including scientific, religious, experiential, parapsychological, philosophical, skeptical, humanistic, meditative, shamanistic, humorous, and poetic approaches. The journal might even include fiction, cartoons, and reviews of books and movies, even music related to survival, as well accounts of personal experiences. The journal might be called *Charon: The Journal of the Afterlife* or something like that.

Such a journal or magazine would be open to all approaches and would be geared to the general (undergraduate) reader. Such a publication and or website would hopefully attract a wider audience than does dry academic parapsychology at the present time. This may be a way to entice a wider audience of readers and contributors to join the debate about survival and to give parapsychologists' writings a wider exposure.

A strong editorial hand may be needed to ensure that such a journal, magazine, or website would not deteriorate into irrationalism, to ensure that all viewpoints are represented, and that the contributions are of high quality. Would anyone like to join me in such an effort? Sursem members, *MoA* authors, theologians, religious leaders, parapsychologists, philosophers, psychologists, and other interested parties, including lay persons are welcome. (I am not sure how long my increasingly cybernetic body will hold out, so the road to Editor-in-Chief may be pretty unobstructed.) Let me know if you are interested.

The writers of both *MoA* and *BP* have provided good, comprehensive, erudite reviews of the literature in their areas, although the index for *BP* is woefully incomplete.

Both *BP* and *MoA* are "must" reads for serious scholars in the area of survival research.

424 Little Lake Drive #3
Ann Arbor, MI 48103, USA
Dstokes48103@yahoo.com