

1. THE POLITICS OF PHYSICALISM

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
— William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, Scene V

This book needs to be written. This story needs to be told. It is a story of corruption and abuse of power, of scientific ridicule and academic prejudice, of how the people we have trusted to give us accurate knowledge have betrayed that trust and blocked large segments of knowledge from our view. When we wake up and recognize it, this corruption will be seen to be as serious as the corruption in the Catholic Church which precipitated the Protestant Reformation or the corruption in the French government which brought on the Revolution. This corruption has not compromised too much the accuracy of scientists working in their fields of expertise, but its effect on the culture at large has been profound and crippling. Science has brought us up out of the Dark Ages, and now the scientific establishment has brought our culture back down into something like another Dark Ages. This scientific establishment has become something like an authoritarian priesthood with a rigid belief in a purely physical universe, a belief that was not determined by scientific methods but is defended and enforced with primitive, unscientific methods of social domination and manipulation such as ridicule and ostracism. Heretics are no longer burned at the stake. They are simply ridiculed out of existence. It is almost as effective and doesn't violate any health laws.

These extreme social pressures dominate not only the scientific community but also the entire academic community. They have created an extreme bias, which destroys science and academic freedom.

Yes, we are already deep into something like another Dark Ages. Somebody should have warned us that this was happening. Somebody should have written this book a long time ago. But I don't see this book anywhere. It is as if everybody was functioning in some kind of trance state.

This book needs to be written by somebody with the very highest scientific or academic credentials. Unfortunately, all of those people are caught up in the problem. They have been indoctrinated into the belief system. They would be shunned and ostracized and lose their whole social existence if they were to write such a book as this.

So it is left to those of us with lesser credentials to write this book and solve the problem. I have taken it upon myself to write this book because I am aware of the problem and I am not controlled by the scientific establishment. But I can't fix the problem by myself. I need your support. Ninety percent of Americans believe in God or a spiritual reality, and ninety percent of Americans have had a psychic experience. Have you been ridiculed by members of the scientific establishment? Have you lost your job or status within the academic community because of your interest or belief in non-physical phenomena? Do you feel that the scientific establishment is an obstacle to our exploration of the spiritual? I am hoping you will give this project your active support.

The unscientific methods are easy to recognize. When we learn to spot these methods, the scientists who use them will lose their credibility. They won't be believed or be taken seriously any more. We don't have to make any scientists change. It's as easy as that.

First of all, I think I need to say plainly and clearly that I have great respect for science itself. Science has so greatly increased the scope and accuracy of our cultural knowledge over the past few centuries that I have no words powerful enough to describe it. Because of its success in giving us accurate knowledge, science has rightfully earned the very highest status in our culture.

But the high status of science has created a problem. Science has tapped into a human psychological need for "authorities," people who know all the answers. Scientists have acquired an aura of omniscience, of infallibility, of authority. They have become an unnamed "Them," whose opinion is "Truth," such that anybody who disagrees with them can be dismissed as mentally incompetent. Their opinions are believed and taken seriously, whether those opinions were arrived at via the scientific method or not. Scientists get away with using unscientific methods such as ridicule, authoritarian pronouncements, and power politics to put down, dismiss, and block the study of subjects beyond their ken, especially the psychic and the spiritual.

A Ph.D. scientist doing research on communications with spirit entities is shunned by his colleagues, who point at their heads to indicate that he is crazy.

(If they were doing science, they would ask to see his evidence, instead of behaving like eighth graders.)

A graduate student is advised not to write a paper on parapsychology, because it could be career-ending.

(This is creepy, like something out of a Kafka novel. Unknown people could be ending this student's career, for unknown reasons. Whatever happened to academic freedom?)

The editor who published a peer-reviewed paper on "intelligent design" was ridiculed as a "Bible thumper."

("Scientific ridicule" has become a familiar expression. But ridicule is not scientific.)

In 1988, the National Academy of Sciences issued a report that concluded: "The committee finds no scientific justification from research conducted over a period of 130 years for the existence of parapsychological phenomena" (Druckman and Swets, 1988, page 22).

Actually the committee DID NOT LOOK AT the research of 130 years. The report contained only 5 references to the peer-reviewed *Journal of Parapsychology*, which dates back to 1937, and no references either to the peer-reviewed British journal, which dates back to 1882, or to the peer-reviewed European journal. It does not even mention the name "J.B. Rhine," let alone refute his findings and the people who replicated them throughout the world. The scope of the study clearly did not support its sweeping conclusion.

This shoddy and obviously biased study, led by two known zealots against parapsychology, is in huge contrast to the very impressive scientific credentials of the members and leaders of the National Academy of Sciences. Their conclusion is now forever recorded in the annals of folly.

But the NAME of the National Academy of Sciences has given it credibility. People haven't bothered to look at the study, which in turn didn't look at the scientific evidence. All they have needed to know is that the National Academy of Sciences said this. That gives it "authority" and makes it "Truth."

These are only a few examples of dirty science. You may have examples in your own life of scientists ridiculing you, questioning your sanity, or assuming that their mentality is so much greater than yours that they can say, “You didn’t see what you saw.”

I am not saying that science itself is dirty. But when scientists, in the name of “science,” backed by the high status of science, their own high scientific credentials, and prestigious names such as Harvard and Johns Hopkins and the National Academy of Sciences, use these unscientific methods, the name of science has been dirtied. So, even though this is not science, I feel justified in calling it “dirty science.”

What do I mean by “scientific establishment?” Is this some kind of conspiracy theory? No, it isn’t. I have a precise definition.

Scientists studying physical phenomena with the physical senses — the physicists, chemists, biologists, astronomers, and so on — have established themselves. They have become the scientific establishment.

In fact, they have been so successful in studying the physical reality that they have asserted that the only way to do science is to explore the physical reality with the physical senses, and they have taken this one step further, to decree that the only reality is the physical reality: The spiritual does not exist, psychic abilities are impossible, and the mind is nothing but the physical brain, which must be studied with the physical senses. But, in fact, these other aspects of reality do exist, and there are other modes of perception besides the physical senses with which to perceive them and make scientific observations.

The idea that there is no reality beyond the physical has come to dominate not only the scientific establishment, but also the academic community as well, at least in the United States. I used to call it “the physical hypothesis,” but it is much more than a hypothesis. It has become an axiom of scientific orthodoxy, accepted at our major educational institutions as such an absolute inviolable truth, that so dominates all other thought, including scientific evidence, that people who express an interest in such subjects as precognition, telepathy, clairvoyance, remote viewing, psychokinesis, energy medicine, spirit entities, the power of prayer, reincarnation, levitation, or intelligent design are automatically dismissed as mentally incompetent, and denied publication, funding, and employment.

The foregoing may sound extreme, but I believe that it accurately represents the mental atmosphere that dominates our present-day academic environment. I invite academic people to present evidence showing my view to be flawed. The evidence as I see it shows that the subjects I have named in the preceding paragraph are rarely studied or taught at ranked colleges or universities in the United States.

Whenever I say this, people point out exceptions to the rule — a Master’s thesis at Michigan, a discussion group at Harvard, a study of medical intuition at Duke, and a course in consciousness science at Duke. But these have been done quietly, without much publicity, and they haven’t become part of the cultural awareness. You can’t get a degree in parapsychology at any ranked college or university in the United States.

Further evidence that studies of such subjects are exceptions to the rule is that for the most highly publicized of such studies, people have felt the need to offer explanations as to why they were allowed:

Duke University was being newly created as an expansion of Trinity College in 1925-30, and thus was more open to J.B. Rhine and parapsychology than more established universities. The Stanford Research Institute (SRI), on remote viewing, was created at the request of the CIA

and funded with a huge amount of money from them. Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) received its funding and building space year after year for research in “engineering anomalies” by a person with engineering credentials. The research on reincarnation begun by Ian Stevenson at the University of Virginia has been allowed to exist because it was funded by a grant specifically for religious and spiritual studies (from Chester Carlson, the founder of Xerox).

I am encouraged to have discovered Dr. Lisa Miller, who can be found by looking up “spiritual studies at Columbia.” According to Wikipedia, “She founded the Spirituality Mind Body Institute at Teachers College, Columbia University, the first Ivy League graduate program in spirituality and psychology,” apparently without any explanation of why this program was allowed to exist. Perhaps the barriers are softening already.

The assertion that there is no reality beyond the physical or what can be explained by known physical laws has been called “physicalism,” “scientism,” “reductionism,” or “materialism.” I prefer “physicalism,” because it expresses most directly the idea of a belief in a purely physical reality.

For the assertion of a purely physical reality to be held with such absolute certainty, it must have been proved scientifically beyond any doubt. But I don’t see that proof anywhere. Also, as scientists should know, “Nothing exists beyond the physical” is a logical proposition of the form, “There are no such things,” which cannot be proved without a complete knowledge of everything that exists. It should be clear, with the discovery that “dark matter” occupies an estimated 96% of the physical universe, and the more recent revelation that dark matter doesn’t really explain the observed phenomena, that we have nowhere near a complete knowledge of even the physical, much less the more subtle aspects of reality that may exist.

And conversely, to disprove the proposition “There are no such things,” it is necessary only to find one such thing. In 1958, I dreamed of my grandmother’s death an hour before I received the telegram. That’s all the evidence I ever needed in order to know there was a reality beyond what had been explained in my physics courses at Harvard. Billions of people worldwide have had experiences similar to mine.

Responsible researchers have been studying scientifically the psychic and the spiritual since the 1800s. The Society for Psychical Research in Great Britain was founded in 1882. J.B. Rhine in the United States began studying around 1930 what he called “extra-sensory perception” (ESP) with the most rigorous methods of physical science. I first heard about J.B. Rhine’s work when I was at Harvard in the 1950s, although not in any of my courses. Parapsychology has been accepted as a science by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) since 1969. The Alex Tanous Library at The Rhine Research Center has literally a “ton” of evidence for the existence of psychic and spiritual phenomena.

And yet there is still an extreme bias against the psychic and the spiritual by establishment scientists. They still assert, as first-principles of their belief system, that psychic abilities are impossible, that spirit entities do not exist, and that the mind is nothing but the physical brain.

Or perhaps I should use the scientific impersonal and say “It is assumed” within the scientific establishment that these things are so, and that these assumptions are considered basic criteria of rational thought. I don’t want to pin the blame on anybody in particular, except for those few individuals I can actually quote. All scientists are innocent until proven guilty. But at

the same time, all scientists must be part of the consensus, in order to make psychic and spiritual subjects laughable and not even debatable at ranked American colleges and universities.

In social psychology we learn that when the legitimate arguments fail, people switch to illegitimate arguments. And so it is with physicalism: Since no legitimate scientific argument can possibly be made to support it, unscientific arguments have been used to defend and enforce it (again switching to the scientific impersonal so as not to put the blame on anybody except those I actually quote).

The first sign of an extreme bias is that establishment scientists simply refuse to look at the evidence. They just assume, since they believe that psychic abilities and spirit entities do not exist, that the evidence is flawed — that there were methodological errors, “dirty test tubes,” or actual cheating. And where scientists refuse to look at the evidence, science can’t be done.

Instead, these established scientists parade their credentials. They exploit their status as “authorities” by making authoritarian pronouncements such as “There are no such things” in reference to psychic or spiritual phenomena. And they are believed and taken seriously on the basis of their credentials, without having to have a shred of scientific evidence to back them up.

I put the word “authorities” in quotes, to mean “so-called ‘authorities.’” This is a cultural phenomenon for which we have no word. We exist in an environment of “authorities” all our lives. When we are small children, our parents are as gods to us, all-powerful and all-knowing. Thus we are psychologically predisposed to believe that there are “authorities,” people who know all the answers. This psychological conditioning is reinforced as we grow up, with teachers who know all the answers, while our job is simply to memorize what they teach, and preachers who claim to speak from the authority of God. In our adult lives we consult with experts — doctors, lawyers, plumbers, electricians, and so on — who know more about their respective fields than we do.

All these experts have credentials, from the Latin “credo,” meaning “believe,” to indicate that they can be believed. But credentials are only a heuristic, a rule of thumb, to indicate that these people have passed certain tests and are more likely to be accurate than people without credentials. It is no guarantee that they are accurate. It would take another expert to determine whether they really are accurate, and sometimes not even the experts know. Here is where people can and do set themselves up as “authorities,” when they don’t really know what they are talking about, and get people to believe them.

And so scientists, with their scientific credentials, can get people to believe them, with their authoritarian pronouncements, even though their statements have no scientific backing at all. This has been called “argument from authority.” This more accurately should be called “argument from so-called ‘authority.’” It is only the pretense of authority, and the people who do this are only pretending to be authorities. It would not be an argument from real scientific authority without the backing of replicated scientific studies.

The real criterion by which scientific statements should be judged is on their accuracy, and not on the basis of credentials. Actually, credentials create a bias, a judgment that the person with the greater credentials is more likely to be accurate. To eliminate this bias, peer reviews are sometimes conducted without knowing the author’s name. Scientists know this, and some scientists deliberately use their credentials to create a bias in their favor.

Another unscientific method and the key to enforcing the belief in physicalism is argument by ridicule. There is ordinary “soft” ridicule, and then there is “hard” ridicule. Soft ridicule is only laughter. It is distracting, but only a nuisance, like dogs barking.

But since I have become involved in the field of parapsychology, I have discovered that there exists a phenomenon which I call “hard ridicule,” where people are deprived of publication, funding, or employment because they are interested in the wrong subjects or hold the wrong ideas. Heretics are not threatened with loss of life, as they were in the Dark Ages, but with loss of livelihood. Also they lose their whole social existence as their colleagues shun them. This is equivalent to what excommunication was in the Dark Ages. It is as close to death as anybody but a government is allowed to do to a person in these present times.

And then we have power politics. In the Preface to my Delta edition of *Worlds in Collision* by Immanuel Velikovsky, the author explains that the book was originally published by Macmillan, a company which did a large proportion of its business selling textbooks, but that members of the scientific community boycotted Macmillan, refusing to buy its textbooks as long as they published *Worlds in Collision*. Therefore Macmillan was pressured to sell its rights to the book to Doubleday, a company that was not so dependent on textbooks. I suspect that the same kind of stuff is going on all the time, but it is not all as well publicized.

These are some of the unscientific methods — refusal to look at the evidence, authoritarian pronouncements (so-called “argument from authority”), ridicule (soft and hard), and power politics — used by the scientific establishment to defend and enforce the belief in physicalism and block the study of the psychic and the spiritual.

Somehow, the idea that there is no reality beyond the physical has entered the minds of members of the scientific community and has captivated them, so that they insist that psychic abilities are impossible and spirit entities do not exist, even though these beliefs are not supported by scientific studies and even though there is a large and growing body of evidence of both psychic abilities and spirit entities.

This mental attitude, this belief in a purely physical universe, is a force in itself that needs to be removed if our culture is to advance. Researchers in the areas of the psychic and the spiritual have been seeking to win the approval of establishment scientists for their discoveries. But if establishment scientists refuse to look at the data, science can’t be done. There is an extreme bias operating here. That bias must be removed before science can be done. That force blocking our cultural advancement is the subject of this book.

As I have said, literally a “ton” of evidence has been presented for parapsychological phenomena in scholarly publications. In recent years the legitimate findings of parapsychology have also been described in many books written for the general public, including *The Gift*, by Sally Rhine Feather, *Unbelievable*, by Stacy Horn, *Best Evidence*, by Michael Schmicker, *The End of Materialism*, by Charles Tart, *Let Magic Happen*, by Larry Burk, and *Supernormal*, by Dean Radin. These are only a few of the best.

Reincarnation researchers have developed a strict scientific protocol and have used it to uncover thousands of cases, some in the United States involving people who didn’t even believe in reincarnation.

Research indicating that we are not limited to our physical bodies has been conducted by responsible people.

The power of prayer has been demonstrated in scientific experiments.

Energy healing has been demonstrated in scientific experiments.

I have a list of 144 peer-reviewed papers on intelligent design.

I have even seen evidence of levitation.

Dirty Science is not repeating all this positive evidence. It is focusing instead on the illegitimate and unscientific arguments that are being used to block these legitimate findings. It is not seeking the parental approval of the scientific establishment. It is asking ordinary people such as yourself to recognize the unscientific arguments so that they no longer influence our culture.

Because our Western civilization has limited its explorations to the physical, the generation who discovered the spiritual had to go to India to learn more about the spiritual reality. The New Age culture which they developed is now ridiculed and shunned by the Western academic establishment.

In my own personal experience, I didn't have to go to India. All my influences were from Western civilization. I discovered the spiritual and the key to a new civilization by going through Freudian and Jungian psychotherapy and dream analysis. I then learned more about the spiritual from Edgar Cayce and Eklal Kueshana. Freud, of course, was accepted for a long time by the academic community. But now Freud is "out." And all these other influences have been dismissed by the academic community. I was hoping that academic people would read and evaluate my ideas for a new civilization, but it seems that they were so blocked by prejudices against my major influences that they never got around to reading and evaluating my own ideas. Thus Western civilization has been deprived of my positive contribution without even being aware that it exists.

Because the United States has fallen behind other developed countries in math and science, President Obama in recent years tried to encourage young people to study these subjects. But the Hippies rejected science years ago, because of its adherence to a purely physical reality, and President Obama was trying to convince their grandchildren, who I'm sure were already aware of its limitations. Cleaning up the invalid mental attachments of the scientific community will not only remove barriers to our cultural progress, but it will also improve the quality of physical science itself, by attracting more of the best and brightest of our youth.

Scientists can get away with unscientific methods because they have the power. But we have given them this power by believing everything they say, and we can take it away, simply by questioning their authority.

It is the scientific method that has given us our accurate cultural knowledge, not just the opinions of scientists. We need to distinguish between the methods of science, which have given us our accurate knowledge, and the methods of status, which people have used to dominate other people since before we even existed as human beings.

As a first approximation to knowing the difference between what is science and what is not science, undergraduate courses in critical thinking teach us the difference between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" arguments. And even if not all "legitimate" arguments qualify as scientific, we can be certain that all "illegitimate" arguments are unscientific. That distinction alone is enough to identify most of the unscientific arguments described in this book. For those who haven't taken the course, I am giving a brief description of scientific and unscientific methods in the next chapter.

Any scientific opinion, to be truly scientific, must be based on scientific studies, not just one, but more than one, all reaching the same conclusion, meaning that they are "replicated." If the scientist does not cite replicated scientific studies, then his/her opinion is not scientific.

The third question to ask is “Is the scientist qualified in this particular field?” Most of the negative opinions about parapsychology are by people totally unqualified in that field.

These three questions, then, will eliminate just about all the unscientific opinions:

1. Is this an illegitimate argument?
2. Is this opinion based on replicated scientific studies?
3. Is this person qualified in this particular field?

This takes a little more work than simply believing scientists because of their status as scientists, but it will go a long way towards untangling the huge snarl of false belief that now dominates Western civilization.

I think it is most important to recognize that scientists are not “authorities” who know all the answers about everything. A “scientist” is generally defined as a person with a Ph.D. degree in a scientific field. Scientists are knowledgeable in their particular fields of study, and earn their Ph.D. degrees by becoming expert in a very narrow segment of that field. They qualify as “expert” only in that very narrow segment, and outside of the broader field I would question whether their opinions should carry any weight at all. Because they are scientists, they are more qualified to say what is “science” than poets, priests, or rock stars. But that is all. Outside of those fields which they have studied, the opinions of scientists are largely uninformed.

For example, I have read about experiments by physicists trying to disprove astrology (CSICOP, 1996). Studies testing the accuracy of astrology should be conducted by people knowledgeable in astrology. I don’t think that physicists have the necessary knowledge of astrology to perform accurate studies in that field. I am wondering whether physicists would accept experiments in physics performed by astrologers?

Similarly, the committee that evaluated parapsychology in the name of the National Academy of Sciences did not include a single member who was expert in parapsychology.

And the published opinions of eminent biologists Francis Crick and Edward O. Wilson on the nature of dreams are an embarrassing display of ignorance and arrogance.

Outside of the domain of the physical, in the areas of the psychic and the spiritual, physical scientists are totally unqualified. If they don’t even believe that such things exist, that implies that they have absolutely no knowledge about them.

I use the expressions “physical science” and “physical scientists” to mean scientists studying physical phenomena with the physical senses. These scientists would say that these expressions are redundant, because this is the only way that science can be conducted. Even the *Encyclopedia Britannica* online now defines “science” as being conducted with the physical senses. This is a limited and limiting view, as I am going to explain.

How did scientists become locked into this belief system? It is not an easy question to answer. It involves psychological and sociological factors, and another factor called “how things happen.”

I can understand why physical scientists might see only physical reality. Scientists studying physical phenomena with the physical senses are not likely to find anything but physical reality. So I suppose that after centuries and billions of observations, finding nothing but the physical, some of them might be led to believe that there is no reality beyond the physical. But remember that they limited themselves to the study of the physical in the first place.

It would be more accurate, then, to say that their view was LIMITED to the physical. But physical scientists have acquired such an aura of omniscience that it is some kind of blasphemy

to say that their view is limited. But it was artificially limited in the first place. They didn't ask about ghosts or angels. They simply ignored these subjects and focused on physical things observable with the physical senses.

And if some people now want to ask about things such as ghosts and angels, and apply scientific methods to those questions, the members of the scientific establishment are totally unqualified to voice a scientific opinion on such subjects, having ignored them in the first place.

But again, to suggest that the scientific establishment is "not qualified" is some kind of blasphemy. The scientific establishment decides who is qualified. But I think that all establishment scientists would recognize that it is more accurate to say that their view is limited to the physical than to say that nothing exists beyond the physical.

I can see why scientists in physical fields such as physics, chemistry, biology, and astronomy might at least pay lip-service to this thinking. It doesn't affect their scientific work in their fields of expertise, while opposing it could jeopardize their status as scientists. Yes, a dedicated physical scientist can treat the non-physical as if it doesn't exist, but to make the leap and assert that it really doesn't exist is really bad logic.

Actually, physical scientists studying physical phenomena with the physical senses do find things, fairly often, that don't conform to known physical laws. Instances of synchronicity are dismissed as "coincidence," although highly improbable. Unexplained healing is labeled "the placebo effect," as if they knew all about it and it was explained by physical science. Similarly, the origin of species is explained as "random" mutation, as if randomness was an explanation of the process causing the mutation. Regarding non-conforming observations, Albert Einstein is reported to have once said, "Even if I saw a ghost I wouldn't believe it" (Horn, 2009, page 33). With that kind of attitude, of course, the physical scientists can edit out anything that doesn't fit their belief system.

But there are other aspects of reality than the physical, and other senses with which to observe them. If we want to learn about these other aspects of reality, we might want to study them scientifically.

There are important influences in our human existence, such as our mental processes — our thoughts, emotions, memories, and dreams — which cannot be observed with the physical senses. They are observed with a different set of perceptions, which I call "the mental senses." The scientific study of the mind must start with the evidence of the mental senses, with whatever difficulties that this presents.

The early psychologists did not recognize the mental senses as such. They were working with something they called "introspection," which has a convoluted definition, combining perception, thought, and even opinion. They were not very successful. If they had been able to focus purely on the perceptions of mental events, they would have done better.

Freud and Jung and the early psychoanalysts, on the other hand, were very successful, building up a huge body of accurate knowledge based upon the evidence of the mental senses (although they did not recognize these senses *per se*). But this body of knowledge and the scientific study of the mind have been swept away by the dogmatic insistence on physical evidence by the scientific establishment.

With psychic and spiritual phenomena, instead of simply asserting that these things don't exist, it would be more scientific to see if there is any evidence of their existence. But the evidence of these things, obtained by qualified and responsible scientists in the established way with the physical senses, is swept away by the scientific establishment, simply because they are established and the others are not.

The scientific study of non-physical subjects is relatively new, compared to the study of physical subjects, especially physics and medicine, which date back to ancient Greece in Western civilization. Psychoanalysis 100 years after Freud has had only as much time to develop as medicine 100 years after Hippocrates. The non-physical scientists are not established. They are not part of the scientific establishment. They are treated with prejudice by the scientific establishment, very much as new immigrants to America have been treated by the social establishment, as in “Irish need not apply.” But that is status-snobbery. It has nothing to do with scientific thinking or accuracy.

Recent surveys have shown that the vast majority of people in our Western culture have had psychic experiences, and that the percentage of people who have reported such experiences has been increasing in the 21st century. I am grateful to Carlos Alvarado for bringing many of these studies together in one concise report:

In a telephone survey conducted by the Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene in Germany in 2000, more than half of the people gave an account of personal exceptional experiences.

In 2006, Dr. Erlendur Haraldsson conducted a survey of people in Iceland, where 70% of the men and 81% of the women reported some psychic experience. These percentages had increased from 1974, when 59% of the men and 71% of the women reported psychic experiences.

In Switzerland in 2014, in a sample of 1580 people selected carefully to be representative of the Swiss general population, 91% of all participants had experienced at least one “exceptional experience” (EE), such as precognition, supernatural appearances, or *déjà vu* (Alvarado, 2014).

So you can’t really call these experiences “paranormal.” They are normal. Somebody has already said that. Cris Putnam, in promoting his book, *The Supernatural Worldview*, said “Paranormal is the New Normal.” He reported an online survey of more than 4000 Americans between 2006 and 2011, with 90% reporting at least one “paranormal experience” (Putnam, 2014).

And yet an entrenched scientific establishment denies that this is possible, in the face of all evidence.

According to Gallup polls over the years, roughly 90% of Americans believe in God or a higher power (Gallup, 2016).

In contrast to this, a survey of elite scientists (members of the National Academy of Sciences) conducted in 1996 by Edward J. Larson and Larry Witham showed that roughly 70% of these scientists DID NOT believe in God or human immortality (Larson and Witham, 1998).

There is an extreme bias operating here.

A survey conducted in June 2009 by the Pew Research Center finds less of a bias, but still a definite bias. (Perhaps this is because the scientists they selected, members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), were not all as “elite” as the members of the National Academy of Sciences selected for the 1996 survey.) This poll showed that 51% of the scientists said that they believed in God, a universal spirit, or a higher power, in contrast to 95% of Americans who believed in some kind of deity or higher power, according to a survey done by the Pew Research Center in 2006 (Pew Research Center, 2009). However you look at it, there is a very large bias which separates the beliefs of scientists from those of the general public.

Who has the bias? Without even asking the question, it is assumed by members of the scientific establishment that the general public has the bias. Persons of status can get away with this. They can project their faults on persons of lesser status, because those persons have no power to contradict them. But isn't it more likely that members of the scientific establishment have the bias, with the extreme pressures that are on them to conform to a belief in a purely physical reality? This possibility is simply bypassed by the scientific establishment. Because they are scientists, and therefore assumed to be unbiased, it is simply assumed that the general public has the bias. The explanation given for this is that those of us who are not scientists are uninformed, unintelligent, superstitious, and/or delusional (of course without the necessary psychological testing).

I am sure that most scientists, if they thought about it, would recognize this as gross class prejudice. And likewise, if they thought about it, I am sure that scientists would recognize the bad logic in the assertion, "There is no reality beyond the physical." And again, if they thought about it, they would recognize the unscientific nature of authoritarian pronouncements, refusal to look at the data, hard ridicule, and power politics. But they don't think about it.

What is going on here? This is not scientific thinking. This is more like in-group thinking.

"Science" is a method of acquiring knowledge through observation and proof. "Science" is also a social group, of people who practice the scientific method. And not all of the opinions, attitudes, and beliefs of people in this social group are arrived at by the scientific method. Some of their views are simply conformity to the norms of their social group.

If you belong to a social group, any group, you must conform to its norms and at least pay lip service to its opinions, attitudes, and beliefs. If you don't, you will first be gently instructed, then you will lose status in the group, and then you will be expelled from the group.

The persons with the highest status in the group are allowed some degree of nonconformity, to innovate. The persons with the lowest status in the group are also allowed a degree of nonconformity, but they are ridiculed as fools and are the butt of jokes, thus serving a useful social purpose.

The social group is known in sociology and social psychology as the "in-group." Everybody outside of the group is known as the "out-group." Obviously there are many other social groups, so I have seen the plural "out-groups." But to the members of the in-group, all persons outside their group are viewed equally as "not-in," and therefore equally as one out-group. The status of all those in the out-group is lower than the lowest in the in-group, and therefore, even more than the lowest in the in-group, they can be the target of jokes and objects of ridicule.

In-group thinking is viewed as perfect, and out-group thinking, where it is different, is viewed as flawed. Members of the in-group are seen as superior to people in the out-group, who have faults that in-group people don't have.

I am grateful to sociologist Amber Wells, Ph.D., for verifying this description of in-group thinking and providing the following professional definition and clarification:

Sociologists and social psychologists use the term in-group to describe a social group whose membership depends on a shared identity; this can range from a preference for a specific diet or book genre or even support for a political party. Members of an in-group can become so homogeneous in their relationship to this identity that even a slight deviation from it could result in their rejection/removal from the group and elicit the derision of its members. In-group thinking, therefore, can be especially vulnerable

to confirmation bias and other logical fallacies. Outgroup members are those who do not conform to the collective identity around which an in-group is organized. Their opinions/voices/perspectives are often considered to be less valuable and less worthy of consideration than those of in-group members.

I have seen these attributes of in-group behavior demonstrated with small groups, and I have extrapolated those findings to include the very largest social groups, such as the Catholic Church, the Hippies, the scientific establishment, and the whole academic community. Certainly we are aware of the in-group thinking of large groups in cases of religious prejudice, war, and genocide. But somehow in my Harvard education the idea was implanted in my head that academic people were free of prejudice, and scientific people were so completely unbiased that the word “objective” was used to describe their thinking.

So I am asking scientific and academic people to examine the opinions, attitudes, and beliefs of their own social group. Do they fit the description of in-group thinking that I have given? In order to do this, a degree of self-knowledge is necessary: Why do you conform to beliefs of your social group that are not based on scientific studies or good scholarship?

And I think that the answer to that is that peer-group pressure is more powerful than peer review. The normative pressures exerted upon people to conform to in-group thinking are more powerful than the intellectual forces that produce accurate science or scholarship. If one’s scientific theory is wrong, it is debated and rejected. But if one does not conform to the in-group thinking, one’s entire professional and social existence can be rejected. An important part of the education of scientific and academic people is indoctrination into in-group norms, although this is not done in the classroom, but by smiles and frowns.

Scientists operate with the greatest possible accuracy within their own fields of expertise. It is mostly in dealing with areas of knowledge outside their own, as physical scientists talking about non-physical subjects, that they use the unscientific arguments of physicalism. This is the standard pattern of in-group thinking, with its prejudices against the out-group.

For example, the Catholic Church has recorded thousands of miracles, and the Christian Science Church has recorded thousands of miraculous cures. But all this evidence is dismissed as “anecdotal evidence,” because it wasn’t acquired by people in the scientific in-group, who are automatically assumed to be accurate, whereas people in the out-group are not. Also, when scientists insist that observations must be made by “trained observers,” they exclude police officers, radar operators, and air traffic controllers, who are trained observers but not members of the scientific in-group. All this is already gross class prejudice, without going so far as to call anybody “delusional.”

It all depends on the subject matter. Procedures which would be recognized as good science if applied to physical subjects are labeled “bad science” or “pseudoscience” or “anecdotal evidence” if applied to out-group subjects. Parapsychologists generally conduct their scientific studies more carefully than other scientists, because they are treated with suspicion. But it doesn’t matter how carefully they conduct their experiments, if the scientific establishment has already decided (unscientifically, of course) that the subject matter does not exist.

The scientific in-group has its own vocabulary and mannerisms by which its members identify themselves to one another. I became aware of this when I was reminded by a Ph.D. scientist that scientists don't say “proof.” They use instead the words “verification” and “falsification.”

I remember that when I was first introduced to science in 1946, we were taught to pronounce the word “lever” as “lee-ver” and not “lev-ver.” This is scientific in-group thinking

and has nothing to do with the accuracy of science itself. These in-group preferences can change over time, like fashions in clothing. For all I know, “lee-ver” has now changed back to “lev-ver.”

There is a whole vocabulary of words used in academic circles that I have to keep looking up in the dictionary, words such as “hubris” for “arrogance,” “hegemony” for “domination,” and “fatuous” for “stupid.” The only reason I can see for using these unfamiliar words is that they serve as a kind of caste mark.

The in-group vocabulary and mannerisms are not “science.” The real criterion that makes science valuable to the culture is its accuracy, and this accuracy is obtained by the scientific method. We need to look beyond the credentials and the in-group norms to see whether or not the opinions being expressed were arrived at by using the scientific method.

So we have uninformed opinions supported by unscientific methods accepted universally as absolute truth within the academic community. This should at least give rise to some debate. I thought that everything was debatable in the academic community. But there is no debate.

What forces are keeping everybody so compliant? Nobody is putting a gun to their heads. But, as I have already explained, the social forces of ridicule and ostracism threaten them with something very near to death. This threat easily explains their conformity.

Who is responsible for these forces? Who created these social laws which they all must obey? I have tried to explain it in terms of a social pecking order, with leaders and followers, but I don’t see any obvious leaders. The illegitimate arguments of John B. Watson, Edward O. Wilson, and others I quote should be easy to spot by freshman students of critical thinking. So I can’t imagine that people with PhD degrees would be fooled by them. It seems that the people I quote are only resonating to a belief system already established. It is as if everybody in the academic community were held in the grip of some mass-hypnosis.

Because persons of the very highest status in an in-group are allowed some degree of nonconformity, I sent letters in 2013 to the presidents or chancellors of 137 highest-ranked U.S. colleges and universities, asking them, as persons with the very highest status in the in-group, to use their influence to end the domination of physicalism in our educational institutions. I received 39 responses. They didn’t all agree with me, but at least I put the idea in their heads. There are no obvious leaders enforcing the rule of physicalism, but maybe there are leaders who can end it.

Or maybe that is beyond their power. If the National Academy of Sciences or a consensus of Ivy-League presidents voted to end physicalism, it would happen. But if any one president, or an isolated few, made that suggestion, they would probably suffer the near-death experience of ridicule and ostracism. That is why I am now appealing to the general public, to put pressure on the academic community from the culture at large.

The members of the scientific establishment have done nothing in hundreds of years to eliminate the bias of physicalism. They don’t seem to be even aware that it is a bias. Let us at least remind them that it is a bias and is seriously blocking both our cultural and scientific advancement.