

# Don't Look at My Hand: A Response to "Quantum Misuse in Psychic Literature"

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**ABSTRACT:** In this invited response to the article "Quantum Misuse in Psychic Literature" by Jack A. Mroczkowski and Alexis P. Malozemoff, appearing in this issue of the *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, I agree that the term "quantum" can be misused if it is used as an explanation for psychic phenomena. What quantum mechanics does provide, whereas classical mechanics does not, is evidence that the physical world is *compatible* with psychic phenomena. That is, the core mystery about psychic experiences is that they transcend the everyday constraints of space and time. The same mystery is true of quantum phenomena. Some authors claim that this shared mystery is a mere coincidence. If so, that is an astonishing coincidence.

**KEY WORDS:** quantum, psychic, theory

In this article I respond to Jack A. Mroczkowski and Alexis P. Malozemoff's (2019) article "Quantum Misuse in Psychic Literature" that appears elsewhere in this *Journal* issue. I agree with Mroczkowski and Malozemoff's admonition about the misuse of quantum concepts in articles and books discussing psychic and associated "psi" phenomena. Here is how I addressed this issue in the first chapter of my book, *Entangled Minds*:

This book suggests that we take seriously the possibility that our minds are physically entangled with the universe, and that quantum theory is relevant to understanding psi. That said, we should avoid

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jumping to premature conclusions. I'm not claiming that quantum entanglement magically explains all things spooky. Rather, I propose that the fabric of reality is comprised of "entangled threads" that are consistent with the core of psi experience. (Radin, 2006, p. 19)

In other words, don't look at my hand; look where I'm pointing. That is, in the 19th century, scientists could dismiss psi phenomena as impossible because such experiences violated the prevailing understanding of the physical world. But after the emergence of quantum and relativist theories in the first quarter of the 20th century, scholars of psi phenomena found that psi experiences—which are considered strange precisely because they are unconstrained by classical boundaries of space and time—were compatible with more sophisticated models of physical reality. This compatibility does not mean that current physical theories are adequate to *explain* psi, but it does indicate that advances in physics are headed in a direction where theory and experience may eventually converge.

Such convergence is already indicated in the emerging field of quantum biology, as Mroczkowski and Malozemoff (2019) mentioned. Again, this development does not mean that today's understanding of quantum biology adequately explains psi, but it does suggest that it is headed in the right direction. After all, just two decades ago leading scientists insisted that no living system could sustain quantum processes long enough to play any meaningful role (e.g., Tegmark, 2000). Today, it is increasingly thought that quantum effects may be *essential* for the operation of critical processes in some living systems (Marais et al., 2018).

As previously impossible dominoes continue to drop, it is becoming increasingly plausible that some aspects of human brain processing may also involve quantum effects. If that involvement turns out to be true, then the relationship between psi and quantum theory might be more than an analogy. Time will tell. Until then, I also agree with Mroczkowski and Malozemoff (2019) that authors are wise to be explicit that evidence is pointing to, but hasn't yet definitively reached, a clear association between quantum mechanics and psi phenomena.

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