

What Is Scientific Materialism?

Explore published a guest editorial titled, “Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science” (September/October 2014, Vol. 10, No. 5) that misrepresents the conflict between pro-religion and anti-religion scientists.

The ideology of scientific materialism became dominant in academia during the 20th century. (No. 3)

If someone thinks they are Napoleon, it means they are crazy. My point is that there is no such thing as an “ideology of scientific materialism.” Consider, for example, the observation that human beings have free will and the conscious knowledge of human beings as opposed to the sense knowledge of animals. This is not a scientific observation because it arises from our ability to make ourselves the subject of our own knowledge. That animals can see and hear and solve simple problems is, of course, a scientific observation. That human beings have free will is a metaphysical observation that explains why slavery is illegal but it is okay to own animals.

There are only two kinds of anti-religion scientists. One kind is irrational and the other kind is dishonest. The irrational ones say that free will is an illusion. The dishonest ones say that it is an emergent property of the brain. This is dishonest because “emergence” is a scientific concept. The properties of water, for example, emerge from the properties of hydrogen and oxygen. One might honestly say that free will emerges from the brain by analogy. Leaving out the phrase “by analogy” is a dishonest way of ignoring the method of inquiry called *metaphysics*. The observation that we have free will raises the metaphysical question: What is the relationship between my self and my body? The answer judged to be true by rational people is that it is a mystery, with the understanding that there are no mysteries in science. In science, there is a marvelous record of success, and there are only unanswered questions.

Most importantly, QM explicitly introduced the mind into its basic conceptual structure since it was found that particles being observed and the observer—the physicist and the method used for observation—are linked. (No. 7)

The authors are thinking of the double-slit experiment. When water waves hit a double-slit, you see the interference pattern produced. When a beam of electrons hits a double-slit you see nothing unless you put a screen in place. The authors think the screen is like a human mind. This is utter nonsense. The only roll the human mind plays in the double-slit experiment is asking the question: What happens after the electrons hit the double-slit when there is no screen?

Minds are apparently unbounded and may unite in ways suggesting a unitary One Mind that includes all individual, single minds. (No. 15)

The science establishment in the United States is very anti-religion and most scientists, especially biologists, think life ends in the grave. This causes cognitive dissonance because so many educated people believe in the Near Eastern, Chinese, and Indian religions that say we pay for our sins after we die. These scientists make themselves feel better by suppressing the method of inquiry called *metaphysics*. The authors of this article are collaborating with the science establishment by giving an atheist-friendly version of the metaphysical argument for God's existence: Humans are finite beings, and finite beings need a cause. Assuming or hoping the universe is intelligible, means an infinite being (God) exists. It is true that you can't prove that God exists. However, you can prove that the human soul is spiritual. The authors don't even know what the soul is because they don't know anything about the metaphysical categories of form and matter.