

# **THE WHOLE PERSON**

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## **Toward a Naturalism of Minds and Person**

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# Preface

This is a systematic work, integrating perspectives and positions on many issues in philosophy, psychology, and multiple other disciplines. It did not begin with that intent. The original theoretical positions that I developed several decades ago were inconsistent both with standard positions in neighboring domains of psychology, linguistics, and so on, and with fundamental theoretical and philosophical assumptions made in these areas and in related domains of philosophy. So, the choice was either to give up the original insights, or to develop diagnoses and replacements for the inconsistent related positions. The latter approach has progressively, though perhaps unsystematically, constructed the systematic framework that is the focus of this book.

Although systematic, this work is far from complete, in at least two senses. There is much unaddressed, from lack of time, constraints of length, and lack of development, and there is, consistent with its own standards of fallibilism, a presumption of currently unknown errors. Systemativity does not, at least here, involve any claim of finality.

Instead, I have several more limited aims for this work:

To help dissolve some of the conceptual barriers to thinking about minds and persons, in part by uncovering their history, in part by uncovering where and how those barriers are functioning in contemporary work, and in part by demonstrating how multiple problems and barriers dissolve when the conceptual frameworks that produce them are replaced.

To help contemporary studies of minds and persons, both in psychology and philosophy, move beyond the vestigial grip of behaviorism, neo- and logical-positivism, analytic philosophy, and the far from vestigial grip, especially in psychology, of contemporary disdain for questions of normativity as being incompatible with a naive materialistic “science”.

And to present a model, however skeletal, of minds and persons, with what I think might be some powerful new kinds of dynamics and dynamic properties to consider in such modeling.

Inevitably, the systematic framework presented here is skeletal, some parts more so than others. I have attempted to address issues and phenomena of the mind and person that are conceptually most fundamental, functionally most foundational, and scientifically most problematic — along with a healthy dose of opportunism of people, books, and other sources of aggravation and inspiration. There are — inevitably — tendrils of further implications and enablings extending in many directions. The result, I hope, points to some ways forward that have productive potential. But no matter the length of the book, this project is a report on model construction and revision that is necessarily a work in progress. Again — consistent with its own standards — my aims for this work are to help in moving relevant fields away from error.

So, the book is about “The Whole Person” in at least two senses:

1) It is theoretical and conceptual, attempting to draw on all relevant constraints — empirical, conceptual, metaphysical, evolutionary, cosmological, and so on — in exploring the nature of minds and persons. In this, it is contradictory to Machian inductivism — an ideology of science which indirectly supported Freud’s dubious model of the person by default in virtue of inhibiting the development of any alternative for the necessarily whole person concerns of therapy. The emergent unity of psychology is not to be understood via anything like an inductivist, stitching-together accumulation of Machian data patterns. And,

2) With respect to conceptual and metaphysical constraints, the deep presuppositions of the core model are in conflict with those of interfacing fields concerning not only cognition and representation, but also many other aspects of minds and persons, which forces a whole person account in order for any subset of partial models on offer to be consistent and coherent with other aspects, parts, or persons. The forcing of a systematic theory is also the forcing of a whole person model.

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