

# ProtoSociology

An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research

ration ist seit E. Durkheim, den wir als einen Begründer des Fache Soziologie einstufen, ein relevanter Schwerpunkt des Fache Soziologie. Um dabei die Weichen richtig zu stellen,

## Physicalism, or Something Near Enough In Memory of Jaegwon Kim

Edited by Terence Horgan and Brian McLaughlin

ziologie nimmt einen besonderen Anschnitt vor, der zu klären ist, da soziale Integration als eine Differenzierung von Mitgliedschaftsordnungen eine bestimmte allgemeine Theorie voraussetzt. Unter „Ordnungen“ sind dabei die Regelung der Mitgliedschaftsbedingung und damit die Teilnahme an Kommunikationssystemen in der Ausübung von bestimmten Rollen und Statuspositionen zu verstehen. Die Mitgliedschaftstheorie fasst die System-Umwelt-Relation nicht als irrekonstituiert (Niklas Luhmann), sondern als die selbstreferenzielle Entscheidung über Mitgliedschaftsbedingungen und ihre Selektion, die keine Resonanz in der nicht sozialen Umwelt hat. Der Verweisungszusammenhang von Sinn, wenn wir das einmal unterstellen, ist in diese Differenzstruktur einzuordnen. Gehen wir von der Mitgliedschaftstheoretischen Selbstkonstitution sozialer Systeme aus, so sind soziale Systeme souverän. Damit geht einher, dass die soziologische Theorie die folgenden Annahmen aufgeben sollte:

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# ProtoSociology

*An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*

Volume 39, 2022

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Physicalism, or Something Near Enough  
In Memory of Jaegwon Kim

*Edited by Terence Horgan and Brian McLaughlin*

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# A CRITIQUE OF KIM'S CASE THAT CLASSICAL METAPHYSICAL EMERGENCE IS INCOHERENT

Brian P. McLaughlin

## Abstract

Jaegwon Kim, in “Supervenient and Yet Not Deducible’: Is There a Coherent Concept of Ontological Emergence?” (2009), attempts to show that C.D. Broad’s conception of metaphysical emergence is incoherent. I argue that Kim’s attempt fails because he fails to recognize that trans-ordinal laws, in Broad’s sense, are supposed to be ontologically fundamental laws. Broad’s conception of metaphysical emergence is coherent, though it is another issue (one I do not address here) whether anything in fact answers to it.

No one played a larger role in reigniting interest in the classical, British Emergentist, conception of metaphysical (or ontological) emergence than Jaegwon Kim. It is thus ironic that no contemporary writer was more critical of that conception than Kim.<sup>1</sup> His last published paper on emergence is entitled: “Supervenient and Yet Not Deducible’: Is There a Coherent Concept of Ontological Emergence?” (2009). In the introduction to his second volume of collected papers, *Essays in the Metaphysics of Mind*, where it is reprinted, he describes his efforts in the paper as follows:

I try to make sense of the idea, found in C.D. Broad and many other writers, that an emergent property is one that is supervenient on, or determined by, its “basal” conditions but not deducible from them. If my reasoning is generally correct, there is serious doubt as to whether a coherent sense could be attached to the idea of ontological, or metaphysical emergence (as distinguished from epistemic emergence). I believe this is the most seriously negative message I have delivered to the fans of emergence. (2010: 2–3)

In the paper, Kim argues that Broad’s conception of metaphysical emergence, the most developed metaphysical conception in the classical British Emergentist literature and our sole concern here, is incoherent.<sup>2</sup> After making the case to his satisfaction, he draws a general moral: “it may well be that in our search for a coherent concept of metaphysical emergence, we are looking for something that does not exist” (104).<sup>3</sup>

1 See, especially, Kim 1999, 2006, and 2009.

2 For an examination of the classical British Emergentist literature, see McLaughlin 1992, and 2019.

3 The page reference here is to the reprinted version of Kim’s 2009 paper in Kim 2010. All of

# WHAT'S WRONG WITH NONREDUCTIVE PHYSICALISM? THE EXCLUSION PROBLEM RECONSIDERED

*Kevin Morris*

## *Abstract*

*Jaegwon Kim argued that nonreductive physicalism faces the “exclusion problem” for higher-level causation, mental causation in particular. Roughly, the charge is that given the presumptive ubiquity of physical causation, there cannot be irreducible mental causes for physical effects. Since there are mental causes, Kim concluded that nonreductive physicalism should be rejected in favor of a more reductionist alternative according to which mental causes are just physical causes differently described. But why should mental causes be “excluded” in this way? Unfortunately, Kim had less to say about this than one might expect. After reviewing some of Kim’s proposals, I suggest that the exclusion problem should be premised on nothing more or less than Occamist, simplicity-based considerations. I apply this conception of the exclusion problem to some prominent responses to Kim’s critique of nonreductive physicalism and argue that this conception mandates reconsidering the success of these responses.*

## I. Introduction

While he contributed in many ways to metaphysics, philosophy of science, and philosophy of mind, Jaegwon Kim is perhaps best known for his trenchant criticisms of nonreductive physicalism.

What is nonreductive physicalism? Following Kim, I will take it to be a position about the nature and structure of reality built around two core components.<sup>1</sup>

First, nonreductive physicalism supposes that in some sense physical reality is exhaustive, that in some sense all of reality is physical.<sup>2</sup> This is the physicalist component of nonreductive physicalism. Whatever else it is supposed to be, nonreductive physicalism is supposed to be a genuinely physicalist metaphysic. I will have more to say about what this physicalist component involves below.

1 In characterizing nonreductive physicalism in this way, I am supposing (as I believe Kim did) that it is not merely a view, say, about the ordering of scientific theories or about representational items more generally.

2 Spelling this out in detail requires saying just what “physical” means in this context. For discussion, see Goff 2017, Howell 2013, and Wilson 2006, among others.

# OVERDETERMINATION AND CAUSAL CLOSURE: A DEFENSE OF THE CAUSAL ARGUMENT FOR PHYSICALISM

*Alyssa Ney*

## *Abstract*

*Among the arguments that have been proposed for physicalism, the “causal argument” is widely taken to be the most compelling. Justin Tiehen (2015) has raised an interesting objection to this argument that takes the form of a dilemma. Tiehen’s ultimate conclusion is that at best, the causal argument is circular and so its premises cannot provide support for its conclusion, physicalism. The aim of the present paper is to respond to Tiehen’s objection in order to provide a defense of the causal argument.*

## I. Introduction

Among the arguments that have been proposed for physicalism, the “causal argument” developed in work by David Lewis (1966), David Papineau (2001), Jaegwon Kim (1998, 2005), and Daniel Stoljar (2011) is widely taken to be the most compelling. This is an empirical argument that aims to show how advances since the Scientific Revolution make physicalism a reasonable metaphysical position to hold. Recently, Justin Tiehen (2015) has raised an interesting objection to this argument that takes the form of a dilemma. Tiehen’s ultimate conclusion is that at best, the causal argument is circular and so its premises cannot provide support for its conclusion, physicalism. The aim of the present paper is to respond to Tiehen’s objection in order to provide a defense of the causal argument. Although there are several rather straightforward responses a physicalist can give to Tiehen’s dilemma, consideration of this argument is worthwhile for clarifying the status of and motivation for the argument’s key premise: the causal closure of the physical domain.

## 2. The Causal Argument for Physicalism

The canonical form of the causal argument was presented in Papineau’s 2001 paper “The Rise of Physicalism,” as an argument for reductive physicalism. As

# MULTIPLE TYPES PHYSICALISM: INFIRMITIES OF NON-REDUCTIVE PHYSICALISM

*Gerhard Preyer and Erwin Rogler*

## *Abstract*

*It is part of Jaegwon Kim's life's work that he has demonstrated that non-reductive physicalism is not an option in the philosophy of the mental. However, he also recognizes the problems of mentalism that cannot be solved by physicalism. This concerns above all phenomenal consciousness, which resists naturalization. In the philosophy of the mental, this addresses a very fundamental problem of what the place of the mental is in the physical world.*

*It is Kim's merit in the philosophy of the mental to have shown non-reductive physicalism to be contradictory and qualitative experience to have shown its place as a phenomenon that cannot be explained physically. But Kim wants to be a physicalist and functionalist at the same time. For this he describes his position as "physicalism, or something near enough". It is to Kim's credit that he has presented non-reductive physicalism as a variation of British emergentism. But this raises a very fundamental problem, whether this is a valid research program of systematization of mental experience or whether it needs another research program.*

## I. Introduction

### *1. Initial Situation*

Reductionism in the philosophy of the mental was no longer attractive since the early 1970s and it was only rehabilitated by "new wave" physicalism since the early 1990s. However, the abandonment of the type identity theory of the 1950s did not lead to a new dualism in the philosophy of the mental; rather, physicalism was to be retained. This is true of functionalism and of Davidson's anomalous monism. In this respect an approach has been devised which considers both a physicalism and a non-reductive physicalism to be compatible. The basic ontological assumption is a physicalist monism, that is, that which exists in space and time is physical, for example, van Gulick, but also Davidson. But a property dualism of mental and physical properties is asserted. The mental properties are not due to physical properties, for example, by bridge laws or an analytic and nomological supervenience. (On Davidson's account of anomalous monism: Preyer, Rogler 2020, 64–74)

The rejection of a reductionist approach to theory dates to the second se-



# FUNCTIONAL REDUCTION WITH A THIRD STEP: A LARGER AND LESS REDUCTIVE PICTURE

Ronald Endicott<sup>1</sup>

## *Abstract*

*Functional reduction follows two familiar steps: a definition of a higher-level or special science property in terms of a functional role, then a statement describing a physical property that plays or occupies that role. But Kim (2005) adds a third step, namely, an explanation regarding how the physical property occupies the functional role. I think Kim is correct. But how is the third step satisfied? An examination of the pertinent scientific explanations reveals that the third step is best satisfied by a multiple-subject, part-whole explanation, which is to say, a decomposition of the occupier's causal capacities or relations. This is true even in cases wherein role and occupant properties are identical, for an occupier's causal capacities are always underwritten by a part-whole explanation. As a consequence, functional reduction is transformed into a larger picture that at bottom always contains multiple layers of distinct, nonidentical properties that divide between parts and their whole systems. I call it "Part-Based Functional Reduction." My aim is to develop this larger picture of reduction.*

## I. Introduction

In a volume dedicated to Jaegwon Kim, it is especially fitting to discuss his developed doctrine of functional reduction. It stands as the third and final pillar in Kim's overall metaphysics, placed alongside his early-period work on the nature of events and his middle-period work on concepts of supervenience. But my discussion will cover a broad spectrum of views about functional reduction, not just Kim's. Like many others, Kim operates with a notion of functional reduction that involves a single-subject theory whereby the same object *x* possesses the role and occupant properties. Also like many others, Kim's (1998) first version of functional reduction follows two familiar steps: a definition of a higher-level or special science property in terms of a functional role, then a statement describing a physical property that plays or occupies that role. But Kim (2005) subsequently adds a third step, namely, an explanation regarding how the physical property occupies the functional role.

I think Kim is correct. But how is the third step satisfied? Kim left the matter to the appropriate sciences. Yet an examination of the pertinent scientific

1 I was fortunate to have studied under Jaegwon at Michigan many years ago, and he remained a kind and generous guide in the years that followed.

# THE PROSPECTS FOR NON-REDUCTIVE PHYSICALISM

*Ausonio Marras*

## *Abstract*

*The aim of this paper is provide a reassessment of Nonreductive Physicalism (NP) as a position in philosophy of mind in view of influential critiques of some of its central assumptions and implications. First, I undertake to explicate NP's foundational concepts and metaphysical commitments in the attempt to establish NP's internal coherence. Second, I defend NP against an attempt to discredit its theoretical plausibility by responding to what is perhaps the most powerful argument against NP, namely, Jaegwon Kim's argument to the effect that the very principles of NP commit NP to epiphenomenalism.*

It is no longer clear whether nonreductive physicalism (or nonreductive materialism) can still be regarded as “the most influential metaphysical position” in contemporary philosophy, as even some of its critics were once willing to acknowledge (cf. Kim 1998). There has been, of late, something of a reductionist revival largely founded on sustained critiques of some of the central assumptions and implications of nonreductive physicalism (henceforth: NP), and the time is ripe for a reassessment of this, at least once venerable, position. There are two components to this task. The first concern the internal coherence of nonreductive physicalism: are its foundational assumptions, its basic concepts and metaphysical commitments, individually and jointly coherent? The second component of the task concerns the plausibility of NP: does NP have the resources to account for what an adequate theory of the mind-body relation is expected to account for, and can it do it better than other theories of mind, in particular, better than reductive physicalism? This is a large task, various bits of which I have addressed in a number of papers over the past several years.<sup>1</sup> Here my aims are more limited. I shall begin by providing a brief and provisional characterization of NP. In the course of explicating some of its central concepts and assumptions, I shall refine the initial characterization by distinguishing two alternative formulations of NP and show how each can coherently accommodate NP's distinguishing features. I shall then distinguish various senses of ‘reduction’ and show how NP can be said to be nonreductive in one sense but not in the others. Finally, I shall turn to the plausibility question, addressing exclusively the specific and fundamental issue of mental causation. And even

1 Esp. Marras 1993, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2007.

# PROPERTY IDENTITY AND THE SUPERVENIENCE ARGUMENT

*Joseph Mendola*

## *Abstract*

*The theses and arguments with which Jaegwon Kim was most identified all crucially involve properties. Events are said to be exemplification of properties by objects at times. Supervenience, despite its many varieties, is a relation between families of properties, such that there is no difference in supervening properties without a difference in subvening, base properties. The so-called 'supervenience' or 'causal exclusion' argument is directed against nonreductive physicalism, which denies the identity of physical and mental properties. It concludes that if physicalism is true, then mental properties are only causally efficacious when they are identical to physical properties. But despite all the work properties do for Kim, there is little in his writing regarding traditional ontological views about properties, and he sometimes makes claims about property identity that are puzzling and hard to square with other claims he makes. This paper probes this neglected corner of his work, especially in regard to the supervenience argument and the fate of nonreductive physicalism.*

The theses and arguments with which Jaegwon Kim was most identified over his long and distinguished career all crucially involve properties. Events are said to be exemplification of *properties* by objects at times.<sup>1</sup> Supervenience, despite its many varieties, is a relation between families of *properties*, such that there is no difference in supervening *properties* without a difference in subvening, base *properties*.<sup>2</sup> The so-called 'supervenience' or 'causal exclusion' argument is directed against nonreductive physicalism, which denies the identity of physical and mental *properties*. It concludes that if physicalism is true,<sup>3</sup> then mental *properties* are only causally efficacious when they are identical to physical *properties*. But despite all the work properties do for Kim, there is little in his writing regarding traditional ontological views about properties – immanent realism, predicate nominalism, trope theory, and the like – and he sometimes makes claims about property identity that are puzzling and hard to square with other claims he makes.

This paper will probe this neglected corner of his work, especially in regard to the supervenience argument and the fate of nonreductive physicalism. I think

1 Kim 1993, 3–52.

2 Kim 1993, 53–91 and 109–70.

3 And even if plausible forms of dualism like epiphenomenal dualism for qualia are true.

# CAUSAL EXCLUSION AND GROUNDING

*David Pineda-Oliva*

## *Abstract*

*In this contribution, I critically discuss the thesis, advanced by some recent writers, that nonreductive physicalists can solve the problem of causal exclusion by resorting to the meta-physical notion of grounding. After discussing the many problems confronted by very recent versions of this proposal, I conclude that a version of Nonreductive Physicalism framed in terms of a notion of realization of properties is in a better position than Grounding Physicalism in order to successfully deal with a notoriously complex metaphysical issue such as the causal exclusion problem.*

Jaegwon Kim's work on the problem of mental causation remains as an outstanding contribution to contemporary philosophy. One of the many important issues he raised is what he called the supervenience argument and now is most commonly referred to as the problem of causal exclusion. Twenty years ago, I published a paper on Kim's Causal Exclusion argument (Pineda 2002). It seemed to me a formidable problem for physicalists. On the one hand, Nonreductive Physicalism appeared as the most convincing form of physicalism; on the other hand, Kim's argument led to the conclusion that, if Nonreductive Physicalism is correct, then the mind has no causal influence on the (physical) world. My article clarified some of the premises of the argument. I argued, for instance, that the Principle of Explanatory Exclusion, according to which there cannot be two independent and complete explanations of the same (token) event, was in fact not needed. One can, I argued, offer a version of the argument without such a premise which would be as powerful as the original one (actually, more powerful given that the principle appeared controversial to many critics). The rest of the paper was a critical discussion of some of the objections to the argument (basically, Yablo's objection in Yablo 1992 and the overgeneralization problem, Block 2003). My overall conclusion was negative: none of the objections looked convincing enough.

Twenty years later, I still look at the exclusion argument as a formidable challenge to physicalists. In fact, the exclusion problem has remained a basic concern. All these years have witnessed a considerable amount of new work full of interesting ideas. But I still think that a convincing solution to the problem is pending. I cannot do justice here to all of these new contributions, nor dis-

# THE SUPERVENIENT CAUSAL EFFICACY OF CHROMATICALLY ILLUMINATED CONSCIOUS EXPERIENCE

*David Henderson, Terry Horgan, Matjaž Potrč,  
and Vojko Strahovnik*

## *Abstract*

*In our work we have drawn attention to an aspect of conscious experience that we have labeled chromatic illumination, which consists of conscious appreciation of a large body of background information, and of the holistic relevance of this information to a cognitive task that is being consciously undertaken, without that information being represented by any conscious, occurrent, intentional mental state. We have also characterized the prototypical causal role of chromatic-illumination features of conscious intentional states, and we have detailed the specific kind of physical-to-mental supervenience situation that would need to obtain in order for a chromatically illuminated conscious intentional state to figure as a supervenient mental cause of one's subsequent cognition and behavior. In this paper we answer two residual questions. The first is a "How possible?" question, asking whether such a supervenience scenario is really a coherent conceptual possibility, given that it posits a putative conscious feature of conscious experience that allegedly plays a conscious causal role that supposedly constitutes conscious appreciation of information not being consciously represented. The second is a "How plausible?" question, asking whether the details of such a physical-to-mental supervenience scenario can be spelled out in a way that makes actually plausible the claim that chromatic illumination actually gets physically implemented this way in the human brain. We argue that the supervenient causal efficacy of chromatically illuminated conscious experience is not only a genuine conceptual possibility, but also very plausibly can really occur in humans.*

Conscious experience, we maintain, often includes an aspect we call 'chromatic illumination': appreciation of background information, and of the relevance of this information to a cognitive task that is being consciously undertaken, without that information being represented by any conscious, occurrent, intentional mental state.

Imagine, for example, that you are driving on a remote country road. Seated in the car next to you is a curious small child who has rarely ridden in a car before, staring intently through the front window. As yet the road has been quite straight with excellent visibility ahead, and you have encountered virtually no

# ARMCHAIR METHODS IN PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

*Christopher S. Hill*

## *Abstract*

*Jaegwon Kim relied principally on armchair methods in approaching problems in philosophy of mind. This paper is concerned with the nature of such methods and their prospects of success. Identifying the main armchair methods as introspection, modal reasoning involving conceivability tests, and conceptual analysis, the paper argues that insofar as the first two members of this trio aim to reveal the constitutive metaphysical natures of mental states, they are unable to reach their objective. In contrast, it defends conceptual analysis, arguing that Quine's attempt to discredit it fails. More specifically, it maintains that a certain form of conceptual role semantics is immune to Quine's strictures against meaning, and that this conception of meaning allows room for armchair discoveries about the meanings of our words (though it has no tendency to provide access to deep facts about the constitutive metaphysical natures of extralinguistic entities).*

## I. Introduction

Although several aspects of Jaegwon Kim's work have deep implications for the interpretation of empirical science, the methodology to which he adhered was mainly that of an armchair philosopher. He believed that there are general philosophical truths of considerable importance that can be made explicit by more or less a priori reflection. This presupposition informed both his work in general metaphysics and his work in philosophy of mind.

Kim and I often discussed issues in philosophy of mind during the twelve years when we were colleagues. These discussions were extremely rewarding, on the whole, but I sometimes came away from them quite puzzled about what exactly had transpired. At the time I believed that all of the important questions in philosophy of mind have very substantial empirical dimensions, but I had to grant, in reflecting on some of our conversations, that Kim's a priori arguments had been quite persuasive. It seemed that he had arrived at impressive results by armchair reflection.

After attempting to reconcile these divergent views for some time, I've arrived at a few conclusions about the role of armchair methods in philosophy of mind. As I now see the situation, we should draw a three-fold distinction

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