

Physics: A Science in Quest of an Ontology

Wolfgang Smith, author

To the extent that modern physics possesses an ontology at all, it has tended to be the Cartesian doctrine of “bifurcation.” Not only, however, does this thesis prove to be untenable, but since the advent of quantum theory it has rendered physics de facto incomprehensible. This book introduces an astoundingly uncomplicated and inherently Platonist ontology in which the quantum theoretic stratum assumes its rightful place within the hierarchy of being.

Reviews

Smith continues to pursue the trail he blazed with *The Quantum Enigma* with this compact fourth book dedicated to untangling the ontological conundrums at the heart of physics. Here, in three enlightening chapters, he examines what he posits may be “the key to an ontological comprehension of physics”: the irreducible wholeness of a “corporeal entity,” meaning it’s “not subject to the bounds of space and time”—and not reducible to the sum of its “atomistic” parts. Smith argues that irreducible wholeness, or IW, offers a glimpse of “a previously unsurmised ontological unity and order,” represents a solution to the famous “measurement problem” that has fascinated/frustrated physicists since Schrödinger and Heisenberg. Smith’s contention also stands as a challenge to much contemporary physics theorizing, such as superdeterminism and “widespread and supposedly well-informed opinion” about quantum theory.

The measurement problem, of course, centers on the mystery of the collapse of a wave function at the moment of measurement. In previous books, Smith has made the case that this transition from corporeal to physical “cannot be accomplished by means of the causality upon which physics as such is based.” Here, he goes further, arguing that understanding the transition means stepping outside of physics altogether. “I incline to believe that the worst metaphysics is generally to be found among those who claim not to have any at all,” Smith writes, with customary wit, in a preface.

That exemplifies the text that follows, a crisp, coherent, unabashedly opinionated presentation that will be clear and engaging to readers who need not be subject experts to follow along—though some background in physics will certainly aid in evaluation of Smith’s contentions, which suggest, at times, a return of Platonism. Smith is a deft stylist, offering brisk, memorable thumbnail rundowns of physics, ontology, and the histories of science, mathematics, and more. The crucial distinctions he draws between the physical and corporeal, or horizontal and vertical causality, come through with sharp clarity. Three included articles digging deeper into aspects of IW illuminate the main text.

Takeaway: A sharply penned argument that solving physics’ great puzzle demands stepping outside of physics.

Great for fans of: Jean Borella and Wolfgang Smith’s *Rediscovering the Integral Cosmos*, Sabine Hossenfelder’s *Existential Physics*.

Production grades

Cover: B, Design and typography: A, Illustrations: N/A, Editing: A

Marketing copy: A

Innovation & Tech Today

Review by Betsy Chasse & John Trevor Berger

A distinguished mathematician, physicist, and philosopher—who finds himself irreconcilably at odds with the prevailing Zeitgeist—Dr. Wolfgang Smith’s passion to expose the errors of scientism for the betterment of science (and humankind) is accomplished eloquently in his latest book. *Physics: A Science in Quest of an Ontology* builds upon his earlier works *Cosmos and Transcendence*, *The Quantum Enigma*, and *The Vertical Ascent*. Over the course of these publications he discerned the error of the physicist’s basic philosophical presuppositions; posited the necessary distinction between the physical universe (the world “as conceived by the physicist”) and the corporeal world (the world as it manifests itself to sensory perception); and discovered the phenomenon of vertical causality—an ontological mode of causation which acts instantaneously, as distinct from the temporal causation known to physics—which makes possible the transition from the physical to the corporeal in the act of quantum measurement. [CLICK LINK TO READ FULL REVIEW](#)

Dr. Wolfgang Smith Merges Physics and Philosophy in New Book

Physics Quest for an Ontology review

Dr. Smith's fifth and latest book, *Physics: A Science in Quest of an Ontology*, proffers his findings on a previously unsurmised ontological unity and order, presenting the perception of classical and quantum physics "in a brand new key."

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'Physics: A Science in Quest of an Ontology' Turns Our Understanding of Reality on It's Head

Dr. Wolfgang Smith graduated from Cornell at age 18 with majors in physics, mathematics, and philosophy.

Smith now introduces a new ontological factor, the necessary complement of vertical causation: irreducible wholeness. The result is a persuasive proof of integrality in the cosmic order, presenting physics and cosmology in a brand new key. It is a restoration of meaning both to science and to our worldview at large.

As the author explains, to the extent that modern physics has possessed an ontology—a theory of "being"—at all, it has been primarily founded on the substance-dualism of René Descartes. Not only does Smith demonstrate this Cartesian "bifurcation" of reality to be untenable, but he also shows how, in the wake of quantum theory, this principle has in fact made physics incomprehensible.

At heart a philosopher in the most traditional sense, Smith became deeply attracted to the Platonist and Neoplatonist schools early in life, and in *Physics: A Science in Quest of an Ontology* he introduces a complete refoundation of physics on Platonist grounds, in which the quantum-theoretic stratum assumes its rightful place within the hierarchy of being.

We highly recommend reading all four of his books to better dive into the mind of Wolfgang Smith, and to immerse yourself in his nomenclature and metaphysics. You will embark upon an unexpected and thoroughly thought-provoking journey. His writing reflects a lifelong pursuit for an increasingly comprehensive understanding of the nature of reality, and his latest work reaches the summit.



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