



The Non-Local Universe: The New Physics and Matters of the Mind

By Robert Nadeau, Menas Kafatos

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Classical physics states that physical reality is local, or that a measurement at one point in space cannot influence what occurs at another beyond a fairly short distance. Until recently this seemed like an immutable truth in nature. However, in 1997 experiments were conducted in which light particles (photons) originated under certain conditions and traveled in opposite directions to detectors located about seven miles apart. The amazing results indicated that the photons "interacted" or "communicated" with one another instantly or "in no time," leading to the revelation that physical reality is non-local--a discovery that Robert Nadeau and Menas Kafatos view as "the most momentous in the history of science."

In pursuing this groundbreaking argument, the authors provide a fascinating history of developments that led to the discovery of non-locality and the sometimes heated debate between the great scientists responsible for these discoveries. What this new knowledge reveals, the authors conclude, is that the connection between mind and nature is far more intimate than we previously dared to imagine. What they offer is a revolutionary look at the implications of non-locality, implications that reach deep into that most intimate aspect of humanity--consciousness.

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- Sales Rank: #994868 in Books
- Published on: 2001-05-31
- Released on: 2001-05-31
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 5.10" h x .60" w x 7.80" l, .75 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 256 pages



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The latest of many attempts to link subatomic physics to broader human concerns, this brisk, uneven volume splits neatly in two: the first half explains key ideas in quantum physics, and the second makes grand claims about their worth for other fields. Classical physics rules out "action at a distance." (You can't move a billiard ball unless something--a pool cue, an air jet, lightning--contacts it.) But quantum physics permits "non-local" action, and recent experiments prove it: do certain things to one photon, and you'll affect another faster than light can travel between the two. Hence, "all of physical reality is a single quantum system that responds together to further interactions," say the authors. Nadeau (a historian of science) and Kafatos (a physicist), both professors at George Mason University, move from these cogent, compact exegeses of quantum non-locality to its purported meanings for biology, philosophy and even economics. Non-locality, Nadeau and Kafatos contend--with its attendant "complementarity" between parts and wholes--helps explain the origins of life, speaks to the evolution of consciousness, solves the dilemmas of recent social and literary thought and bridges for good the divides between mind and matter, arts and sciences. The authors bring up, but don't always keep in mind, the difference between explanation and analogy. Some arguments "prove" truths most potential readers already know (e.g., we ought to work to save the rain forests); others (about evolution and about French theory) seem facile. Nonetheless, Nadeau and Kafatos supply plenty of food for thought: the apparently recondite concept of non-locality, they suggest, has consequences everywhere. (Jan.)

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Review

"Nadeau and Kafatos supply plenty of food for thought: the apparently recondite concept of non-locality, they suggest, has consequences everywhere."--*Publishers Weekly*

About the Author

Robert Nadeau, a historian of science, has written seven books on the implications of advances in science and technology. **Menas Kafatos**, a physicist, has published numerous books and articles on computational science, astrophysics, earth systems science, general relativity and the foundations of quantum theory. They are both professors at George Mason University, in Fairfax, Virginia.

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