

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

TORN BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Wisdom And Rhetoric

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BOOK REVIEW

This fourth installment of a nonfiction series explores the intersection between the physical and spiritual worlds.

In this volume, Murphy expounds on his “two-world hypothesis” with an emphasis on physical and spiritual health. Featuring an underlying assumption that humans are “dualistic” beings with both physical and spiritual bodies, the author’s thesis argues that there are likewise two worlds—a finite “physical world” and an infinite “ethereal world”—that “act upon each other.” While accepting that modern medicine can cure physical problems, the book claims that many of humanity’s ailments (particularly mental health ones) are really “of spiritual origin” and thus require spiritual treatments. Divided into two parts, the volume looks at specific spiritual causes of human suffering in the first section. These spiritual ailments range from “past-life traumas” that can physically manifest in the birthmarks of reincarnated babies to possession by “evil spirits” or “demons.” Indeed, the book contends that possession by an evil spirit is more than just the stereotypical psychosis associated with images conjured by movies like *The Exorcist* and include benign symptoms, such as forgetfulness and indecisiveness. After offering a “primer” on spiritual conditions, the volume’s second half delivers strategies, such as meditation techniques and child-rearing tips, that can address and provide relief for those who suffer. Written in a concise style whose main body is under 100 pages, this book does not make a comprehensive case for the existence of the supernatural. Rather than analyzing otherworldly beings through the lens of scientific data, the volume often simply assumes that the entities, from gnomes (who are “very loyal, if you can convince them to help”) to ghosts (“the spirits of materialistic people who have no thoughts of the afterlife”), are part of the two-world universe in which humans exist. And while Christian readers may dismiss some of its topics as occultic, the engrossing work leans heavily into Christian theology, with ample biblical references and appendix material centered on squaring its ideas within that religion’s traditions. Some physicians and psychologists may dismiss the unconventional book as pseudo-scientific while acknowledging the value of its arguments supporting meditation and empathy.

An engaging, if unorthodox, approach to health.