

Galileo Commission Report

Summary of Argument

- 1) No human intellectual activity, including science, can escape the fact that it has to make assumptions that cannot be proven using its own methodology (i.e. absolute presuppositions).
- 2) The prevalent underlying assumptions, or world model, of the majority of modern scientists are narrowly naturalist in metaphysics, materialist in ontology and reductionist-empiricist in methodology.
- 3) This results in the belief that consciousness is nothing but a consequence of complex arrangement of matter, or an emergent phenomenon of brain activity.
- 4) This belief is neither proven, nor warranted.
- 5) In fact, there are well documented empirical phenomena that contradict this belief. Among them are
 - a. Veridical reports of near death experiences (NDEs) with complex intuitions, perceptions, cognitions and emotions during well documented absence of brain activity.
 - b. Veridical reports of non-local perception that were confirmed independently during such near-death-states of absent brain activity.
 - c. The large data-base of parapsychology and anomalous cognition research shows in a series of meta-analyses that such non-local perceptions are indeed possible.
 - d. The large data-base of children who remember previous lives, some of whom have corresponding deformities.
- 6) An increasing number of open-minded scientists are already researching these frontier areas using existing scientific methods, and are reaching empirically grounded conclusions that challenge the mainstream majority view.
- 7) They therefore argue that we need a model of consciousness that is non-reductive and allows consciousness its own ontological status.
- 8) A minimum-consensus model is a dual aspect or complementarity model, in which matter and mind, consciousness and its physical substrate, are two aspects of reality that are irreducible and simultaneously occurring perspectives of an underlying reality to which we otherwise have no direct access.
- 9) If that is granted, we can immediately see that consciousness can have its own direct access to reality, not only through sense perception, as in classical empiricism, but also through inner perception or radical introspection.
- 10) As a result, there may be a different and valid access route to reality, through consciousness, in addition to the classical one science is offering.
- 11) This might include direct access, under certain conditions, to deeper structures of reality, which may provide important insights into ethics, meaning, and values.
- 12) Indeed, insights from NDEs and other transformative experiences suggest that we are all embedded within a larger field of consciousness, with profound implications for ethics in an interconnected world.

- 13) Integrating an enlarged view of consciousness into science will also yield a new methodology that will have to be developed: the methodology of radical introspection or inner experience.
- 14) In view of the widespread perception that a narrow materialist world view is often uncritically passed on to young scientists by mainstream authorities as an adequate explanation of reality and as a pre-condition for a successful scientific career, we call for an open exploration of this topic and we encourage the scientific community to become more critically self-reflective of the absolute presuppositions on which their activities are based and to consider expanding their scope.