

Questions Concerning the Galileo Commission

Galileo launched a new experimental science that changed the history of the world and, paradoxically, led to the peculiar dangers before us—climate catastrophe and nuclear war.

So the timing is right for a new experimental science--but this time a science that focuses on mind and consciousness—the missing complement of the physicalist science of Galileo's making.

In your own field, and in general, what do you consider to be the major limitations of science, as it is currently understood and practised?

I was a graduate student in philosophy at Columbia University in the 1960s, and once mentioned to a fellow an experience I had of telepathy. His jaw dropped, and he said: "But that's impossible! It would imply dualism!" *A priori*, my experience was destroyed. (But it wasn't.)

This to me shows a major limitation in the way much of science and philosophy operate today, seemingly blind to whole realms and types of human experience. R.D. Laing used for this the phrase "destruction of experience." *The New Inquisition* was the title of a book by Robert Anton Wilson not so long ago that objected to the intellectual totalitarianism of *Science*.

At the risk of sounding melodramatic, isn't the invalidation of whole realms of human experience a kind of crime against humanity? The major limitation of the dominant mode of science today is the truncated ontology it foists upon us. The devaluation of the inward dimension of our being is no small thing.

Nor is this limitation just an academic matter. Science today operates in unwholesome alliance with corporate capitalism and the government's military arm. In the rich and powerful military-industrial complexes, well-trained material scientists are amply rewarded for their services. But science, in that context, is forced to perform as servant to its corporate and state underwriters. The allegiance of science to truth wherever it leads is compromised, even to the extent of criminal falsification of truth, concerning, for example, issues surrounding the tobacco industry, the pharmaceutical industry, the climate denying cabals, the defenders of the Iraq war, the parties agitating for a new arms race, and so on.

But science, to qualify as science, needs to be free from political, economic, and metaphysical bias.

How would you like to see these limitations addressed?

That's a tough question. In my opinion, the facts of human experience suggest we are part of a single reality that transcends time, space, and physical existence. The entire realm of consciousness, all its forms and effects on the body, tell a tale of mystery, meaning and transcendence. And yet, the overwhelming presence of technology in our lives seems almost to make the psychic dimension superfluous. I have read stories of Australian "clever men" transcending space by telepathy, but would they lose their cleverness if they had smart phones? Plato once remarked that the invention of writing had an adverse effect on memory.

Is the growing immersion in digitized experience impairing our capacity to engage with *unmediated* reality, the external *and* the internal multi-worlds that surround and interpenetrate us?

One way to address the imposition of techno-physicalism is to turn things off and get rid of things--to fast from technology. I chose, for example, never to purchase a smart phone. When I go for a stroll on our town's lively pedestrian mall, I feel like a stranger in a strange land. I have nothing in my hands, no earphones, nothing strapped to my head. It's called unfiltered experience. Does it belong on the list of endangered species? The intrusion of technology in our lives is something of a limitation imposed on us by the triumph of physicalist science.

Science has not only learned how to destroy all life on Earth, it is also at work learning how to survey all living humans, and then sneak within (via FB) and influence their minds, as, some hold, with the 2016 election of Trump. The technology is being used in surreptitious ways to insinuate itself inside our minds. It may be time after all to start screaming out about the invasion of body snatchers.

What new methodologies and ontology would you propose?

New methodologies for dealing with the phenomena that interest us are needed. Aside from the general difficulties in testing human behaviour, the psi phenomena that interest us have strange properties; they tease us but are maddeningly elusive, even, as many have contended, systematically evasive and uncontrollable, as discussed at length in J.E Kennedy's "The Capricious, Actively Evasive, Unsustainable Nature of Psi" (JP, V. 67, 2003).

I value experimental work in parapsychology, but believe that spontaneous phenomena are often more compelling evidentially and perhaps more revealing as to the meaning and character of psi phenomena and therefore of human consciousness.

I'm working on a taxonomy of unusual psychophysical phenomena, resulting from my research on the levitations of Joseph of Copertino. (*Man Who Could Fly*, 2016; *Wings of*

Ecstasy (2017) Drawing comparatively on many fields of study, I think it possible to form an image—based on a synthesis of a spectrum of historical evidence—of futuristic humanity.

Spontaneous, new psi occurrences are, I believe, happening all around us, and sometimes *to us*. Early psychical research was an outgoing venture into living society. My experience has been that people everywhere have or know of those who had interesting experiences that relate to a new science of consciousness. I have been cultivating a methodology of alertness to current events, including attention to the Internet. To mention one of many curious finds. I had no idea that in 1992, a church and priest two hours away in my state of Virginia were the scene where many plastic statues of the Madonna wept profusely many times before many witnesses, including journalists from the Washington Post (see *The Seton Miracles: Weeping Statues and Other Wonders*, James Carney, 1998).

There are, in my view, some very interesting general ideas that may be personally testable. Let me just mention two lines of exploration I've pursued a little. The first is an ongoing experiment in (what I would call) the parapsychology of religion. The point of the experiment is to consciously set up a situation in which I dialogue with my subliminal self. That's the essence of it. I do this with the aid of the pendulum; by producing paintings semi-automatically; by cultivating a knack I have for dwelling in the hypnagogic state; by drumming, humming, singing and expostulating with variously personified figures of my imagination.

Another area of great interest inspired by Myers is the creative stand he assumes toward the idea of the multiplex nature of human consciousness. Adam Crabtree has written an original book, *Multiple Man*, that delves into the creative potential of multiple mind.

I would also emphasize the idea of postmaterial medicine as a project around which psychical research may rally, and suggest Larry Dossey's paper, "Postmaterial Medicine, Health, and Healing," to kick that idea off. As far as the methodology of future science, it should, as Paul Feyerabend repeatedly argued, wean itself from dependence on state and industry, and serve truth and life on Earth.

The kind of ontology I imagine as the groundwork for the renaissance of science we are trying to imagine would be one grounded in the primacy and irreducibility of mind. The exact formulation of this ontology of irreducible mind remains an open question. There are all sorts of candidates out there, but which can accommodate the full spectrum of empirically authentic phenomena. I myself am drawn to the panentheism that roughly undergirds the anthology, *Beyond Physicalism*, ed. Ed Kelly et alia. The new ontology, however we abstractly label it, we may think of as part of a new fact-based mythology of transcendence. It is a story that opens us to the possibility of new realms of experience, a possibility we can feel attracting us to the future.

What differences do you think an extended science would make to your field, and in general?

First off, if philosophers took seriously the challenge of psychical research, we might see a renaissance of speculative metaphysics. I feel, in fact, the same would be true for many academic disciplines. Adding another ontological dimension to any domain of study is likely to enrich it in ways we could scarcely imagine in advance.

Any other observations you may have.

The objection to reductive materialism is not just logical, evidence-based, and metaphysically significant; it is also political and economic. Science and its dominant ontology today operate within a political and economic order; to challenge the ontology of science is to challenge the dominant world order. The U.S. spends and makes untold billions of dollars on weaponry and armaments whose aim and use is to threaten and if need be inflict total death and destruction. How much does the U.S. invest in research that may help us understand what happens to the people killed by the weapons we make. The answer is nothing. Something seems a bit out of kilter here. We need a new vision or the people will perish.