

Olympia Declaration May 1999

Consciousness and the Original Spirit of Science

A widespread and growing awareness that humanity is on a hinge of history is inspiring a profound reevaluation of our ways of knowing and interacting with the world.

In many areas - ecology, population, education, health and healing, spiritual values - humanity is facing unprecedented crises. For the first time this predicament is truly global.

We believe that the metaphysical world view which assumes dead matter to be primary, and sensory empiricism and rationality to be the only avenues to truth, leads to a profound split between mechanistic "facts" and spiritual values.

The task before us is to expand modern science to include not only mechanism, but also meaning, values and purpose. In short: a science of consciousness to complement our current mastery of matter. Such a change will require a radical transformation of science as a methodology as well as of scientists themselves.

The change will build on the great achievements of modern science by returning to its original spirit of "scientia". This was the form of science - which included the transformation of the scientist (as observer) in addition to exploration of matter (as observed) - that was present in ancient Greek philosophy.

Two and a half thousand years later, from April 28th to May 2nd 1999, a group of scientists, philosophers, health care specialists, and other scholars, met in Olympia, Greece, to explore the original spirit of science and to examine whether new approaches in physics such as quantum mechanics might help to open the way to a true science of consciousness.

We believe that the progress of science in exploring consciousness and the relationship between consciousness and matter would be better served if scientists were to recognise the importance of their own inner vision. And as profoundly spiritual people have long known, silence is a way of knowing which can enhance one's sense of moral truth.

A general consensus emerged in this conference that the transformation toward the original spirit of science will involve a recognition that the task before us is best summarised not so much as consciousness within science, but as science within consciousness.

A full report of this conference will appear in the next issue