

GALILEO COMMISSION

Integrated Worldviews Study

Year One: Examining the Science of Human Worldviews

Year Two: Exploring an Integrated/Unitive Worldview

Year Three: Resourcing a Integrated/Unitive Worldview

Worldview definition

"We adopt the idea that there are only two observable, essential forms of assumptions – worldviews - to choose from today. One has us as creatures that are intrinsically part of Nature, physically and spiritually. The other has separated from Nature, also physically and spiritually. Dualistic either/or thinking, which does not seek complementarity between apparent opposites, is not part of the indigenous worldview. Making comparisons between the two worldviews may therefore seem to be a contradiction. We maintain, however, that although there may be some mysterious symbiosis at play, we are at a point where either/or decisions must be made regarding which way of understanding our place in the world will best serve life systems."

Restoring the Kinship Worldview

Wahinkpe Topa (Four Arrows) and Darcia Narvaez, PhD

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A Worldview is the fundamental intellectual and intuitive/experiential understanding of an individual or society's reality at that point of time. It is their internalized 'map of the world' based upon their own cosmology and place-based language and perceptions. All human belief systems and worldviews stem from a particular relational context. We reflect the environments within which we live, offering many interpretations of the same reality. Humans make decisions and take actions that influence the physical and social systems that surround them based on their own perceptions of the present and others' perceptions of the past through lived experience, stories and other forms of received wisdom.

At birth all human babies share the same core intrinsic needs. Their inner and outer worlds are fundamentally intertwined, to the extent that they only later start to experience themselves as separate beings in a world of others. The desires and values of the foetus and infant are shaped by how well their basic needs are met and will influence their identity/personality and subsequent motivations, beliefs and behaviours in the world. Worldviews are therefore inextricably linked to the development of human values, beliefs and behaviours, with physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual capacities intertwined throughout the life course.

Over time, two worldviews have dominated the perceptions, sensemaking, decision taking and actions of humanity and it has been suggested that these are deeply rooted in the way the two hemispheres of the brain perceive and interact with the world (McGilchrist, I, 2023).ⁱⁱ

1) The Dualistic/Linear Worldview (DLW) left hemisphere processing: is detailed, analytical and sequential, focuses on parts rather than wholes, and it is excellent at breaking things down into

categories and processes. It tends to abstract and decontextualize information, focusing on explicit details and often missing the broader context and is oriented towards control, manipulation, and utility, prioritizing certainty, predictability, and the manipulation of the environment. It sees human beings as apart from Nature.

2) The Holistic/Non-linear Worldview (HNW) right hemisphere processing: interprets information in a holistic manner, seeing the big picture and context. It is attuned to the implicit, the relational, and the interconnectedness of things. It engages with the world in a direct, immediate, and living way, appreciating the uniqueness and flow of experience and emphasizes the embodied and intuitive aspects of knowledge, understanding through experience and empathy. The HNW seeks complementarity between apparent opposites and understands human beings as intrinsically part of Nature.

The study will explore whether, through analysing the benefits and risks of an over-focus on one over the other, it is possible to develop and promote a new Integrated/Unitive Worldview that is a balance of the two and that can serve the emergent needs of the time.

A New Way Forward

The current predominant worldviews, and the tensions between them, account for most of the wicked issues the world faces today. Colonialism, the rise of fascism, climate crisis, violent extremism, inequity, mental health crisis, and individual and collective alienation are deeply connected to the ongoing struggles between these two worldviews. The proposed solutions to these intractable problems also emerge from one or the other. Some glorify science and technology. Others speak to coherence within Self and with Nature. Each offers hope, but tends to exclude the benefits and possibilities that might arise from the other.

An awareness has been steadily emerging around the world, and across all sectors of academia and civil society, of a new possibility. Rather than adopting the DLW assumption of two, opposing, disconnected perspectives, the possibility is emerging for a third path, which integrates and transcends both, while mitigating the risks of either.

The urgent need for such a new, emerging worldview is well documented. Iain MacGilchrist, Ervin Laslow, Jude Currivan, Indy Johar, Jo-Ann Archibald and all the chapter authors of the recent book *'The Great Upshift'*ⁱⁱⁱ have written about the vibrant possibility of a worldview that moves humanity beyond the current chasm that affects all aspects of life, leadership, choice, and action.

This includes one that recognises the mythological dynamics being endlessly played out in human conflicts.^{iv} It also suggests the need to embrace moving beyond the boundaries of worldviews themselves into something much more profound.^v

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“Sanctuaries are not places where we are set straight; sanctuaries are places we are broken down. Sanctuaries are not sites of solutions. They are practices that help us see that the way we see the problem we want to address is often part of the problem.

Sanctuaries are not committed to reinforcing rectitude, as much as they are invested in touching inclinations and the intersectionalities of our bodies. Most importantly, sanctuaries are assemblages or reconfigurations of the dynamic cross-cutting relationships between us and our children, us and our ancestors, and us and the other-than-human agencies in and around us.”

Bayo Akomolafe

While the necessity for a new worldview is widely acknowledged, its narrative and call to action are still developing. It is generally agreed that the new approach will inspire adaptation and diversity, so that it will manifest differently to optimize local conditions of resources, history, hopes and needs. It will be held by all, and lived differently by each. It will influence and be influenced by thought and language as well as by feelings and action. It will attend to the needs of both the individual and the collective. It will centre on Life and Wellbeing for the Earth and all her inhabitants. It will draw wisdom from ancient and indigenous cultures history and inform commitment to the future. It will leverage the benefits of the two worldviews and mitigate their risks. It will be carried in the deep subjective experience of the arts and storytelling, as well as in the technical, scientific, and mathematical arts.

It will challenge us to acknowledge that, by their very nature, all human worldviews are limited and that there is a boundless and loving intelligence that lies beyond these.

I think that all that exists, exists in consciousness; that consciousness is the stuff of the cosmos. Matter is a phase of consciousness. It is not a separate thing, any more than ice is separate from water; it's a phase of water; it's neither less nor more than water; it's not separate from water; it's a kind of water. And matter is a kind of consciousness—for a time—that has certain quite marked properties that are different from the way we normally think of consciousness, just as water is transparent and flows and all the rest, and ice is hard and opaque and can split your head open. So they're different but they're part of the same ontology. Consciousness and matter must be distinguished—I argue strongly that they are distinguished, just as ice and water are—but there should be no need to set the one against the other.

Dr Iain McGilchrist

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to accelerate the development, dissemination, and adoption of this new way of understanding the world by addressing the following questions:

What global narratives and patterns have been emerging that support this suggestion?

What narratives and patterns could help inform and empower this new worldview, and how could individuals, communities and institutions contribute to its emergence?

What conditions would support a global community of learning and action?

What tools and approaches would be needed to embed it in civilisations around the world?

A mixed methods approach, strongly influenced by insights from complexity science, will be used to explore these questions. The approach will be based on:

- Inquiry and deep humility, understanding that this emerging worldview is grounded in uncertainty and emerging reality.
 - Diversity of perspectives, understanding the dangers of a dogmatic, hegemonic approach.
 - Multiple scales of perception and action, recognizing the complex interdependencies among levels of awareness and action (individual to universal).
 - Fluid and generative relationships between material and spiritual realities, understanding that the split between mind and matter is a hallmark of failed worldviews.
 - Embedded in, and emergent from, action, understanding that any true paradigm shift comes at the interface between received theory and inexplicable experience.
 - Personal and reflective, understanding that worldviews and their shifts depend on developing identity and personal transformation.
 - Stretching and folding (rather than moving in a linear path), understanding that any new worldview should be open, high dimensions, and nonlinear.
 - The project will expand the conversation to include new voices and experiences, then converge to set conditions for new, more coherent patterns to emerge.
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A Science and Worldview rooted in Life

"A worldview is not merely a collection of separate, independent, unrelated beliefs, but is instead an intertwined, interrelated, interdependent system of beliefs."

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Richard Dewitt, Worldviews: An Introduction to the History and Philosophy of Science

The Galileo Integrated Worldviews Study will seek to work with other Silva Grantees and expert partners to examine the evolution of the two dominant worldviews, together with their impact on the world.

Over the three years it will aim to:

- examine the foundational assumptions of the major sciences and religions in light of these two ways on understanding the world
- explore the patterns (similarities, differences and connections) of the two dominant worldviews that inform individual and collective perception, sensing, and action
- incorporate the knowledge, cosmovision and traditional wisdom of indigenous science
- explore the factors that shape worldviews, such as early life experience, human language, social structures, and cultural narratives

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- explore the factors that transform worldviews, such as suffering and significant life experiences
 - explore the cultural/societal influences that control/manipulate societal/cultural worldviews and how these impact human and planetary flourishing
 - explore the influence of these worldviews on key human systems such as health, economics and education
 - determine the values and principles that support the development/promotion of an Integrated/Unitive Worldview
 - seek to share its findings with a global audience
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Year 1: Examining the Assumptions behind the Two Dominant Worldviews

Multi-disciplinary Review and Analysis:

1. Consolidate research and perspectives

- Conduct an extensive review to understand the existing research on the science behind the two dominant human worldviews and cultural narratives, and their impact on human values, behaviors and societal structures.
- Consult with indigenous knowledge holders, environmental activists, spiritual leaders, and other stakeholders to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives.
- Commission summary papers that seek to consolidate the core findings.

2. Host dialogues and collect stories

- Initiate a three-year process of Collective Dialogue and Sensemaking to explore the patterns (similarities and differences and connections) between the different worldviews that inform individual and collective perception, sensing, and action
 - Identify the key assumptions together with the commonalities and differences in how humans perceive their relationship with the world.
 - Establish a working relationship with other Silva Grantees and key global partners to share emergent knowledge and understanding
 - Agree a communications strategy which includes a dedicated website
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Year 2: Exploring the development of an Integrated/ Unitive Worldview

1. Synthesis and Integration:

- Synthesize the findings from Year 1 to develop a comprehensive scientific framework for understanding human worldviews, highlighting common elements and areas of divergence.
- Integrate insights to create a holistic model that accounts for both individual variations and collective patterns in worldview formation.

2. Life-centric Principles:

- Identify the core principles rooted in human flourishing, planetary regeneration, social justice, and ecological interconnectedness that form the basis of a Integrated/Unitive Worldview.

3. Summary Report

- Compile and publish a Summary Report that includes specific actions and recommendations.
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Year 3: Resourcing an Integrated/Unitive Worldview

1. Communication and Outreach:

- Commission a group of expert participants to produce a 35 chapter book promoting the global need for an Integrated/ Unitive Worldview.
- Summarise the actions that can be taken by individuals, communities, institutions, and nations in support of an Integrated/Unitive Worldview.
- Collaborate with artists, storytellers, and media professionals to craft compelling ways of reaching diverse global audiences.
- Further develop the website and associated outreach resources

2. Education and Training:

- Provide the scientific evidence to support the integration of Unitive Worldview principles into formal education systems at multiple levels, from primary schools to universities, to cultivate a deeper understanding of ecological interconnectedness and ethical responsibility.
- Provide the scientific evidence to support the integration of Unitive Worldview principles into economic systems.
- Provide the scientific evidence to support the integration of Unitive Worldview principles into global health systems.

- Assist with the creation of training programs for leaders and decision-makers to facilitate the move towards a Unitive Worldview and Narrative.

3. Policy Advocacy and Institutional Change:

- Provide the scientific evidence that supports policymakers, business leaders, and civil society organizations to advocate for policies and practices aligned with life-centric principles, such as sustainable development goals, climate action plans, and regenerative agriculture initiatives.
- Work towards integrating Unitive Worldview perspectives into institutional frameworks and decision-making processes to foster a more peaceful, resilient and regenerative future.

Evaluation and Iteration:

Throughout the three-year period, continuously evaluate the impact of the strategy through working group feedback and action plans. Solicit feedback from key partners and stakeholders and adapt the approach as needed to maximize effectiveness and relevance.

By systematically exploring the worldview and values that we need for a resilient and regenerative future, develop an **Integral Scientific Approach, rooted in Life**, that can help catalyse a profound cultural shift towards a more interconnected, compassionate, and sustainable world.

ⁱ Narvaez, D and Topa, W (2022) Restoring the Kinship Worldview, North Atlantic Books

ⁱⁱ McGilchrist, I (2023) The Matter with Things, Perspectiva

ⁱⁱⁱ Laslow, E and Lorimer, D (2023) The Great Upshift, Light on Light Press

^{iv} Tick, E 2005) War and the Soul

^v Akomolafe, B (2023) Making Sanctuary, www.bayoakomolafe.net

^{vi} Dewitt, R (201) Worldviews: An Introduction to the History and Philosophy of Science, Wiley-Blackwell