

THE ACADEMY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF POSTMATERIALIST SCIENCES: INTEGRATING CONSCIOUSNESS INTO MAINSTREAM SCIENCE



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INTRODUCTION

There are moments in the history of science when major shifts occur, and general assumptions and core conceptualizations are suddenly called into question. Thomas Kuhn, perhaps the best known and most influential historian and philosopher of science of the 20th century, made these changes his special study, and developed the concept of the “paradigm shift.”¹ He defined this as a unifying vision of reality which most scientists agree. He further noted that when that vision no longer accords with the experimental data, and too many anomalies are reported, paradigms go into crisis. When that happens, he said, new worldviews emerge and become consensual. It is the conviction of the authors that an emerging vision of a postmaterialist science is now occurring exactly as Kuhn predicted. Like all such shifts this new perspective has far-reaching conceptual, experimental, and practical applications. The Academy for the Advancement of Postmaterialist Sciences has been established by the authors of this essay with the express purpose of providing a collegial institutional structure for a substantive expression and manifestation of this paradigm change.

The founding of the Academy arises from the response to the “Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science” published in the journal *Explore* in 2014.² The Manifesto was one of the outcomes of a meeting held at Canyon Ranch in Tucson, Arizona, on February 7–9,

2014. Co-organized by Gary E. Schwartz, PhD and Mario Beauregard, PhD from the University of Arizona and Lisa Miller, PhD, from Columbia University its purpose was expressly to discuss what a post-materialist paradigm might look like and its implications for science and society.³ The Manifesto was drafted by Beauregard, Schwartz, and Miller, and co-signed by the participants of the meeting (listed alphabetically).

Certain broad conclusions emerged with associated recommendations. Quoting from the manifesto:

- (1) Post-materialist science does not reject the empirical observations and great value of scientific achievements realized up until now. It seeks to expand the human capacity to better understand the wonders of nature and, in the process, rediscover the importance of mind and spirit as being part of the core fabric of the universe. *Post-materialism is inclusive of matter, which is seen as a basic constituent of the universe*
- (2) The post-materialist paradigm has far-reaching implications. It fundamentally alters the vision we have of ourselves, giving us back our dignity and power, as humans and as scientists. This paradigm fosters positive values such as compassion, respect, and peace. By emphasizing a deep connection between ourselves and nature at large, the post-materialist paradigm also promotes environmental awareness and

the preservation of our biosphere. In addition, it is not new, but only forgotten for 400 years, that a lived transmaterial understanding may be the cornerstone of health and wellness, as it has been held and pre-served in ancient mind–body–spirit practices, religious traditions, and contemplative approaches.

- (3) The shift from materialist science to post-materialist science may be of vital importance to the evolution of the human civilization. It may be even more pivotal than the transition from geocentrism to heliocentrism.

One of the concrete recommendations that came from the Canyon Ranch meeting was the recommendation to create a website devoted to postmaterialist sciences, and this was done: (<http://www.opensciences.org/>). Included on the website are the names of over 200 scientists worldwide who have subsequently agree with the manifesto.

In the Spring of 2016 Stephan Schwartz, Gary E. Schwartz and Larry Dossey drafted and published in *Explore* a declaration specifically addressing some of the healthcare aspects of post-materialism, “Declaration for Integrative, Evidence-Based, End-of-Life Care that Incorporates Nonlocal Consciousness.” Twenty two scientists and physicians signed the published declaration, and more have done so subsequently.

Another of the 2014 recommendations was to create an academy or

association to foster the evolution of an extended science that incorporates a postmaterialist perspective, and to establish a formal academic infrastructure for a collegial community pursuing these lines of research. Three years later, based on the response received since 2014, a conclave was assembled in 2017 to do just that.

FOUNDING OF AAPS

On August 24–27, 2017, Gary E. Schwartz, PhD. The University of Arizona, and Marjorie Woollacott, PhD, University of Oregon, Emeritus, invited a group of 11 scientists (9 from the United States, 2 from Canada) spanning the fields of physics, psychology, neuroscience, and medicine to found an international organization to foster postmaterial sciences. Once again the meeting was held at Canyon Ranch. Ten scientists were invited to attend in person, one by video. After several days discussion the consensus name selected by the group was the Academy for the Advancement of Postmaterialist Sciences (AAPS). The 11 members became the founding Board of Directors, with Gary E. Schwartz being elected the founding president with Marjorie Woollacott the president-elect. The present document was authored by Gary Schwartz, Marjorie Woollacott, and Stephan Schwartz, and co-signed by the rest of the board (listed alphabetically).

From this meeting emerged the Academy recommended in 2014. It was established on the basis of the following foundational purposes:

(1) To encourage both individual and cultural transformation through research about postmaterialist consciousness combining and integrating perspectives that come from looking out into the world (third person), perspectives that come from looking into the self (first person), and perspectives that are interpersonal (second person) and transpersonal through scientific and educational outreach involving a worldwide learning community. The goal is the realization of an advanced and integrative scientific worldview that supports a renewed relationship with the natural world.

This includes an expanded definition of natural law to include the realms of life, consciousness and meaning, and it acknowledges the special interconnected roles of reasoning, intelligence, intuition, love, and compassion in the advancement of human science, culture, and spirit.

- (2) To provide a supportive professional organization for scientists, students, and science-minded professionals, who wish to understand and contribute to postmaterialist science in their respective disciplines and fields.
- (3) To rigorously and creatively advance theory, research, and applications of postmaterialist sciences in all domains by promoting evidence-based truth-seeking inquiry. This includes the development and advancement of pedagogy at all levels (from K-12 through university) that cultivates discovery and knowledge incorporating a postmaterial perspective.
- (4) To be proactive in bringing current and future postmaterialist knowledge to mainstream and frontier scientific organizations as well as the media in a responsible and open-minded fashion.
- (5) To boldly explore all aspects of human consciousness and reality in the spirit of intellectual freedom.

The specific work of the AAPS includes the following:

- Encourage participation in research and publication of articles about shifting scientific worldviews as a result of awareness of the significance of consciousness as a fundamental and universal phenomenon.
- Communicate research findings at meetings, both sponsored and co-sponsored, and through publications both electronic and in print.

The mission of the AAPS is to:

- Bring these two disparate truth-seeking worldviews of objective science and subjective conscious and spiritual experiences, into public awareness in order to facilitate needed changes in underlying cultural beliefs about reality. In order to change the world, we need to change the core worldview that controls our actions.

- Advance the understanding of the nature of consciousness, including interactions between the brain, mind and broader levels of consciousness, including spirituality.
- Bring together scientists and philosophers of diverse backgrounds, to facilitate the integration of research within the broad range of sciences and philosophy (neuroscience, psychology, physics, biology, etc.).
- Encourage translational research and the application of new knowledge in the complementary medical fields to develop improved disease treatments and cures.
- Provide professional development activities, information, and educational resources for postmaterialist consciousness researchers at all stages of their careers, including undergraduates, graduates, and postdoctoral fellows, and increase participation of scientists from a diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds in postmaterialist research. In this way, the AAPS will create a safe-haven for young scientists and students to become conversant in state-of-the-art postmaterialist science and bring this knowledge to their respective departments in universities and research centers.
- Promote public information and general education about the nature of scientific discovery and the results and implications of the latest research regarding the nature of postmaterialist consciousness.
- Inform legislators and other policymakers about new scientific knowledge and recent developments in postmaterialist consciousness research and their implications for public policy, societal benefit, and continued scientific progress.

For AAPS to achieve these high ideals, it must emphasize its commitment to integrity in fostering (1) openness to alternative theories, (2) the application of careful scientific methodology, and (3) the advancement of both professional and public communication.

Rather than attempting to be low-key about this research, in the AAPS we are choosing to boldly and honestly share these real possibilities for the sake of scientific as well as personal integrity.

Our goal is to create a safe haven for senior scientists, young scientists, and students, to individually and collectively explore concepts and findings that may fall outside the mainstream of accepted materialist thinking. It is our shared conviction that science and society can only advance to the extent that genuine and replicated evidence is

allowed to speak and be heard. Toward this end a documentary filmed at the AAPS founders meeting has been produced by Michel Pascal and colleagues (www.expandingrealitytheme.com).

For more information about the AAPS and potentially becoming a member, please visit www.AAPS.global.com.

REFERENCES

1. Kuhn T. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press; 1962.
2. Beauregard M, Schwartz GE, Miller L, et al. Manifesto for a post-materialist science. *Explore*. 2016;12(2):272–274.
3. (<http://opensciences.org/files/pdfs/ISPMS-Summary-Report.pdf>).