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SchwartzReport

## The transformation – nonlocal consciousness becomes a fundamental in our reality

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*The Schwartzreport tracks emerging trends that will affect the world, particularly the United States. For EXPLORE it focuses on matters of health in the broadest sense of that term, including medical issues, changes in the biosphere, technology, and policy considerations, all of which will shape our culture and our lives.*

In 2017, I was asked to present my *8 Laws* book at a conference.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards a group of millennials came up to me and asked to take me to lunch, saying that they had some questions. In answer to a question asked by a woman in her late twenties, recently awarded her PhD, I made a reference to a book by Barbara Tuchman. The reference drew blank looks around the table, which surprised me because the late Barbara Tuchman along with Doris Kearns Goodwin, both Pulitzer Prize winners, were two of the most respected and well-known women historians and biographers of the 20th century. Kearns Goodwin is still at work. A little later I was asked a question by a man about thirty, who did something successfully in the financial world. To test an idea I had reached when asked the earlier question, this time in my answer I referenced another Pulitzer Prize winner, David McCullough, two-time winner of the Pulitzer, the National Book Award, recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom on PBS and other networks with regularity; surely he must be known. But once again I was surprised.

This really stood out for me, so I asked the table, “What do you read, how do you learn things?” They answered, “We read novels and adult comic books; we do social media and look at websites. We play video games and watch cable series on Netflix, Showtime, Starz, Hulu, and HBO, mostly.”

It made me realize that even though I study social trends and outcome data every day, and am immersed in the academic literature of several fields, from neuroscience, to biology, medicine, physics, anything having to do with consciousness, I had lost the bubble as submariners say, had lost touch with an aspect of popular culture. Two things came out of this. First, I realized that table of millennials had not mentioned nonfiction, nor did they recognize the major nonfiction writers I had referenced. That suggested to me that if I wanted millennial and younger readers to read and think about the insights I had learned from research, I should put those insights into novels as well as nonfiction books and academic papers. I began to write what over the past three years have become three novels. Second, I began to binge watch cable series. What did I learn? Many things which, when combined with the social outcome data I had already been tracking, has convinced me that our cultural world view is changing; materialism as the dominant worldview of Western culture is fading.

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Magic has always been a cultural presentation of nonlocal consciousness. But what it means has changed over the centuries. Today it is comprehended very differently than even in the recent past. If you grew up with Harry Potter books and movies as major experiences in your childhood and youth, you have a very different view of magic than you would have had if those same years been spent with the book and movie, *The Wizard of Oz*. This new view is reflected in series such as, *Once Upon a Time*, *American Gods*, *The Order*, and *The Good Witch*.

My binge watching taught me consciousness and spacetime are now a consuming popular interest. There are now 15 cable series in which time travel, often accompanied with other nonlocal abilities, plays a fundamental part of the narrative. *Frequency*, *Dark*, *Future Man*, *The Flash*, *11.22.63*, *Outlander*, *Quantum Leap*, *Continuum*, *Travelers*, *Timeless*, *12 Monkeys*, *Flash Forward*, *Primeval*, *Legends of Tomorrow*, *Doctor Who*.

But that is just part of it. The Abrahamic male dominance culture *Of Father Knows Best*, *Leave it to Beaver*, or *The God Father*, is changing as part of the greater change in consciousness concerning the culture's perception of sexuality and gender. Gender equality and interracial romance is now accepted and unexceptional in these series. So much for *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. Same sex romantic relationships, not a problem. Transgender is not only accepted, several shows have transgender prominent regular characters. *Sense 8*, a series made by the Wachowski brothers who created the *Matrix* series, now the Wachowski sisters, is an example, and it is also explicitly based on nonlocal consciousness. This trend in consciousness has many facets, I have learned, and is occurring in various ways and to various degrees throughout the west, and elsewhere as well. Even a country like Saudi Arabia feels the change. Woman can now drive and leave the house without the permission and accompaniment of a dominant male.

But here I want to focus on the integration of nonlocal consciousness into science.

In 2005, The Gallup Organization reported, “About three in four Americans profess at least one paranormal belief. ... The most popular is extrasensory perception (ESP), mentioned by 41%, followed closely by belief in haunted houses (37%).”<sup>2</sup>

According to the Pew Research Center, “Nearly one-in-five U.S. adults (18%) say they've seen or been in the presence of a ghost, according to a 2009 Pew Research Center survey. An even greater share – 29% – say they have felt in touch with someone who has already died.”<sup>3</sup>

Dutch cardiologist Pim van Lommel, writing in 2010, said that as a result of “better chances of survival due to improved resuscitation techniques and treatment options,” there has been an increase in the occurrence of near death experiences (NDE). He compiled data from many sources and reported the data suggested that, “in the United

States and Germany... approximately 4.2 percent of the population has reported an NDE.<sup>4</sup> In the U.S. alone, with an estimated population of 329 million, that would be nearly 14 million people. Perhaps then it is not surprising that concurrently with the change in popular culture, the research community of scientists, physicians, scholars, and philosophers whose life work centers on consciousness is also changing.

Materialism may still be the dominant paradigm in science, but the general culture in which those scientists are embedded is changing, and so is science, not just because such ideas are more prevalent and accepted in society, but because the accumulating research in a wide range of fields, from medicine, to biology, to physics is compelling a growing number of scientists and physicians to confront the failure of materialism. In parapsychology alone there are now nearly a dozen protocols used in laboratories around the world, each with odds the results are the result of chance being greater than one in a billion, where one in twenty would be significant.

All of this is completely consistent with the insights of the late Thomas Kuhn, M. Taylor Pyne Professor of Philosophy and History of Science of the Princeton University and, later, Laurence S. Rockefeller Professor of Philosophy at MIT. Kuhn coined the term paradigm and explained the process in his 1962 exegesis, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, arguably the most important book about the history and philosophy of science ever written. He showed that after a period in which a variety of points-of-view compete, certain theories begin to draw adherents and schools (of thought) are formed. Gradually this phase gives way to a next stage of development where one school "gains status" by being more successful in solving what the discipline has set up as its most acutely pressing tasks. This does not mean that this school's theory and techniques are more "truthful" or that they can solve all problems. It only means that the school is more efficient and successful at solving the critical problems in question at that moment. Indeed, since by definition a paradigm is a set of boundaries, the victorious school and its theories are only designed to solve a selected and limited list of puzzles. Once a view has proved successful, the school it represents draws adherents from the other schools until a kind of critical mass is achieved. At this point one set of theories predominates and becomes the entire discipline's paradigm, and a discipline becomes thereby a science. When many different disciplines hold the same basic paradigm, a meta-paradigm emerges.

This is not the end, however; this is a dynamic process. Kuhn showed how as research continued if the paradigm had previously unrecognized limitations anomalies would arise. As they increased the anomalies would cause a paradigm to go into crisis. In response, he explains, there is an attempt to extend existing theory and, when that fails, the paradigm has to change to incorporate something new. And that is exactly what is happening with materialism.

Several years ago I wrote the following: "It has been more than six decades since Gilbert Ryle, Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy at Oxford, coined 'The Ghost in the Machine,' in his book *The Concept of the Mind*, as a way of criticizing what he saw as Descartes' absurd mind-body dualism."<sup>5</sup>

Since then the nature of consciousness has been largely explored only from the assumption that it was an as yet not understood neuro-physiological process entirely resident in the organism. Its inherent physicality became an ironbound axiom. However, a growing body of experimental research now challenges this and a fundamental transition is underway in science. Still a minority position, it is nonetheless the trend direction in a wide range of disciplines, from medicine to biology to physics. Whole new sub-disciplines have emerged driven by the results of this research since Ryle's dismissive words.<sup>6</sup>

This work is pushing toward a new paradigm, one that is neither dualist nor monist, but rather one that postulates consciousness as the fundamental basis of reality. Max Planck, the father of Quantum Mechanics, framed it very clearly in an interview with the respected British newspaper, *The Observer* in its January 25, 1931 edition. Context is always important, and Planck understood very well that he was

taking a public position, speaking as one of the leading physicists of his generation through one of Britain's most important papers. He did not mince words: "I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness."<sup>7</sup>

Two corollaries flow from Planck's assertion: First, is the existence of Nonlocal Consciousness, an aspect of consciousness independent of spacetime and not physiologically based. Second, that all consciousnesses are interdependent and interconnected. One sign of the power of this trend is that most scientists doing research concerning consciousness tend to cite in their papers only work within their own discipline or a closely related one. Physicists rarely cite physicians, and physicians rarely cite physicists. As a result, separate literatures dealing with consciousness, both local and nonlocal, are developing independent of one another. It is only when seen collectively, however, that the emerging paradigm this research is producing becomes clear: a paradigm incorporating nonlocal consciousness.

One of the ways in which this change in science is manifesting is in the founding of multiple professional organizations predicated on a post-materialist scientific worldview and emerging new paradigm. This is not a new process, rather it is a mirror of what happened at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century with the breakdown of the taboo against science exploring consciousness, which dated back to the Council of Trent (1545–1563 CE) when the Roman Catholic Church made spirit, read consciousness, particularly nonlocal consciousness, its domain, leaving to the emerging new world of formal science the physical world of space and time.<sup>8</sup> Almost concurrently, psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, and parapsychology emerged with associations, organizations, conferences and journals that prosper to this day. Now a new group of organizations, this time mostly interdisciplinary, are coming into being. The Academy for the Advancement of Post-Materialist Sciences, the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness, the Society for Scientific Exploration, the Society for Consciousness Studies, the Scientific and Medical Network. Thousands of scientists and physicians, both young and old, are now involved in these new expressions of collective intention.

A statement in the founding document of the Academy for the Advancement of Post-Materialist Sciences can speak for all these newly birthed organizations, I think. Quoting from its 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.<sup>9</sup>

From the perspective of history and trends, I think it is clear that both the general culture and the scientific one are undergoing a

transition. So how many people does it take to make such a transition? Is there any competent well-conducted research to answer that question? As it happens, there is.

Professor Boleslaw Szymanski, director of the Social Cognitive Networks Academic Research Center (SCNARC) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and Prof. Gyorgy Korniss, Associate Professor of Physics at RPI, carried out a lengthy and fascinating series of studies to see if they could work out how many people it takes to change a cohort's consciousness. They found, "...the prevailing majority opinion in a population can be rapidly reversed by a small fraction  $p$  of randomly distributed committed agents who consistently proselytize the opposing opinion and are immune to influence. Specifically, ... when the committed fraction grows beyond a critical value  $p_c \approx 10\%$ , there is a dramatic decrease in the time  $T_c$  taken for the entire population to adopt the committed opinion."<sup>10</sup> Simply put, "To change the beliefs of an entire community, only 10 percent of the population needs to become convinced of a new or different opinion. At that tipping point, the idea can spread through social networks and alter behaviors on a large scale."<sup>11</sup>

Max Planck said something else, "A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it."<sup>12</sup>

As I write this there are approximately 329 million people in the United States, 52% are 39 or younger; that's 170,127,068 who live in this new culture who do research in this emerging worldview. Ten percent of them is just 17 million. This change is coming, and I think we should start thinking about this: What will science be like when consciousness becomes a regularly considered aspect in the design of experimental protocols, and how will it affect emerging technologies?

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