

FRIENDS OF WISDOM

NEWSLETTER

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Nicholas Maxwell, Mathew Iredale, and Katherine Crawley on the Progress of the Friends of Wisdom:



Friends of Wisdom began as a suggestion on Nick Maxwell's website in 2003. For a while nothing much happened except that, during the next two years, four or five people joined. Then, in August of 2005, Nick sent out an email to everyone he could think of suggesting that Friends of Wisdom be brought into active life. A number of people joined. The FOW emailing list with jiscmail was set up. There was a great burst of email debate about a range of issues from altruism versus greed, global crisis and the role of science, to public education, liberalism, and Adam Smith's Invisible Hand. At the same time, Nick struggled with the task of creating a FOW website: members received drafts of the various pages of the website and were asked to comment. All this may be viewed, incidentally, at the FOW archive:

www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/friendsofwisdom.html.

In the spring of 2006, FOW went public. An article about FOW appeared in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* in May and, after much discussion about its

content, FOW produced a press release, which announced the existence of the group, and indicated its aims. Almost overnight, membership of FOW doubled in size, from 53 to over 100. At the time of writing, FOW has 137 members from 21 countries. One outcome of the surge in membership was that the emailing debate became almost too enthusiastic. Some of those who were among the first to join FOW left, and others complained about the flood of emails. In an attempt to enable members to have their cake and eat it, Nick created two inter-linked lists in June 2006 – the primary one for new contributions, the secondary one (to which replies are automatically sent) for discussion:

www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/friendsofwisdom-d.html.

Quite soon after the list was set up in 2005, it became apparent that different people had different ideas about what FOW should try to do. This, of course, is entirely to be expected. The initial idea was that FOW should be “an association of people sympathetic to the idea that

academic inquiry should help humanity acquire more wisdom by rational means.” FOW would “try to encourage universities and schools actively to seek and promote wisdom by educational and intellectual means” (FOW website). Some members had rather more definite ideas for FOW. They hoped FOW would do what it could to spread awareness of the urgent need to put wisdom-inquiry into academic and educational practice. They hoped debate would concentrate on such questions as “What ought wisdom-inquiry to be?”, and “How can FOW spread awareness of the cogency of the case for wisdom-inquiry?” Others were interested in related but somewhat different issues. Some wanted to know how “wisdom” should be defined. Some had related projects they wished FOW to take up and pursue. Some had doubts about the value, or relevance, of rationality. Some had concerns about the nature of modern physics. Some were more interested in the spiritual dimension of wisdom, than in the bearing wisdom might have to academic and educational matters. Various options were discussed. Should FOW start up an alternative, open, online university devoted to wisdom? Should FOW organise an international conference? Should FOW form itself into a properly constituted society, with membership and a constitution? Should FOW start up a journal, or be primarily a vehicle for debate, information and support?

So far, five projects have got underway all associated, to a greater or lesser extent, with FOW:

First, Ron Barnett, a member of FOW and Professor of Higher Education at the London Institute of Education, asked Nick to edit with

him a special issue of the *London Review of Education* devoted to “Wisdom in the university”. This was published in July 2007 (vol. 5, no. 2). There are seven articles devoted to the theme of wisdom in the university; five of the authors are members of FOW. This issue of *London Review of Education* is to be published as a book by Routledge in the winter of 2008, Ron Barnett adding a short epilogue.

The second FOW project of note is this very Newsletter. It is to be hoped it will flourish, stimulate debate, and help promote the ideas of FOW.

Third, Michael Krausz, Milton C. Nahm Professor of Philosophy at Bryn Mawr College, and a member of FOW, decided to initiate a book about Nick’s work, in a series he edits, published by Rodopi. The book is to be edited by Leemon McHenry. There are eighteen contributors, seven of whom are members of FOW.

Fourth, Jubair Alhadithi, a member of FOW, is engaged in organizing a conference on wisdom and education at his University in Malaysia, the University Technology Petronas.

And fifth, there is a plan to have a modest meeting of Friends of Wisdom in London, probably next spring.

What hope is there that FOW can do anything to influence academia to take more seriously than it does at present the task of helping humanity learn how to create a better, wiser world? When one considers the massive size of academia world-wide, and the minuscule dimensions of FOW in comparison – and when one considers the powerful vested interests that there are in preserving the

academic *status quo*, and the way in which academia, supposedly all about innovation is, in so many ways, almost rigidly conservative – the aspirations of FOW may well seem hopeless. Is not FOW a sort of institutional Don Quixote, idiotically and laughably attempting the impossible? Perhaps. But in mitigation of this rather bleak picture, there are a few recent developments which just might be interpreted as first faltering steps towards putting wisdom-inquiry into academic practice.

To begin with, the gravity of the threat posed by global warming has led some scientists in the UK in the last few years to create new interdisciplinary research bodies designed quite specifically to come to grips with some of the problems engendered by global warming. These do in effect put some aspects of wisdom-inquiry into practice, in that they seek to engage with the public and parliament in addition to coordinating relevant technical research. There is the John Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, founded by 28 scientists from 10 different universities or institutions in 2000. It is based in six British universities, has links with six others, and is funded by three research councils. Alongside the Cambridge Environmental Initiative and the UK Energy Research Centre, both launched in 2004, there is the Oxford University Centre for the Environment, launched in 2005. Some changes to academia are being made because it is recognized that traditional modes of inquiry, devoted to the acquisition of specialized knowledge, cannot respond adequately to new problems of living.

In the UK there is increasing concern that communication between science and the public should go in both directions, and should include discussion of research aims and priorities. This is illustrated by the report on nanotechnology, published by the Royal Society and Royal Academy of Engineering published in 2004, a collaborative effort produced by scientists and non-scientists. The Royal Society has also created a ‘Science in Society Programme’ in 2000, with the aims of promoting ‘dialogue with society’, of involving ‘society positively in influencing and sharing responsibility for policy on scientific matters’, and of embracing ‘a culture of openness in decision-making’ which takes into account ‘the values and attitudes of the public’.

Demos, a London-based think tank, has, in recent years, organized a series of conferences on public engagement with science, attended by natural and social scientists, civil servants and others.

In the US there is the “teaching for wisdom” programme. Robert Sternberg (Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Tufts University, and a contributor to “Wisdom in the university”) has done much to promote this programme. The basic idea is that, whatever else is being learned and taught – history, physics, geography – the learning and teaching should proceed in such a way that wisdom is acquired along with specialized knowledge.

In the USA, the University of Chicago has recently announced “a \$2 million research program on the nature and benefits of Wisdom”. They say that “up to twenty, two-year research

grants will be awarded to scholars from institutions around the world who have received their Ph.D. within the past ten years”. This, we have been told, is the first phase of a larger grant programme to be launched next year. For details see:

<http://www.wisdomresearch.org/index.html>.

Put “wisdom studies” into Google, and over ten thousand entries come up, some of which may be associated with courses at universities. Wisdom itself has over 82 million entries. Another indication of increasing interest in wisdom in academia in recent years, one might cite the wisdom bibliography by Richard Trowbridge, which contains references to over 800 works, (Richard is a member of FOW and someone who has engaged in wisdom-research). It can be found on Cop Macdonald’s “Wisdom Page” – Cop is also a member of FOW and his site is a mine

of information about recent work about wisdom:

<http://www.wisdompage.com/>.

One should also take into account other campaigning groups with aims similar to those of FOW, such as Scientists for Global Responsibility and Crisis Forum: see the “What Needs to Change” page of the FOW website. Is it idiotically quixotic to hope that FOW might have a positive role to play in helping to give support, coherence and direction to these, and other similar, scattered developments? Could FOW help transform such fragmentary initiatives into a coherent movement?

We can but try.

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For Further Information on the wisdom-inquiry conference at the University of Malaysia contact Jubair Alhadithi:

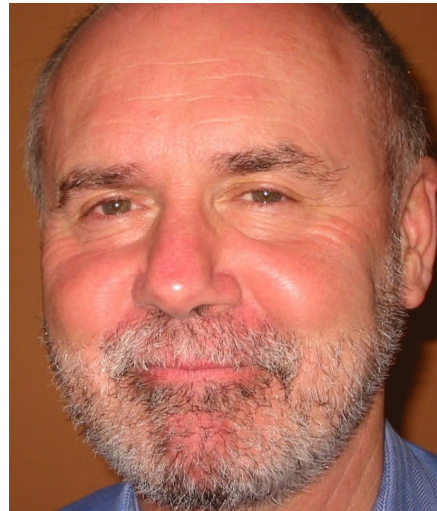
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The School of Consciousness and the Janus Project

By Chris Thomson

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I joined Friends of Wisdom for three reasons – because I will explore any way of adding wisdom to the world; because I feel that the purpose of FOW, although specifically aimed at academia, is generally in alignment with my own life purpose; and because I rarely resist a challenge, in this case the challenge of attempting to bring wisdom to academia. Before I say more about the challenge, I should like to say a little about my life purpose and how I think it might relate to FOW.

I have always been interested in wisdom and consciousness and I have devoted quite a bit of my life to exploring them and how other individuals and cultures have approached them. If I have any purpose at all in life, it is to become wiser and more conscious and to help others do the same. As with all others who tread this path, I have done it in my own, singular way. In the distant past, when I was part of academia (Chinese, economics, and law), I threw myself vigorously at knowledge, almost as if knowledge alone would show me the way. More recently, when I was a director of think tanks in Scotland (Scottish Council Foundation) and in Santa Fe,

New Mexico (The Atalaya Institute), I explored ways of helping people and societies act more wisely. And then, a few years ago, when I set up the School of Consciousness (which is now based in Spain), I began more explicitly helping people become more conscious and more intelligent. This needs a little explanation. At the School we run courses in consciousness and in intelligence. The courses in consciousness are designed to help people become much more aware, right across the spectrum of awareness. They become much more aware of themselves, of others and of the world. We focus on six forms of consciousness – Physical, Emotional, Mental, Social, Direct, and Spiritual. We have found that, in terms of our potential to be more conscious, most of us have a very long way to go and are barely scratching at the surface. This has far-reaching implications for all of us, but I believe it has been neglected by academia.

Quite distinctly, the School's courses in intelligence are designed to help people put consciousness into practice, to help them act wisely and effectively on what they experience and know. Interestingly, we have

found that, with enough time and work, people become much more conscious relatively quickly. On the other hand, they find it quite difficult to become more intelligent, in the sense I mean it here. Although I have done no research, I have a strong sense that most people find it difficult, for a wide variety of reasons, to act wisely and effectively on what they know, at a deep level, to be true and right. Current responses to knowledge of climate change are just one of many examples of this. People are just very reluctant to change what they think, believe and do. They find changing what they say easy! They like talking the talk, but they do not like *walking* the talk. If this is true of the School's students (who explicitly want to grow and change), I am willing to bet it is equally true of most people in academia. That is a part of the challenge that faces us.

I am assuming from what I have seen so far that a big part of the purpose of FOW is to find ways of helping academia as a whole become more conscious and more intelligent. I do not think it matters that we call this "wisdom". In fact, I do not mind what we call it, so long as the world ends up a better place! But it will be obvious to all of us that the challenge we have set ourselves is immense because wisdom and academia could hardly be more different. Given the supremacy today of academia over wisdom, we should not be surprised that Martin Luther King was able to say: "Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles but misguided men." What can we do about it? What can we do to create a situation where we have guided men and women and where our spiritual power prevails? In my view, we

should begin with whatever it is that links wisdom and academia. I believe that there is only one connecting link – human beings, because it is we who have created both wisdom and academia. What this tells me is that all of us are capable of creating opposites. Tom Atlee summed this up very succinctly when he said that the world is "getting better and better and worse and worse faster and faster." To put this another way, we are all, bright academics included, capable of being both very wise and very stupid, and this contradiction, more than anything else, is the human condition today. We may have the potential to be the most intelligent species on the planet, but the reality is that we are the most dangerous and destructive.

I shy away from trying to define wisdom in precise words, yet what is wisdom if it is not being more conscious and more intelligent? If academia is to become wise, then the individuals who make up academia will have to find ways to become more conscious and more intelligent. In an ideal world, we would all be working on our consciousness and intelligence. In the real world, very few of us do this. It is surely significant that while there are many courses in academia on what conscious and intelligence *are*, there are, to the best of my knowledge, no courses in how to become more conscious and more intelligent. Each time I tried to interest an academic institution in ways of becoming more consciousness and more intelligent, I came away with the distinct impression that these are the last things on the mind of academics. No amount of intellectual effort is going to make academia wise. I think it has to go far deeper than that – into who we are as human beings and what we

think we are trying to do on this small planet. I have no magic formula, except the recommendation that each of us works on ourselves to become more conscious and more intelligent. Ultimately, I do not think we cannot avoid this work. My main concern, which I might as well get into the open right now, is that we fall into the trap of trying to “academise” wisdom. That, I believe, would be futile. It would be like trying to catch a moonbeam in your hand and then trying to understand its nature by cutting it into little bits.

All that said, it is far too early for me to assess whether FOW is likely to achieve its purpose and whether I will be a useful member. I want to see what others have to say first.

The Janus Project: Where Social Change Meets Personal Development

This is a proposal to establish an organisation that will provide a radically different approach to:

- Solving current problems
- Avoiding future problems
- Creating a better future

Background

One of the most significant developments in the last 25 years is the huge growth of the “problem solving industry”. It is as if the world now consists of two disconnected halves. One half is constantly creating problems and the other half is constantly trying to solve them. This is as true for organisations and countries

as it is for individuals. Just think how many people are involved these days in “problem-solving” jobs. These include the obvious ones, such as doctors, nurses, police, social workers, therapists, coaches, counsellors, and lawyers, but also the less obvious ones, such as politicians, authors of self-help books, people in NGOs and policy institutes, as well as civil servants at all levels of government. The more we think about, the more people appear on the list. A very large number of people in the world today rely for their income and job security on a huge and predictable supply of problems for the foreseeable future. It begs the question of what they would do in a problem-free world. In any event, the fact that so many people are engaged in trying to solve problems suggests several things: that there are more problems than ever in the world; that we may be more aware than ever of the nature and extent of the problems; and that more people than ever are attracted to problem solving. These are important issues, but much more important are the two central questions lying behind them. Are we creating problems faster than we are solving them? And what do we really mean by “solving problems”?

The litany has become all too familiar – war, crime, social and family breakdown, corruption, oppression, injustice, poverty and inequality, endemic mental and emotional illness, and climate change and the destruction of nature. The list itself is alarming enough. But what is really alarming is that, despite all the time, money, energy and resources we put into solving these “major league” problems, they just keep on getting worse. As the 21st Century gets under way, wars are raging on three

continents, inequalities within and between nations are greater than they have been for many decades, violence and dishonesty are on the increase, people are under immense pressures to work harder and spend harder, and the planet can no longer tolerate the damage we are doing to it. It is clear we need a fundamental rethink about what we mean by “solving problems”.

Deeper Causes, Deeper Solutions

It should be a truism that the most effective way to solve any problem is to identify and address its “deeper causes”. However, what tends to happen in practice is that a great deal of “problem solving” is about eradicating or repressing the symptoms. Treating the symptoms may make things seem better for a while. It may even give the impression that the problem has been cured. But if the causes are not addressed, the problem will return, often worse. Until we decide to identify and address the deeper causes of our problems, we shall forever be in crisis mode, trying to solve problems that seem increasingly intractable. To give some examples, we deal with illness, poverty, crime and pollution as if they were the problems themselves, when in fact they are almost certainly symptoms of things going wrong at a deeper level. We may not fully understand, or even acknowledge, the deeper level, but if we want to solve these things once and for all, we will eventually have to come to terms with it. Crime, for example, is typically addressed by recruiting more police, building more prisons and imposing tougher sentences, all because criminal behaviour is seen as the problem rather than as a symptom of something deeper. The same is true of

health policy. The main focus is on the medical treatment of symptoms *after* people have fallen ill. That is a costly and inefficient way of doing things. It would save a lot of time, money and suffering if our main focus was on promoting good health and preventing people from falling ill in the first place. And if people did slip through a better health promotion net, it still makes much more sense to identify and treat the underlying causes of illness.

What is true for crime and illness is equally true for other problems, be they personal, organisational or societal. Prevention is better than cure, but if you have to cure, make sure you are addressing the root causes. Having said this, the symptomatic approach is undoubtedly appropriate when the symptoms have become life threatening or otherwise intolerable. But we should remind ourselves that it is we who have allowed them to reach that point.

Illness

It should by now be common knowledge that some of the root causes of ill health are unhealthy living, a dysfunctional upbringing, unhealthy places, unhealthy work, and absence of meaning and purpose in life. Addressing these root causes would involve bringing in systems, institutions, policies and values that promote healthy living, a healthy upbringing, healthy places, healthy work, and deeper meaning and purpose.

Poverty and inequality

A major root cause of inequality and poverty is a value-system that values money and property highly, regards people (labour) as a cost, and nature

and the planet as exploitable. Under that system, the rich inevitably get richer, the poor fall further behind, and nature and the planet deteriorate. Addressing this would involve, among other things, bringing in systems, institutions, policies that value human beings and nature higher than money and property.

Crime

Our current socio-economic system unwittingly encourages crime, because it puts pressures on people to acquire as much money as possible and to spend as much as possible. It rewards the rich and penalises the poor. It encourages selfishness. It causes stress and anger as a direct result of its aggressive, competitive, and exploitative nature. And it sends out the strong message that “success” is having a lot of money. We will not cure crime unless we first remove this particular root cause, our value-system. Our “symptomatic” policies (police, courts and prisons) may remove the symptoms for a while, but crime will persist until we address its root causes. We need to bring in systems, institutions, policies and values that do not encourage people to keep on spending or to get into debt, that do not reward the rich and penalise the poor, that do not seek to pit one person, one business, one nation against another, and that have a very different understanding of “success” and “progress”.

The Deeper Causes Approach is *more effective*, because it gets to the underlying causes. It is *less expensive* in terms of money, time, effort and other resources, because it is based on simple common sense and thoughtfulness, and may not need much technology or legislation or

management. It is *empowering and healthy*, because it encourages people to be self-reliant and knowledgeable and to take responsibility for their own lives. It is *sustainable* in the long term, because the symptoms will no longer keep on recurring. It *puts you at the centre of the equation*, because it forces you to examine the consequences of your own behaviour and that of your organisation.

Chains of Causation, Chains of Implication

When we decide to identify the deeper causes of any problem, what we do, in effect, is to go as far as possible back along the “*chain of causation*” to discover what, at the deepest level we can see, is at the root of the problem. The further back we go along the chain, the more like we are to be able to truly solve the problem once and for all. This can be a very uncomfortable process because it usually involves questioning some cherished beliefs, values and behaviours. Giving up what we have long believed to be correct and true may be the hardest part of solving any problem at a deep level. Meanwhile, it is important to note that the deeper causes approach works in the opposite direction too.

Just as it is possible, and highly desirable, to go back as far as possible along chains of causation to find the deeper causes of our current problems, it is equally possible, and desirable, to go as far forward as possible along “*chains of implication*”, in order to anticipate and avoid future problems. To express this another way, if we want to know what our future problems are going to be, all we have to do is look at our current behaviour and then work out the implications of continuing to behave

this way. Experience suggests that the better we are at going far back along chains of causation to discover the real causes of our problems, the better we become at going far forward along chains of implication to understand where our current behaviours, strategies and policies are likely to lead in the future.

Creating a Better Future

There are three crucial components in creating a better future:

Solving and avoiding problems – we have discussed this component already

Knowing clearly what we want to create – we need to decide very clearly what we mean by a “better world”.

Being willing and able to create it – we need to develop the skills and qualities to be able to carry out the first two components.

What do we mean by a “better world”?

This is probably easier than we imagine, because we already have much to draw on. There are already some very good ideas and initiatives that are making the world a better place. These are to be found in all walks of life, and they can be categorised as follows:

The *new economics*: at the heart of the new economics is the central idea that all our activities should enhance and enrich people and planet, rather than diminish and exploit them, which is what so often happens today. This implies new kinds of relationships, new kinds of businesses, and new kinds of institutions, as well as new values and new goals.

The *new healthcare*: at the heart of the new healthcare are the central ideas of healthy living and self-reliance, rather than overdependence on experts and technology. It is also about whole-person health, rather than focusing mainly on treating physical symptoms. In the new healthcare, medical treatment will be the exception rather than the rule, because the emphasis will be on staying healthy.

The *new education*: at the heart of the new education is the central idea of bringing out the best and uniqueness in each individual, rather than schooling them to believe certain things and to behave in certain ways, which is what often happens today in our schools, colleges and universities. At the heart of the new education will be the development of wisdom, consciousness, and intelligence, in the widest and deepest sense.

The *new society*: at the heart of the new society is a new central purpose – to enhance people and the planet. In the new society, people will rely much more on themselves for the basics of living, rather than be over dependent on business and government. The new society will be sustainable, health-producing and happiness-producing, precisely because its central purpose will be to enhance people and planet.

The *new science*: at the heart of the new science is the central idea of using the whole human being in the search for knowledge and understanding, rather than just the physical and intellectual parts, which is overwhelmingly the case today. Science of the physical/intellectual will continue to give us much that is useful. However, in the new science, knowledge of the physical will be

complemented by direct knowledge of the spiritual, and that will make a big difference.

The *new politics*: at the heart of the new politics are the central ideas that most power stays at the local level, rather than having power concentrated in the hands of politicians and the very wealthy, and that everyone has something useful to say and contribute to the enhancement of their community.

The *new spirituality*: at the heart of the new spirituality are the central ideas of learning how to have direct experience of the spiritual world (by developing the capacity to do so) and of applying this experience in the world.

Clearly, we are under no obligation to adopt any of the above. That said, the many good ideas and initiatives that are already happening make an excellent starting point for any discussion about creating a much better world.

Being Willing and Able to Create a Better World

We have already noted that adopting the “deeper causes, deeper implications” approach to solving and avoiding problems brings with it quite a number of personal (and organisational) challenges – such as the challenge of accepting that our current beliefs, values and behaviours are part of the problem, when they should be part of the solution. Changing beliefs, values and behaviours is not easy, and it is usually quite painful, yet if we want to stop creating problems and if we want to create a much better world, we have to start with ourselves. In

practice, that means working on ourselves, so that we become less likely to cause problems, more likely to anticipate and avoid them, and much better at articulating and creating a better world. Here are just some of the issues people will have to work on:

Concern about job security – although they might deny it, people are probably aware at some level that their current way of doing things (the “symptoms” approach) will guarantee a steady and large supply of problems to deal with for the foreseeable future. Can you imagine doctors, lawyers and police wanting to work themselves out of a job?

Distrust of simplicity – some people are unable to accept that seemingly complex, intractable problems can have simple solutions. Yet the simple way is often the most intelligent way.

Sense of meaning – there is undoubtedly a sense of meaning and purpose that comes with working in perpetual crisis mode. This is no small thing. People need meaning and purpose in their lives. In this context, it is interesting to note the rise in prominence and status of the “emergency services” in the last 25 years or so.

Unwillingness to go deeper – the deeper causes approach necessarily involves asking uncomfortable questions about oneself and about society. For example, are we currently part of the problem rather than part of the solution? Many people do not want to go out of their comfort zone.

The ways we measure “progress” and “success” – people often think that

they are successfully dealing with problems because of the way they understand and measure “success”. Things may seem to be getting better (e.g. GDP is rising) when in fact they are getting worse

The “quick fix” – all of us would like things to get better quickly, without having to do any work or go through any pain. The fact is that our problems run very deep, and it will take correspondingly deep work to solve them. This is likely to take quite some time

All of these are difficult, complex issues that people need to work through. They will need skilled help to do this.

The Janus Project

It should now be clear what the work should be. It is as follows:

To develop and promote the “deeper causes” approach to solving current problems, and to work with people and organisations on this.

To develop and promote the “deeper implications” approach to avoiding future problems, and to work with people and organisations on this.

To identify the best ideas and initiatives that are creating a better world, and to work with people and organisations on developing and promoting these.

To work with people and organisations to develop the skills and qualities needed to carry out all the above.

Who will benefit? Individuals, organisations, governments and others

looking for better, more effective solutions to their problems, who want to anticipate and avoid future problems, and who want to create a much better world.

Requirements

We need a small core group of individuals who understand the need for a deeper approach to problems and the future, and who also understand the central role of personal development in all this. We need the basic infrastructure (office, computers, telecommunications etc.) We are looking for at least one sponsor/client to help us get established.

If you would like to know more or want to get involved, please contact Chris Thomson at

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Towards a Comparative Sophiology: A Retrospective Report on an Educational Course from 1994

By Thomas C. Daffern

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In 1994 I undertook a course of lectures under the auspices of Birkbeck College, University of London (they were physically taught at the Institute of Education) on the subject of Knowledge, Education and Wisdom in the World's Religious and Philosophical Traditions. A brief summary of their content and their background might, hopefully, be of interest to readers.

Firstly, a bit about the background – from 1989-1991, I worked on staff as a Research Development officer at the Institute of Education, on behalf of an intercollegiate project to investigate the feasibility of establishing a new Institute of Peace Studies as part of the University of London federation of colleges. I attended innumerable meetings of academics and educational bureaucrats, and as part of my work also travelled in many countries to investigate how education for peace was dealt with there, including the USA, the then USSR, Ireland, France, Spain, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Italy,

the Vatican, India etc. meeting and interviewing professors and scholars from every culture, every tradition etc. I kept meticulous records of all his work, published my feasibility study in 1990, and basically, to cut a long story short, although many individual academics had supported the initiative, and two colleges in particular took an institutional interest (University College and the Institute of Education) lack of money ensured that the project ran out of funding. Meanwhile, I had myself started lecturing for Birkbeck College, and also for the London region WEA, as well as doing some lecturing at the Institute of Education (as part of their PGCE programme) and I refused to give up hope that someday the University of London (where I was also enrolled for my PhD) would one day see the wisdom of establishing such an Institute. In fact, I would still like to see it happen!

It was at this point that I delivered the following course. The thinking behind the work was simple: *lack of wisdom (ignorance) fuels*

conflicts, hatred, wars and cycles of revenge. Therefore, if we scholars can only concentrate on wisdom, on which the world's different cultures and traditions all agree is so important, and examine the details of the exact nature and dynamics of wisdom, comparatively, and pedagogically, then perhaps we can find ways to prevent conflict, violence, hatred and war from occurring in the future.

Yes, to some extent it was a naïve formula, but then I was relatively young (33 years old) and believed in the powers of reason and philosophy to change the world! (I think I still do, but now I also recognize the presence of a counterforce that also needs studying, which I have named Sophiaphobia, see my recent paper at:

<http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/annualmeeting05.php>.

It was also a hugely ambitious project, but then I was impatient and in a hurry to get the work done. It seemed to me self-evident that peace was preferable to war, and that wisdom (and the scientific study of wisdom) was a necessary prelude to the development of a peaceful world. In 1984, before my association with the University of London, I had already launched a group called Philosophers for Peace, and in 1990 had been elected coordinator of an international network of Philosophers for Peace at a conference in Moscow, so I saw my own work a situated in a wider international context.

The course of lectures consisted of a survey of attitudes to education & scholarship in the world's different religious & philosophical traditions. I

had chosen this topic in consultation with the late Lord Comberemere, who then directed the Birkbeck College Religious Studies Department. We agreed that an in depth look at how different faith traditions view the notion of wisdom, both theoretically, and also practically, in terms of their respective educational systems, would be highly instructive. Lord Comberemere sat on the board of the World Congress of Faiths (founded by Sir Francis Younghusband) and I was also on its board at that time, as well as Secretary General of the World Conference on Religion and Peace for Britain and Ireland (which brought me into contact with many fascinating religious scholars from across the world). I was also teaching at the Muslim College with the late Dr Badawi, who also agreed with my project of establishing a comparative hermeneutics of wisdom across cultures and civilizations. We had some fascinating conversations about the West's fear of wisdom, which he traced back to our founding religious myth of the serpent in the Garden of Eden (a legend which also occurs in the Quran however (2:35-39)).

When planning my course, I knew I had to be concise, but I also wanted a broad overview, encompassing the huge sweep of human history and global civilizations. Here then is the overview of the topics I included, which were dealt with in a largely chronological sequence of talks:

The historical development of schools, literacy, libraries, Universities, colleges, and specialised institutions of learning such as observatories, teaching hospitals, scientific academies etc.

Higher education, academic freedom & responsibility in different religious and cultural contexts;

The history of the relationships between religious authority and the teaching profession;

The relationship between religious and secular education and attitudes in different traditions to humanistic and scientific learning;

The history of textual criticism and the relationship between the study of sacred texts and the transmission of oral and ritual learning traditions;

Education as spiritual initiation and associated attitudes to "ultimate reality" in different traditions;

The tension between religious education as "indoctrination" and as "education for spiritual liberation" and the related tension between exotericism and esotericism in education;

The varying roles of the state and government in education & scholarship, and debates about pluralism, funding, control, separatism, fundamentalism & secularism in education;

The history of education & scholarship in different philosophical schools and traditions, both in antiquity and in the modern era;

The history of ecumenical & inter-faith education. A major purpose of the course was to locate educational and scholarly resources within the major religious & philosophical traditions under consideration to serve

as ethical markers in the development of education for peace & global responsibility. The main emphasis of the course was on higher education but attention was given to all levels of the educational process, including the education of children and adult education, with education being conceived as a holistic life-long process of intellectual & spiritual growth.

Among the areas we specifically focused on were the following:

Primal religions, prehistory and the origins of education & learning: oral traditions & mythologies of knowledge

From Palaeolithic culture to the ancient civilisations of Mesopotamia, Egypt & ancient Persia;

Education in the ancient civilisations of Sumeria & Mesopotamia: cuneiform, literacy, & creation myths;

Education & religion in Egypt: from antiquity through Hellenistic Alexandria;

Education & religion in ancient Canaan & Palestine: the impact of the alphabet, Phoenicia, Ras Shamra, Mari, Ebla etc.;

Judaism and the history of education in Israel: ancient texts & Rabbinical knowledge;

Religion & learning in Greek culture: the philosophical schools & the development of academic scholarship;

Persian religion and the role of education: Zoroaster & the Magi: the divinisation of Wisdom;

Religion and learning in Roman civilisation: Latin approaches to knowledge;

Christian spirituality & education: in search of the Logos;

Islam & education: Quranic sources, the Hadith, the Sufis & Islamic philosophers on the importance of learning;

Philosophy & education in China: Confucius, Mencius, Lao Tsu, Chuang Tsu, Mo Tsu, and Cha'an: in search of the lost mind of goodness;

The Indian contribution: The Vedas & Hinduism, Yoga & the ancient Indian philosophical schools: Jains, Sikhs; education for liberation;

Buddhist approaches to learning: Buddhism as a vehicle of gnostic soteriology, the path of enlightenment, Zen and the diamond path of enlightenment;

Japan: Shintoism & Zen traditions of learning;

Mediaeval educational developments: the rise of the Universities, the importance of the Islamic & Jewish contributions;

The Renaissance, the era of globalisation & the rise of modern philosophy & inter-cultural exploration;

Early modern European education during the renaissance, reformation & Counter Reformation;

The 17th Century: the rise of modern philosophy & scientific education;

The Long Enlightenment & modernity: the politicisation of knowledge in the era of democratic revolutions;

The 18th Century: the French revolution & the Republic of letters;

The 19th century: Empires of learning & the professionalisation of knowledge;

19th & 20th Century educational & spiritual developments: the contemporary global politics of knowledge, education & wisdom.

Some of the above topics I dwelt on longer, others more briefly. At the time of giving these talks, I was working part time on my PhD in intellectual history, and at that time called it *The Architectonics of Wisdom and Peace*, it being my hope to study the way that wisdom is viewed in different religious and intellectual contexts, and to tease out its fundamental architectonic, that is, its structural relationship to other intellectual, cultural and spiritual variables, including cosmologies, eschatologies, soteriologies, philosophies of history etc. Eventually I realised this was far too ambitious an undertaking for a doctorate, and refocused my aim to a narrower study focusing on the intellectual history of the search for peace from 1945-2001, within certain specific intellectual domains (philosophy, psychology, religious studies, historiography).

The wider work however, still remains to be done, and it something which I remain committed to. How refreshing therefore to see this new network of

scholars emerging, through the facilitation of Nicholas Maxwell's visionary philosophical critique of scientism, for let us hope that as well as launching this newsletter, we can in time encourage a whole paradigm shift in what scholarship, including philosophical, scientific and religious scholarship, actually mean. But the road will not be an easy one, nor will it be short – which is why I also now advocate attention being paid to the blockages that obstruct and get in the way of wisdom, the sophiophobic forces in individuals, institutions and societies. And for this critique we will need to combine the rigour of Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge approach (let us call it a sociology of wisdom) with the subtlest tools available to intellectual and educational historians. That will be, as Moses Maimonides put it in his Guide for the Perplexed, the Via Negativa. We cannot hope to understand wisdom per se, except by understanding what it is not – it is not power, not idolatry, not fashionable isms, not techne etc. And the Via Positiva? In effect, that is what my lecture series of mine back in 1994 was about – a start at mapping out the terrain of a comparative Sophiology, in terms of intellectual and educational history. Maybe I ought to dust down those old tapes and

get them transcribed after all... Any volunteers?

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Anyone interested in reading more can find his books at

www.lulu.com/iipsgp

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PEACE STUDIES AND GLOBAL PHILOSOPHY

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The Institute is unique among research centres throughout the world in that it combines training and practical work in conflict resolution with studying the entire range of global philosophical and spiritual traditions, together with the proactive search for global responsibility and justice in our time. Founded in 1990, arising out of a feasibility study investigating the possibility of creating a Peace Studies Institute in the University of London, and subsequent years of active educational research, networking and consultancy, everyone interested in advancing peace research in London, the UK, and internationally is invited to join us. The Institute has also built on the work of *Philosophers and Historians for Peace*, an international networking organisation founded in 1985. IIPSGP Members are involved in a wide range of educational and research activities in both professional and voluntary capacities in all aspects of peace research, environmental education, comparative spirituality and philosophy.

With our unique library and archive on peace research and global philosophy (catalogued partly online) the Institute acts as a support structure and information clearinghouse to empower individuals to develop their own research and action projects in the fields of peace and global ethics and works co-operatively alongside many other institutions and professional networks worldwide. We organise meetings, seminars and lectures programmes, while regular seminars have been held in the House of Lords focusing

on 'Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding', 'Ethics, Politics and Economics', 'Social Development and Global Justice'. A "PEACE AND GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY STUDIES COURSE" is available, combining independent study, correspondence tuition, teacher training, service work in the community, and occasional peer group seminars & study retreats. A small Secretariat and Advisory Council service the work of the Institute, which is a voluntary educational charity, along with volunteers and interns; for internship/ student / faculty positions, membership of the Institute is a preliminary requirement.

The Institute runs the pioneering MULTIFAITH AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND MEDIATION SERVICE serving in situations of conflict or violence involving a religious or cultural dimension. The MMMS is run as both a consultancy and voluntary effort and is available for situations needing outside intervention to resolve, and tackles disputes ranging from the small to the very large. We also founded the COMMONWEALTH INTERFAITH NETWORK linking together educators, peace activists, environmentalists, human rights and social development specialists from Commonwealth member countries helping to transform the Commonwealth into a vibrant community of nations bearing witness to a wider world order based on peace and a love for common values and spirituality. The IIPSGP Director is a British-Canadian dual citizen. IIPSGP also aims to establish a

Global Peace School for children up to 18 years of age in a rural location. THE GLOBAL GREEN UNIVERSITY, founded by IIPSGP IN 1999, is an international network of educators and activists committed to building a peaceful, just, ecologically sane, cooperative and sustainable global society which accepts students for higher degree research on topics of importance to global well being (alternative energy, new management studies, communications, transpersonal knowledge, new physics etc.)

The Institute produces several publications for its members. THE MUSES JOURNAL: LOVE, COMPASSION AND PEACE - THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PEACE RESEARCH AND GLOBAL PHILOSOPHY is the only academic journal in the world dedicated to education and research into the positive dynamics of building global peace and justice through *love*. The journal is structured according to the Nine Muses, the guardians of the Classical Academy; as an academic journal it seeks to restore the lost intellectual and spiritual vision of the interconnectedness of knowledge, spirituality, aesthetics, feeling, and moral and political responsibility that comprise the educational principles of academic life in their ideal form. An occasional IIPSGP Newsletter includes news of developments for peace and global responsibility, particularly those involving research and higher education. Other publications include: *Multilingual and Multifaith Dictionary of Peace and Philosophy*; *Enlightenments*; *Against Sophiaphobia*. A full list is available on the IIPSGP website.

Other programmes of the Institute include supporting the work to set up an ALL PARTY GROUP FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION in the UK parliament; THE ORDER OF PEACE POETS, BARDS AND DRUIDS (an international network of poets and bards committed to

using their poetic gifts for planetary transformation); THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR BRITAIN AND IRELAND; THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST; EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHERS FOR PEACE; THE SCHOOL OF NON-VIOLENCE; PEACE HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP; THE PAGAN ACADEMIC NETWORK; THE STONEHENGE EISTEDDFOD. Another project of IIPSGP is to facilitate the establishment of the LONDON INSTITUTE OF PEACE STUDIES (LIPS) as a formal centre of academic excellence in the UK. The main ongoing work of the Institute is to continue playing its part in laying the intellectual, ethical and educational foundations of a sustainable, global civilisation based on peace and justice. Your contribution towards IIPSGP's programmes of work is invited and your completed membership application will be warmly welcomed. Together we can do what is *impossible* alone in a world in increasing danger and need. Our focus is on finding together the positive solutions to our global crisis.

We have contacts and members all over the planet and seek to build a peaceful global civilisation based on the wisdom found in all faiths, all cultures, and all traditions. Please join us in this vital work. Your support and contribution are most welcome.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

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One wonders: what is wisdom? Wisdom may surely be described as states of someone's being, thinking, and knowing. Wisdom includes the ability or desire to expand one's thinking beyond the usual or ordinary. The notion of wisdom includes extending one's knowledge to reframe that knowledge in increasingly wider and deeper contexts.

But wisdom is also a concept depicted in the thoughts and texts of various thinkers who have somehow risen above or beyond the more usual thoughts of those who know, merely. It is surely historical, may be prophetic, and often difficult to portray in any present moment.

For those of us who might wish to move beyond or transcend the contents of our knowledge, wisdom is also an ongoing personal dialogue. Sometimes clear, often an existential struggle, it is also an attempt to move on, to grow, to place our knowing in new, more complicated, or transcendent contexts. It is an attempt to locate new positions from which to see and to say what grows in meaning, and perhaps how and why.

Here, I will not attempt to frame the widest-deepest meanings of wisdom.



Instead, I will attempt to describe some of my personal perorations both to locate and pursue some paths toward wisdom.

Some ponderings in one's (my) internal dialogue: I have grown beyond some earlier thoughts and thinking. Where do I go next; whom to read or re-read, what next to study? These are hopefully framed within judgments of integrity and self-critical trust.

Other personal dialogues ask to be updated from time to time: Whose ideas in which traditions – ancient, current, “timeless” – inspire me; upset me? Whose works, ideas, thinking are aspects of my thinking – aware or not so aware? I trust myself, usually and mostly, but...

And I am not alone. I have a life-partner and some few others whom I engage-with mutually as critics and mentors: inspiring, tempering, sometimes fomenting. Who else do I trust, use as a critic or respondent? Are they also “growing” in their own quests?

In other contexts, I ask different sorts of questions, or desire some senses of personal growth. These seem to involve forms of “expansion” of my knowing. I want to get beyond, to

think more universally; to include all people (pasts, present, and “visions” into the future), grow in aspirations, often searching for “more.”

I am quite certain that some of the foundations which have led to these yearnings, involve various experiences of “amazement” – my first intellectually captivating time was (I still tell myself) when I was dissecting the hand in my course in Gross Anatomy in a brief excursion into Medicine. At that moment, I was also re-taking up the violin after an extended lay-off. Still today, I look at my left hand both as some sort of complicated object, and as a source of knowing and doing which are truly astonishing.

My hand “knows” so much, can do so much with this instrument. It urges me to go in many other directions: to the instrument. To the sounds it/I make; the music rings out in so many directions. Amazed I was; amazed I remain, and wonder every day if I really-actually can play and perform. Yes.

Time and change: my favourite courses in college were embryology and geology. The idea of a single-fertilized cell becoming a person (me, perhaps especially) - the time of a life, the time of the earth. The idea of looking at the Mississippi River most days, wondering whence it comes and flows; what preceded it over eons?

My first job: involvement with the earliest commercial computers was much about microseconds -now nanoseconds – extends fairly easily to the universe, to history, and the present. I fell in love with Heraclitus’ thinking when I first met his ideas, and

pense most days about the ways in which Pythagoras et al affect/afflict our lives, trying to “stop” the world, to undo change.

I was not educated to the idea of ideas. It was the harsh facts of the Chomskyan revolution in linguistics – invoking a long-dead Descartes - which led or forced me to ask how “cogito ergo sum” has anything to do with the human. (My “work” was toward studying the human body in interaction with others’ bodies: gone, any reception or market for my works. Perhaps soon?)

I began reading backward and forward in the history of philosophy to fathom how an old idea could have “overtaken” my career. I discovered ideas and their “powers” – and the idea-makers and shakers who were said to be the foundation thinkers of Western (and other) thought. Still in our “heads” after 2500 years: how, why? This is today, I sobbed, and we must help create or invent and envision the ideas for a just future. Wisdom? Mere vacillation?

Several thinkers exhorted me to ask about ideas: their history, politics, the marketplaces for ideas – and what is the human? Why do we think we know what we claim? Why does so much of this seem so “obvious” that we proclaim knowledge without studying the human interacting with other humans? Darwin’s last book has disappeared under the power of his earlier proclamations of our being aspects of nature. But this argument over our nature turns almost immediately into politics and religion...as the underlying ideas seem to fade from our thoughts.

I became a teacher-practitioner of dialogue with “my” students. Dialogue mainly because I want both students and myself to be “present” in the contexts of teaching. I read in other traditions where teachers and mentors find honour and ask: why not honour teachers here? I do apparently “inspire” the future for some. What are the relations between teaching and wisdom: a question hovering above all my classes?

More abstractly: what is Western thought, that we have apparently “lost” the idea of wisdom? How do I do what I claim to do, try, think I am doing? As a teacher, I am, “responsible” for knowledge, but particularly responsible for the students.

On the ways toward the present, I studied many of those who have been said to be “wise” – have tried both to understand their works, and to bring them into my sense of the present. I learned much about how to “philosophize with a hammer” and attempt to undo/redo the power of ancients to shape the present. Or – in moments of wonder and lamentation – do I ask them to aid me, save me, tell me?

I try not to neglect (tempting as it is...and easier to tell myself I am...wise), the sage coming into the real world of “retail” ideas, or of youth developing in their quests for meaning

in life, without which the sage-ideas of old sell so well to those who would have control more than wisdom.

Life: how to expand oneself, to make a contract with one’s longest life, to be able to tell oneself-myself I have lived “a pretty good life?” And to continue to explore, expand, and attempt to understand ever more and deeply where we are, and where there is to go in this so-changing world.

How do I see the progress of the FOW, as a society or organization, in relation to my perspective on wisdom?

The grand idea is that of Nick’s whose critique is that the already large idea and actuality of knowledge can and must expand toward a wider and deeper notion: wisdom. By opening up an arena in which there is an actual and developing conceptual realm(s) beyond knowledge, he has declared – exhorted, inspired me and others – to explore ourselves, our thinking, with renewed openness.

FOW has appealed to thinkers over much of the world, whose thoughts and education have developed within differing traditions. It has confirmed, for me, I/we can travel within and without the thoughts of all the world’s wisdom seekers. It has provided, for me, at the least, the sense that we can join the world’s wisdoms in a time of everyone coming to the party together: life, hope, peace!

BOOK REVIEWS OF NICK MAXWELL'S LATEST BOOK “IS SCIENCE NEUROTIC?”

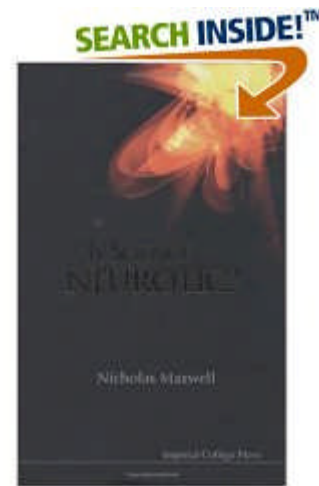
Imperial College Press, 2004, pp. xx+240,
ISBN 1-86094-500-7

Living in denial is bad for our health: A time for action, science. By Ian Glendinning

So, is science neurotic? This is no cliff-hanging mystery story, we are reading; it's a disaster movie.

Like much human endeavour, we may already suspect a large part of science probably is neurotic, a point that doesn't escape Nick's argument; that almost all social enquiry and policy suffers the same *rationalistic neurosis* that he pins on science itself. As well as persuasive rhetoric, Nick provides technical arguments and clear recommendations. Surely science of all things should be sufficiently open to investigating the charge and seeking treatment.

Nick has spent over 30 years of his professional life, since “What's Wrong with Science?” in 1976, communicating his warning that science is missing its main aim, the pursuit of understanding, explanation and knowledge of the world; a fundamental flaw that also lets the rest of world down in a big way. Not simply in the everyday practical technologies that rely on scientific progress, but as the rational basis of most aspects of enquiry and



Available at Amazon Books

<http://www.amazon.com/Science-Neurotic-Nicholas-Maxwell/dp/1860945007/>

justification for decisions of maximum import; global health, energy, environment, sustainable economic activity - you name it – misguided “science” could seriously damage our health.

Previously Nick's message – from knowledge to wisdom – has been to point out that the core scientific pursuit of knowledge overlooks the value of wisdom, the wisdom to realize what is of value. Of course that's something which on first encounter might seem too subjective and intangible for scientific considerations of basic empiricism – which is Nick's point – there is *something* wrong with a science that has no place for wisdom and values.

In “Is Science Neurotic?” Nick nails the problem as a neurosis. Science is in denial.

Nick's work has moved from academic discourse and debate concerning the evolution from knowledge to wisdom, to active

campaigning. The publication of “Is Science Neurotic?” coincided with Nick’s creation of the “Friends of Wisdom” as a vehicle to promote action particularly, but not exclusively, within academe.

Simply put, the neurosis is that; the officially stated aim of science to pursue knowledge using “standard empiricism” – entirely objectively, with no assumptions immune from empirical considerations of observability and testability – is patently (and indeed fortunately) not the reality of scientific progress. Maintaining that official theory in the face of reality is however a hypocrisy, a neurosis. Nick’s message is as much a plea for intellectual honesty as anything else, but it is something much more than that. It’s fortunate that in practice much good science does not actually operate according to the theory it espouses. Clinging to the neurotic belief, is not just a drag, a source of inefficiency and missed opportunity, undervaluing what science can bring to the world, but it can and does drive scientific activity in counterproductive and damaging directions.

In “Is Science Neurotic?” Nick defines the problem and proceeds to elaborate its consequences for science and for wider social enquiry before providing his remedial recommendations.

Perhaps one of the key imperatives of Nick’s thesis is in the message he takes from Thomas Kuhn. His “paradigm shift” terminology has made its way into consciousness in many domains beyond that of the *scientific* revolutions he was originally describing. Defending and clinging onto a false theory, whilst much

underlying activity taking place conflicts with it, such that evidence of the conflict needs to be suppressed in order to maintain the rationalizing argument, is a recipe for revolution and chaos – a catastrophic cusp at the tipping point between the suppressed and suppressing forces.

At a time when so many issues rationalized by science seem to be affecting the world on a truly global scale, could we survive a “revolution” of that magnitude? Better a process of adjustment and evolution of the offending parts.

Nick’s recommendations to save us from this disaster are essentially three-fold:

The extension of basic empiricism to Aim-Oriented Empiricism (AOE) in science and Aim-Oriented Rationality (AOR) generally in wider areas of social enquiry; seven self-regulating, evolving levels of enquiry, including consideration of the methodologies and bases of assumptions of coherence and knowability – i.e. fundamental philosophical issues including metaphysics and epistemology, *and* the inclusion of *VALUE* in all levels of the AOE / AOR *other than* the basic empiricism, so that the aims, directions, and purposes of AOE/ AOR are constantly under review *and* the adoption of cooperative problem solving, over and above refutation and competitive criticism, whether considering questions of science specifically or wider social enquiry.

You can imagine the vehement knee-jerk reaction to those suggestions from a scientific community – a vehemence which Nick suggests belies the neurosis itself.

For science, yes empirical testing of hypothesis and conjecture, but also evaluation of metaphysical and epistemological assumptions, methodological assumptions, and meta-methodologies for improving methodologies, not to mention extension into practices for scientific research policy and value.

Some of the simplest and easiest to implement recommendations arising from this scheme are to include philosophy subjects more generally and earlier in education, in parallel with basic science curricula, rather than suggesting any radical change to science teaching itself. After all as Nick reminds us, neurotic as it may be, science has been an immensely successful enterprise; good sense does tend to prevail *despite* the neurosis; so no reason to force a fix on what ain't necessarily broke. Encouraging change within education and academia is a primary focus of the Friends of Wisdom campaign.

There is of course an important place for empiricism. The proof of the pudding may always be in the eating, the distinguishing aspect of science fact may always be the empirical test, a test that must include the possibility of failure (after Bacon and Popper), but the imagined downside of a "social experiment" may be better not put to the real test. But even in science, progress towards improved knowledge, understanding and explanation depends on a lot more than this basic empiricism. The extension of refutation by experiment beyond science is the refutation by criticism in an "open" society (also after Popper). But just as progress in society requires more than criticism,

so does science live by more than empirical test alone.

The problem is that those things *more than* empirical testing and criticism, are much harder to define and codify in quantifiable and objective ways, than the simple binary concepts of survival or failure under test or criticism. They are as Nick says "problematic". It is however, not only intellectually dishonest, but pragmatically risky, even disastrous, to ignore relevant considerations simply because they are problematic. Nick has undoubtedly identified a real problem, one that is at root psychological, a denial, a neurosis, and one that with understanding and commitment can be treated. One reason there can be little doubt, is that the same neurosis has been in identified other fields of enquiry.

Closer to this reviewer's own agenda, organizational behaviour is part of management study of how groups of individuals interact in both cooperative and competitive ways to achieve their aims as groups and as individuals - typically in business organizations but in any organized institutions for that matter. It's effectively anthropology, or at least a subset of it according to the constituency of the organized group in question.

Chris Argyris initially and later together with Donald Schon created a management subject known as "Action Science" (*oh, the irony*) - the core of which is that people generally hold "espoused theories" (explicit, official, even politically-correct theories), yet clearly act according to quite different "theories in use". The point being that the way such people act is better understood in terms of what is

pragmatically achieved and how. Nevertheless such people would still tend to rationalize (even post-rationalize) their actions, and attribute success or failure to achieve their aims, according to the official “espoused” theory.

Nils Brunsson developed similar ideas under the name “Management Hypocrisy” after previously analyzing for many years what appeared simply to be paradox expressed in management thought and action.

In the same way as Nick’s prescription for science is to recognize the multi-leveled process by which progress is really achieved, and the processes themselves evolve, so has Argyris emphasized “double-loop learning” where one stands back from a process to re-evaluate its basis and “deutero-learning”, the meta-processes by which that learning processes is itself progressed.

Part of Nick’s prescription is to emphasise the cooperative nature of progress in problem solving, as of course did Popper; it’s not all simply a matter of trial by negating test and criticism, So, also in the field of management, Mary Parker-Follett, the giant on whose shoulders stood so many management gurus of the late 20th century, including Peter Drucker, emphasized the necessity of collaborative as well as competitive strategies in making progress - “Just so far as people think that the basis of working together is compromise or concession, just so far do they not understand the first principles.”

Nick points out that the neurosis of denial has evolved some “intricate defense” mechanisms, again, at the risk of labouring the point, so in

management circles are there recognized the skilled incompetencies, the fancy footwork of budgetary games, games of all kinds in fact. Read my lips; do as I do, not as I say. Rules are for the guidance of wise men and the enslavement of fools. It’s all in the game. The reality is that science relies on wise men breaking the rules.

Possibly the weakest aspects of Nick’s case are not to explicitly address game theory at all, and not to recognize the American pragmatist contribution to processes and action in the face of inconclusive problematic arguments. But then the book is a brief and succinct summary of much of his previous work – less than a hundred pages if one subtracts the footnotes and the technical appendices.

That said it is probably not an overstatement to agree that Nick has identified “the problem” underlying all others of global significance, and probably little doubt that it is effectively a psychological problem, a neurosis. Like any such mental illness, effective treatment almost certainly depends on the patient facing up to the problem – acting on true intellectual honesty is perhaps our only hope.

From primary education right through academe and scientific research and all forms of social enquiry and levels of political decision-making; it’s about realising what is of value to life, humanity and the cosmos in general where - as Popper had said before - all life is effectively a matter of problem solving. The ultimate outcome for Nick is a unified world government based on these liberal values. Nick, wearing that heart on his sleeve throughout, can expect a knee-jerk (or

ignorant denial) from political ideologues of the opposite persuasion. But the basic message about what is wrong with “scientific” enquiry, once learned, should ensure that the outcome which evolves naturally, is whatever is valued as “best”. Any presumptions about the goals, other than that they are contingent and evolvable, are positively avoided. Above all this latest work from Nick is a campaigning call to action and, who knows, perhaps the recognition in other topical areas of the need for global cooperation to address global issues means that Nick’s plea will fall on fertile ground.

**Rethinking Science-Studies
with a Return to Natural
Philosophy:
By Giridhari Lal Pandit**

Does science suffer from “rationalistic neurosis”, a damaging but rarely noticed methodological disease? Maxwell argues for an answer in the affirmative, advocating that it has caused much damage to science in particular and to social and academic inquiry in general. But this does not signal a crisis of knowledge production. Rather, with Maxwell, we may describe it as the crisis of science without wisdom. What is worse is that it is not “just the natural sciences which suffer from this condition. The contagion has spread to the social sciences, to philosophy, to the humanities more generally, and to education. The whole academic enterprise, indeed, suffers from versions of the disease” (p. ix). Following a diagnosis of the human condition of knowledge and education, Maxwell (Chapter Three) tells us how it blocks our way to “progress towards

a wiser, more civilized world”. Rationalistic neurosis has the effect of preventing mankind from developing traditions and institutions which would help us learn how to live more wisely. The book is also concerned with learning what is of value in life. Above all, it considers the most important question whether there is a way forward for humanity, from knowledge to wisdom, with a different future for science and for social and academic inquiry more generally.

The orthodox view of scientific rationality holds that in science no assumption can escape scrutiny within the standard frame of reference of empirical evidence. Maxwell argues that this requirement is not fulfilled in the case of the substantial metaphysical assumption that the universe is physically comprehensible, without which science cannot proceed. As a result, the metaphysical assumption of comprehensibility is repressed under the pretension that no such assumption occurs in natural science. It is at this point that rationalistic neuroses occurs and damages science. What is true of the metaphysical assumption of comprehensibility is also true of values and their role in science. Both are influential yet highly problematic in scientific research. It is quite symptomatic of rationalistic neuroses to pretend as if values, like the metaphysical assumptions, played no role at all in science. Suppression of values, resulting in the persistent failure of science policy globally, becomes increasingly visible in the lack of wise investment in those areas of research and development which are in the long term human interest.

Maxwell elaborates and boldly defends a new conception of natural science called aim-oriented empiricism (AOE). In the opinion of the present reviewer, the importance of the book in today's context derives from its argument for a return to natural philosophy and its relentless and passionate pursuit of the fundamental problem of how to learn from scientific progress towards greater knowledge *how* to achieve social progress towards a civilized world with greater wisdom. In the space available here, I am mainly concerned with the latter which reminds us of the Traditional Enlightenment (TE) of the 18th century going back to Voltaire, Diderot, Condorcet et al. In *its* pursuit, four things are most crucial. First, it is most important not to repeat the blunders of the TE as Maxwell (pp. 74-94) diagnoses them. Secondly, as would in a moment become clear below, it is important to characterize the progress-achieving methods of science *correctly*. Thirdly, it is important to introduce improvements and innovations into TE in the present-day context, which can take humanity beyond TE. And, fourthly, it is also important to recognize as *guiding principles* the following principles brought in by Maxwell: (1) "In order to create a more civilized, enlightened world, the problems that we need to solve are, fundamentally, problems of living rather than problems of knowledge". And (2) "in order to make progress towards a sustainable, civilized world we need to learn how to resolve our conflicts in more cooperative ways than at present". As regards this second principle, Maxwell tells us emphatically that there is a lot to learn from how science progresses towards greater knowledge.

TE thus replaced by the New Enlightenment (NE) employs what Maxwell (pp. 94-97) calls Aim-Oriented Rationality (AOR), which represents "a conception of reason that is designed quite specifically to improve problematic aims, and cure rationalistic neurosis". This implies, first, that social inquiry becomes social methodology (arguably different from Karl Popper's piecemeal social engineering) without any pretensions to being a science and, secondly, that promotion of the growth of wisdom becomes a basic aim of academic inquiry, more generally.

The question arises how revolutionary or profound is then NE? Arguing for NE, Maxwell (p. 100) points out: "The proper, basic task of social inquiry is to get into our diverse institutions, traditions and ways of life, into the fabric of society, general progress-achieving methods arrived at by generalizing the progress-achieving methods of science" as against the "neurotic aim" of restricting its task to acquiring knowledge of social phenomena. In this whole picture, quite clearly, the progress-achieving methods of science play the most central role, *assuming* at the same time that they are being characterized correctly. Thus, NE stands for "extracting progress achieving methods from science, generalizing them, and applying them to other institutions and aspects of social life" – to academia, the arts, the media, industry, government, international relations, education, and so on and so forth. This idea goes beyond TE in so far as TE blundered by wrongly promoting the idea of developing social inquiry as a social *science*. Setting a different set of priorities altogether, this required that

knowledge of society be developed first. Once the required knowledge was produced, it was then sought to be applied to solve social problems.

Touching all disciplines, the most fundamental question the book raises is this: Whether mankind, with all the challenges the institutions of learning face globally, can move forward from traditional knowledge-inquiry to wisdom-inquiry, freeing science from a defective philosophy of science and academic inquiry from a defective philosophy of inquiry? How to help humanity learn how to solve its conflicts and problems of living in increasingly cooperatively rational ways? Maxwell calls for a revolution in the aims and methods of science and in academic inquiry generally so as to solve the most urgent problems faced by humanity globally. For example, think of the host planet Earth and its life-supporting ecosystems. And think of the damage human activity causes to these systems and, consequently, to the future generations. Since alternative ways of organizing our corporate activities and social or cultural life on our planet cannot be ruled out, the question is how we might integrate knowledge, wisdom and values in order to put an end to a fragmented approach to philosophy and science, to education, economy, politics and institution building.

An important aspect of AOE is that it is intended by Maxwell as “a kind of synthesis of the views of Popper, Kuhn and Lakatos”, as he puts it elsewhere. At the same time, it is intended to be an improvement over the views of all the three. This claim, which calls for close scrutiny, is bound to throw up more questions in

view of the highly controversial character of these views themselves. This is particularly true of Thomas Kuhn whose views have seen rapid changes and whose shifting argument is heavily dependent on the systematically ambiguous metaphors of a paradigm, disciplinary matrix, translation and lexical taxonomy, as the present reviewer has argued elsewhere.

There is an aspect of Maxwell which deserves a more detailed attention than is possible here. Very generally, AOE requires that the implicit metaphysical assumptions, which the natural sciences make persistently, be made explicit. And, once these are made explicit, these sciences would be freed from their states of repression, enabling them to develop better alternatives to these very assumptions with a view to improving what is accepted by them as scientific knowledge. Of course, this is not meant to imply that this would automatically take us from knowledge to wisdom or from absence of values to their presence.

More specifically, consider the case of physics. In its persistent preference for and acceptance of unified theories, physics makes a persistent untestable metaphysical assumption that the universe is such that no seriously dis-unified, *ad hoc* theory is true (pp. 10-12). This being a substantial, influential yet highly problematic and implicit assumption, AOE demands that (a) it be made explicit and articulated as part of scientific knowledge and (b) it be debated with a view to developing its improved versions. No doubt, serious considerations of scientific rigour and rational discussion in the context of

scientific appraisal of theories add to the importance of this demand. Fulfilling this demand implies giving a chance to scientific appraisal of theories to improve beyond the received views. There are also considerations of neurosis of science or of scientific practice which Maxwell has in mind in proposing AOE over Popper, Kuhn and Lakatos.

In final analysis, the question is what is wrong with philosophy of science of the 20th century? What is lacking with the rules of rational acceptance or rejection of theories by the physicists? Is there a way forward to improve the rules of scientific appraisal of theories and their rational acceptance or rejection, which takes us beyond Popper, Kuhn and Lakatos? According to Maxwell, AOE conceived as an improvement over all the three is the answer. As he says (pp. 39-40): “Current philosophy of science is a deeply neurotic activity. Not only is the philosophy of science beset by long-standing problems about the nature of science, which resist all attempts at solution – most notably problems of induction and simplicity. In addition, work done in the philosophy of science seems to have no impact on science itself whatever. All this is symptomatic of the philosophy of science being the neurotic face of science”. Very detailed and valuable discussions of problems of simplicity and unity of physical theory, rational discovery of new fundamental physical theories and problem of induction, among other subjects, take place in the Appendix.

Interrogating “science without wisdom”, science as articulated by the dominant philosophies of science, the book is intended for everybody who

shares its main concerns. In particular, it is for those who are concerned about the absence of wisdom in the scientific pursuits and academic institutions of learning. It is as much meant for the experts, since it also goes against their creed. It is also meant for the lay-people, or those who are yet neither initiated nor trapped in knowledge society so highly ritualized by the present day practices of philosophy of science. It was Bertrand Russell (*Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits* 1948: Preface) who reminded us that “Philosophy proper deals with matters of interest to the general public, and loses much of its value if only a few professionals can understand what is said”. The task Maxwell sets for the academia, for society and economy and the argument he develops for AOE science fulfills this expectation. Maxwell quite admirably sets a task for philosophers and the scientific community. This is the task of getting back to natural philosophy and trying to implement AOE science.

In many significant ways, all of which cannot be covered under one single review, this book boldly opens an urgently needed debate on science, philosophy, education, environment and institution-building, among other important subjects, and lays the foundations for much sought-after wisdom-inquiry. Interrogating science and philosophy relentlessly, as it does in this context, the book under review is a most admirable step in the right direction. However, concerning one of its fundamental principles which we briefly considered above, I would like to pose a few questions. In the Preface, Maxwell urges the serious reader: “I write in the hope that there will be a few who will not dismiss out

of hand the suggestion that the question of how we are to go about learning how to live in wiser and more civilized ways might have something to learn from scientific learning, and will take the trouble to pursue the line of argument traced out in this book". No doubt I find a great merit in this suggestion as well as in the detailed argument. Long ago Karl Popper had hinted at something like this when he wrote his Essay "The Rationality of Scientific Revolutions" (in Rom Harré, 1975: *Problems of Scientific Revolution*, Oxford University Press). Nevertheless, the question remains why is it necessary not only to assume but to advocate that it is possible to learn from the way science progresses towards greater knowledge *how* we can make social progress towards greater wisdom. Despite the rituals of knowledge society, is it puzzling that humanity has failed to do so until now? Even if science and scientific progress may be a great teacher for humanity to follow in solving problems of living in wiser and more civilized ways, we don't have to *ritualize* all this (in the fashion in which Thomas Kuhn *ritualized* normal science).

No doubt science itself needs values. But can it serve as a source of values? If, as is also recognized by Maxwell (p. xii), "Science fails to pursue those avenues of research that lie in the best interests of humanity", the answer is in the negative. Along with scientific progress, economy and society need moral progress. But can science itself provide criteria in the loftiest realms of value, wisdom and moral progress? Of course, for all these, we have to look elsewhere (?). We may have even to retrieve that which is taken to have been forgotten

and lost. We have to do soul-searching. We have to foster moral self-development. Along with the task of relentlessly asking, with Maxwell, how we can learn wisdom, it is important to learn to interrogate the influential totalitarian assumptions among philosophers and policy makers such as the following: That scientific progress invariably provides the context, *as it were* the frame of reference, for all other kinds of progress. And, what is worse, that science and technology must provide solutions to any current and future problems arising from human activities and their impact on the Earth's ecosystems.

Editor's Endnote:

The French philosopher Giles Deleuze made a distinction between the Philosopher, as 'a friend of wisdom', and the Sage, as 'a possessor of wisdom'. This distinction has been at the heart of the philosophical inquiry into 'wisdom' since Socrates, for whom the role of the philosopher was to question and test 'wisdom' rather than to make claim to 'wisdom' and teach it. Navigating this distinction is one of the most difficult challenges facing the Friends of Wisdom, as an association, given this traditional Socratic tendency among Philosophers to be suspicious of Sages. How can the Friends of Wisdom persuade the traditionally suspicious *academe* to respond to the call for 'wisdom-inquiry' to be a goal for education and research?

This modest newsletter is a first step toward a dialogue between academics and others about the nature and potential of 'wisdom-inquiry'. It offers FOW members an opportunity for reflection and communication on how the FOW is proceeding as an association, movement, or society, while also providing a means for dialogue between each other about matters of deep concern. Perhaps this newsletter will develop into a peer reviewed 'wisdom-inquiry' journal, or perhaps it will organically evolve into something else. Everything depends on the contributions and efforts of the FOW members.

I would like to thank Nick Maxwell, Mathew Iredale, Katherine Crawley, Chris Thomson, Thomas Daffern, Harvey Sarles, Ian Glendinning, and Giridhari Lal Pandit.



I would also like to thank all the other members who offered contributions.

Some FOW members have suggested that this newsletter should also be available in other languages. This is an interesting proposal. I am considering offering a Spanish version in the near future and, perhaps, in other languages as well if volunteers come forward to help me in this task.

For the next issue, I ask members to submit articles on the question of how we should proceed in a dialogue with academia. How can the FOW better promote 'wisdom-inquiry'? What is wrong with academia? How can we help to improve it? What are the next steps for the FOW?

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