Part 6:2 Plato’s anticipation of resistance to insight into the human condition

The initial reaction of intolerant resistance to the exposing truth, which Plato anticipated

The arrival of understanding of the human condition is an extremely exposing and confronting development for upset humans but thankfully there is a way of coping—in fact, coping is too slight a word—the arrival of understanding of the human condition brings about a fabulous new way of living for humans! In truth, the human race would not have had the will and determination to persevere through two million years of the darkness of alienation if it didn’t believe deep within itself that there would be a way to live with the truth when it finally arrived.

Unfortunately, however, there was always a danger that we could lose sight of this faith and trust in the eventual liberation of the human race from the human condition and that when understanding of the human condition finally arrived some would be intolerant of the emerging information and try to reinstate the historical denials that have been used to block exposure to the issue of the human condition. As mentioned previously, psychologists and counsellors recognise that ‘habitual…patterns [of denial] have a life of their own, and their will to live is very strong. They fight back with a vengeance when faced with annihilation’ (Courage to Heal, L. Davis & E. Bass, 1988, p.175 of 495). Resistance is the automatic, historical response to the threat of exposure, however, where human-condition-confronting new ideas and movements are concerned tolerance is essential because, as emphasised, it has been humanity’s central hope that some day, some where, some how understanding of the human condition would finally emerge and the possibility of that occurring always had to be considered. If there wasn’t this tolerance, and instead people immediately attacked and obliterated new confronting information they could be obliterating the one chance humanity had to achieve its freedom—they might, in effect, be killing the goose that laid the golden egg.

Plato gave a very clear warning of this great danger of intolerance threatening to prevent the emergence of understanding of the human condition in his allegory of the cave in his great work The Republic. Plato’s amazingly insightful analysis of the human condition in his cave allegory has already been described in Part 3:10, however, given how revealing it is of the danger of intolerance to the arrival of understanding of the human condition, a further analysis should now be included.

Plato began his allegory with an actual reference to the human condition, saying, ‘I want you to go on to picture the enlightenment or ignorance of our human conditions somewhat as follows. Imagine an underground chamber, like a cave with an entrance open to the daylight and running a long way underground. In this chamber are men who have been prisoners there’ (The Republic, tr. H.D.P. Lee, 1955, p.278 of 405). He then described how between the natural, radiant, all-visible, sunlit world and humans’ ‘cave’ existence stands a ‘brightly burning fire’ that prevents humans from leaving the cave: ‘the light of the fire in the prison [cave] corresponds to the power of the sun’ (ibid. p.282). What the ‘sun’ and its Earthly representation, the ‘brightly burning fire’, represent is the condemning cooperative ideals of life, the ideals that bring the
depressing issue of the human condition into focus—the question of why, when the ideals are to be cooperative, loving and selfless, are humans competitive, aggressive and selfish? The ‘sun’/‘fire’ represents the confronting glare of the ideals and the burning heat of the issue of the human condition that those ideals cause and which the upset human race has had to live in denial of—metaphorically speaking, hide from in a dark ‘cave’. Imprisoned in the cave, all that can be seen are ‘shadows’ cast by the ‘fire’, which Plato said are only an ‘illusion’ of the real world outside the cave. The allegory makes clear that while ‘the light of the fire in the cave prison corresponds to the power of the sun’ (ibid. p.282), with ‘the sun…making things we see visible’ (ibid. p.273) such that without it humans can only ‘see dimly and appear to be almost blind’ (ibid. p.272), having to hide in the ‘cave’ of ‘illusion’ and endure ‘almost blind’ alienation was infinitely preferable to facing the ‘painful’ light of the ‘fire’/‘sun’ that would make ‘visible’ the unbearably depressing issue of ‘the imperfections of human life’ (ibid. p.282), namely the issue of the human condition. Plato’s description of humanity having to live in a cave of blind alienation is clearly a description of humanity having to live in deep denial of the unbearably exposing (the ‘sun’) and confronting or burning (the ‘fire’) issue of the human condition, and of any truths that bring that unbearably depressing issue into focus.

Given Plato’s ability to describe humanity’s state of denial and resulting alienation so honestly, it is no wonder Alfred North Whitehead, one of the most highly regarded philosophers of the twentieth century, referred to the history of philosophy as merely ‘a series of footnotes to Plato’ (Process and Reality [Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of Edinburgh During the Session 1927-28], 1979, p.39 of 413). Plato’s work has rightly drawn comparisons with some of the great religious texts. For example, ‘It has been said that after the Bible, Plato’s dialogues are the most influential books in Western culture’ (from the front flap of Plato’s Symposium and Phaedrus, published by Everyman’s Library in 2001), and ‘Among secular books, Plato only is entitled to Omar’s fanatical compliment to the Koran, when he said, “Burn the libraries; for their value is in this book”’ (American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, The Complete Works, Vol. 4; Representative Men, Riverside Edition reprinted, ed. J. Elliot Cabot, 1903, p.41). There have only been a few denial-free books in the history of the world—in addition to Plato’s dialogues, they include Sir Laurens’ books and obviously the great religious texts. Incidentally, if you would like to read a powerful demystification of some of the religious texts, because with understanding of the human condition such clarifications are now possible, go to Part 10:1, titled ‘Moses, Christ and Plato’. This Part demystifies Moses’ first five books of the Bible, including what he meant by Abraham being instructed by God to ‘sacrifice’ his own ‘son’ (Gen. 22:2).

R.D. Laing raised this truth about the rarity of denial-free books when he wrote that ‘Few books today are forgivable. Black on the canvas, silence on the screen, an empty white sheet of paper, are perhaps feasible. There is little conjunction of truth and social ‘reality’. Around us are pseudo-events, to which we adjust with a false consciousness adapted to see these events as true and real, and even as beautiful. In the society of men the truth resides now less in what things are than in what they are not. Our social realities are so ugly if seen in the light of exiled truth [the unevasive truth], and beauty is almost no longer possible if it is not a lie’ (The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise, 1967, p.11 of 156).

Having described this state of being imprisoned by denial of the issue of the human condition, Plato went on to describe what would happen when understanding of the human condition was found, which is the issue being addressed in this Part of my presentation. (The following quote comes from a helpful summary of the cave allegory that appears in the 1996 Encarta Encyclopedia, under the entry for ‘Plato’. The underlinings are my emphasis): ‘Breaking free, one of the individuals escapes from the cave into the light of day. With the aid of the sun [living free of denial of the issue of the human condition and of any truths that bring that issue into focus], that person sees for the first time the real world and returns to the cave with the message that the
only things they have seen heretofore are shadows and appearances and that the real world awaits them if they are willing to struggle free of their bonds. The shadowy environment of the cave symbolizes for Plato the physical world of appearances. Escape into the sun-filled setting outside the cave symbolizes the transition to the real world, the world of full and perfect being, the world of Forms, which is the proper object of knowledge (by Professor Robert M. Baird. Accessed 11 Jul. 2008 at: <http://encarta.msn.com/text_761568769_0/Plato.html>). To return to Plato’s actual words, he warned that ‘if he [the cave prisoner] were made to look directly at the light of the fire [again the fire represents the unconfrontable issue of our less-than-ideal human condition], it would hurt his eyes and he would turn back and take refuge in the things which he could see [take refuge in all the denials that he has become accustomed to], which he would think really far clearer than the things being shown him. And if he were forcibly dragged up the steep and rocky ascent [out of the cave of denial by the person who has broken free of the cave] and not let go till he had been dragged out into the sunlight [shown the truthful all-liberating—but at the same time all-exposing and confronting—explanation of the human condition], the process would be a painful one, to which he would much object, and when he emerged into the light his eyes would be so overwhelmed by the brightness of it that he wouldn’t be able to see a single one of the things he was now told were real [this inability to absorb discussion of the human condition is what we in the WTM refer to as the ‘deaf effect’]. Plato then said, ‘they would say that his [the person who tries to deliver understanding of the human condition] visit to the upper world had ruined his sight [they would treat him as if he was mad, which is how I’ve been treated], and [they would say] that the ascent [out of the cave] was not worth even attempting. And if anyone tried to release them and lead them up, they would kill him if they could lay hands on him [my detractors have done everything they can, short of physical attack, to kill me] (The Republic, tr. H.D.P. Lee, 1955, p.280, 281).

Reverend David Millikan, who persecuted me and the WTM, then known as the Foundation for Humanity’s Adulthood, in two defamatory publications in 1995 (an ABC-TV Four Corners program and a feature article in the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper) revealed his real motivation and prejudice—and confirmed Plato’s prediction that they would say ‘that the ascent [out of the cave of denial] was not worth even attempting’—when he said, ‘You realise you are attempting the impossible, you will be fighting to have this material accepted right down to the last person on the planet’ (WTM records, 16 Feb. 1995). The other architect of the attack on my work, one of a very few intolerant parents of WTM members, revealed a similar motivation, and a similar confirmation of Plato’s prediction, when he said to me, ‘You know you are encroaching on the personal unspeakable inside people and you won’t succeed’ (WTM records, 12 Feb. 1995). He similarly told his son, ‘You are trying to rattle the black box inside people and you just can’t do that’ (WTM records, 18 Mar. 1995). These men were right in the sense that these truths I am revealing about the human condition are extremely confronting, but they were fundamentally wrong because, as Plato said, the ‘proper object of knowledge’ was to find the ‘enlightenment…of our human condition’ that would enable the ‘transition to the real world’ and they were not allowing for that greatest of all possibilities for the human race, which is the most serious act of oppression of thought possible. The whole principle of democracy was established, and fought and died for by Australian soldiers in France, Gallipoli, and elsewhere, so that we could keep the door to freedom of expression open, most especially in this critical area of enquiry into the issue of the human condition.

Incidentally, I should explain more clearly why these comments by my detractors—about me ‘encroaching on the personal unspeakable’, ‘black box’ ‘inside people’ and that I will be ‘fighting to have this material accepted right down to the last person on the planet’—reveal their real motivation and prejudice. In a campaign akin to J.D.F. Jones’ demonisation of Sir Laurens van der Post, Reverend Millikan used selective editing and extreme misrepresentation to cast me as a dangerous anti-social pariah in both his Four Corners program and Sydney Morning Herald article. The fact of the matter is I simply cannot be
sound enough to confront and look into the human condition, as my detractors’ comments acknowledge I have done, and at the same time be so unsound as to be a monster in our society. Christ pointed out this obvious truth when, in responding to his truth-hating persecutors’ accusation of him being ‘possessed by Beelzebub…the prince of demons’ (Mark 3:22), he said, ‘How can Satan drive out Satan?’ (Mark 3:23). He was making the same point when he said that ‘A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit’ (Matt. 7:18). Sir Laurens also made this same point when, in a comment that was included earlier in Part 5:1, he said, ‘He who tries to go down into the labyrinthine pit of himself, to travel the swirling, misty netherlands below sea-level through which the harsh road to heaven and wholeness runs, is doomed to fail and never see the light where night joins day unless he goes out of love in search of love.’ Alienation cannot look into the human condition—one precludes the other. The truth is, the lack of soundness lies within the person who cannot tolerate someone looking into the human condition. The accusation that I am a dangerous pariah in society was a deliberate, fear-inducing, reverse-of-the-truth lie fabricated to try to prevent the emergence of these ideas against which the attackers held monumental prejudices.

The point being made is that if people don’t want to study these ideas sufficiently to be able to recognise that they are the all-important, all-liberating full truth about humans, they should at least trust in the democratic principle of freedom of expression to evaluate the potential importance to the human race of the ideas being put forward. They don’t have to throw out the rule book on fair behaviour as Reverend Millikan did in his defamatory Four Corners program and Sydney Morning Herald article—or as J.D.F. Jones did in his attack on Sir Laurens.

Of course, the principle of freedom of expression should be applied in all areas of enquiry. Again, as John Stuart Mill emphasised, ‘the dictum that truth always triumphs over persecution is one of those pleasant falsehoods which men repeat after one another till they pass into commonplaces, but which all experience refutes. History teems with instances of truth put down by persecution. If not suppressed for ever, it may be thrown back for centuries.’

So Plato was right when he warned that when understanding of the human condition was found many people would be deaf to what was being said (‘he wouldn’t be able to see a single one of the things he was now told were real’); that some would say that all human-condition-confronting information should be destroyed on sight (‘that the ascent [out of the cave] was not worth even attempting’); that some would accuse the presenter of the understanding of being mad (‘his visit to the upper world had ruined his sight’); and that some would even try to destroy the deliverer of the understanding (‘if anyone tried to release them and lead them up [out of the cave], they would kill him if they could lay hands on him’).

After fighting this intolerant resistance for 20 years now and having finally received complete vindication—a journey that is documented on our website at <www.worldtransformation.com/resistance>—we in the WTM feel and hope this intolerant stage is now over. We hope that in terms of Schopenhauer’s stages that new ideas have to survive before being accepted—from firstly being ‘ridiculed’ and ‘violently opposed’, to secondly having it ‘stated that it may be true but it’s not particularly relevant’, to thirdly having it ‘admitted to be true and relevant but the same critics assert that the idea is not original’ to finally having ‘accepted as being self-evident’—that we have now moved to the second stage. We, our small group of some 50 individuals, are also immensely relieved to have not failed to defend these all-precious understandings against immense and ferocious opposition from not only two of Australia’s biggest media institutions in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Fairfax Media group, but many other powerful and influential people and factions in our community—because, as the science historian Thomas Kuhn said, ‘In science...ideas do not change simply because new facts win out over outmoded ones...Since the facts
can’t speak for themselves, it is their human advocates who win or lose the day.’

So, to recap, the cave depicted in our FREEDOM poster (see the beginning of Part 3:5) is where the upset human race has been imprisoned and, while humanity has finally achieved its glorious freedom, the truth about the upset state is still extremely confronting and exposing and thus painful, which brings us back to the situation depicted by The Abyss of Depression and the Sunshine Highway to Freedom picture, in which the human race is stranded between unbearable exposure and terminal alienation.

As mentioned, the solution to this problem of being stranded is the Sunshine Highway of supporting the truth without confronting it—a path that leads to the TRANSFORMED LIFEFORCE STATE. We can now live in support of the reconciling understanding of the human condition rather than allow our habituated reactions of denial and angry resistance prevent the emergence of a human-condition-free world. There is no point in procrastinating and trying to reassert the old denials when the dignifying truth about humans makes such behaviour unnecessary and obsolete. Why stay in the old dead world when we no longer have to? The catch cry now is ‘Let’s go! Let’s get out of here!’—let’s leave all that pain and anguish behind and move to the human-condition-understood new world. All humans can now immediately be effectively FREE from the terrible, cave-dwelling, alienated state by supporting and participating in the new, understanding-drenched, truthful, FREE World-In-Sunshine. To live in support of these liberating understandings makes possible the most exciting life we fully conscious humans have ever known. All humans can now come out of the terrible cave where they have had to live for so long and join the FREE in the truth-and-understanding-supporting Sunshine Army on the Sunshine Highway to the World-In-Sunshine. This, finally, is the birth of The Kingdom of Light and The Empire of the Sun in The World of the FREE. After such a terrifyingly long journey and struggle through a cavernous world of darkness into this new world of light, the whole human race is going to have such a big celebration and party now that it will go on for generations. Everywhere we are going to be hoppin’ and boppin’, rompin’ and stompin’, hollerin’ and howlin’, huggin’ and laughin’, movin’ and groovin’, rollickin’ and rollin’, jumping and jiving, jolting and somersaulting, peeping and hiding, skipping and skating, shaking and shimmering, embracing and gyrating, twisting and shouting, dancing and singing, slipping and sliding, jamming and slamming, ripping and roaring, whirling and twirling and reelin’ and rockin’. This is it, the great breakthrough and breakout for all humans from our species’ ancient prison into a fabulous TRANSFORMED world of FREEDOM for the human race. This is the time that the most esteemed piece of music ever written, Beethoven’s 1824 Ninth Symphony, anticipates with its full choir of human voices rising to the final height of glorious unison and excitement with the words, ‘Joy’, ‘Joyful, as a hero to victory!’ , ‘Join in our jubilation!’ , ‘We enter, drunk with fire, into your sanctuary…Your magic reunites…All men become brothers…All good, all bad…Be embraced, millions! This kiss for the whole world!’ It is little wonder the piece was adopted by the European Union, the EU, as its anthem in 1985.

Part 6:3 The threat of terminal levels of alienation

The depressingly exposing descriptions of our lost state of innocence given by Sir Laurens, Hesiod, Rousseau, Wordsworth and others provided a powerful illustration of the problem of the Abyss of Depression from unbearable exposure that existed on one side of our species’ seemingly stranded position. What now needs to be provided is evidence of the threat of terminal levels of alienation that lay in wait on the other side of that Abyss of Depression.