Please note, all the Freedom Essays are listed at the end of this essay, and they can also be accessed on our homepage at www.humancondition.com*.
— You can read, print, download, share or listen to (as a podcast) this essay by clicking on (or if viewing a printed version by typing in) this link: www.humancondition.com/freedom-essays/power-of-art*. Obviously to access any links* (indicated by asterix) you need to go to the online version.

This is Freedom Essay 44

Art makes the invisible visible

As has been described at length in these essays, from an all-loving, all-sensitive and completely happy innocent life, we humans then—for a reason we had absolutely no understanding of—turned into ferociously selfish, competitive and aggressive monsters. No wonder we chose to shamefully hide in Plato’s metaphorical cave of darkness away from any light that would reveal our horrifically corrupted condition (see Video/F. Essay 11*).

So denial has been super precious for the human race—but it also meant that there had to be some truth to counter all the denial/darkness/black-out—and that’s precisely what great art has provided; it allowed the light of some honesty about our corrupted human condition to escape from the dark cave in which we have been hiding. (See, for example, F. Essay 10* on William Blake’s poem The Tiger, F. Essay 31* with its analysis of Wordsworth’s great, all-revealing poem Intimations of Immortality, as well as F. Essay 45: Prophetic Songs.*) Indeed, literature Nobel Laureate Albert Camus recognised art’s role as an antidote to all the darkness and confusion of the world when he wrote, ‘If the world were clear, art would not exist’ (The Myth of Sisyphus, 1942).

And among the arts, music and painting had their own particular benefit, because their often deep and important message wasn’t as clear and therefore as potentially confronting as language and stories. As the great novelist Victor Hugo wrote, ‘Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to remain silent’ (William Shakespeare, 1864). And similarly in painting, we find that from Francis Bacon’s tortured self-portraits and Edvard Munch’s terrifying The Scream, to the radiant beauty of Van Gogh’s and Gauguin’s depictions of nature and life, this artform has allowed us to express the agony and the ecstasy of the human condition when words failed us.
Consider Bacon’s *Study for self-portrait* and Munch’s *The Scream* (above). While in our day to day lives we block out the reality of the human condition, these paintings expose the true nature of humans’ corrupted and alienated existence. Indeed, they depict what the Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing so honestly described when he wrote:

‘Our alienation goes to the roots…the ordinary person is a shrivelled, desiccated fragment of what a person can be…between us and It [our true selves or soul] there is a veil which is more like fifty feet of solid concrete’ (*The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*, 1967). (See F. Essay 48* for much more on R.D. Laing.)

Jeremy Griffith explains the significance of Bacon’s work in his book *FREEDOM*:

“While people in their state of denial of what the human condition actually is typically find his [Bacon’s] work ‘enigmatic’ and ‘obscene’ (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 Apr. 1992), there is really no mistaking the agony of the human condition in Bacon’s death-mask-like, twisted, smudged, distorted, trodden-on—alienated—faces, and tortured, contorted, stomach-knotted, arms-pinned, psychologically strangled and imprisoned bodies; consider, for instance, his *Study for self-portrait* (above, top left). It is some recognition of the incredible integrity/honesty of Bacon’s work that in 2013 one of his triptychs sold for $US142.4 million, becoming (at the time) ‘the most expensive work of art ever sold at auction, breaking the previous record, set in May 2012, when a version of Edvard Munch’s *The Scream* [another exceptionally honest, human-condition-revealing painting shown above on the right] sold for $119.9 million’ (*TIME*, 25 Nov. 2013).” (See paragraphs 124–125 of *FREEDOM*.*) (You can also read more about Bacon’s work in various F. Essays including 31*, 42* & 55*.)

At the other end of the spectrum, however, are those aforementioned artists who have the astonishing ability to break the hold of our tortured, preoccupied existence and remind us of the beauty of the world—who offer some glimpse of the magic we will be
able to fully and properly access when we are no longer trapped behind the ‘fifty feet of solid concrete’ the human condition has wedged ‘between us and It [our all-sensitive soul]’.

Jeremy also explains this aspect of art in FREEDOM, writing:

“Great art ‘can make the invisible visible’; it can cut a window into our alienated, effectively dead state and bring back into view some of the beauty that our soul has access to. After years of developing his skills, Vincent van Gogh was able to bring out so much beauty that resigned humans looking at his paintings find themselves seeing light and colour as it really exists for possibly the first time in their life: ‘And after Van Gogh? Artists changed their ways of seeing...not for the myths, or the high prices, but for the way he opened their eyes’ (Bulletin mag. 30 Nov. 1993).” (See paragraph 829 of FREEDOM*.)

So while Bacon and Munch attract record-breaking prices because their honesty has immense cathartic power, it is through the art of masters such as Van Gogh and Gauguin that we are shown the radiant life that awaits humanity now that the human condition has been solved. (See F. Essay 15* on the transformation that is now possible for everyone.)

Watch Jeremy Griffith present the breakthrough redeeming explanation of the human condition in Video/F. Essay 3*, or read chapter 1 of FREEDOM*.

Read more of Jeremy’s insights into how humans have used painting and music and other artistic expressions to depict both our alienated state, and the world’s true beauty, in Video/F. Essay 10*, which includes an analysis of William Blake’s great poem The Tiger; F. Essay 31* on Wordsworth’s great, all-revealing poem Intimations of Immortality; F. Essay 42* on cave paintings; F. Essay 43* on ceremonial masks; and F. Essay 45* on prophetic songs. See also chapter 8:11C of FREEDOM*.
Please Note, if you are online you can read, print, download or listen to (as a podcast) any of the following Freedom Essays by clicking on them, or you can find them all at www.humancondition.com*.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXPLANATION & RESOLUTION OF THE HUMAN CONDITION: Freedom Essay 1 Your block to the most wonderful of all gifts* | 2 The false ‘savage instincts’ excuse* | 3 THE EXPLANATION of the human condition* | 4 The ‘instinct vs intellect’ explanation is obvious – short* | 5 The transformation of the human race* | 6 Our Denialators song ‘Let’s Go!’* | 7 Praise from Prof. Prosen* | 8 “How this liberated me from racism”* | 9 “This is the real liberation of women”* | 10 What exactly is the human condition?* | 11 The difficulty of reading FREEDOM and the solution* | 12 One hour summarising talk* | 13 The WTM Deaf Effect Course* | 14 Savage instincts excuse leads to human extinction* | 15 How your life can immediately be transformed* | 16 WTM Centres opening everywhere* | THE BOOKS: 17 Commendations* | 18 FREEDOM chapter synopses* | 19 FREEDOM’s significance by Prof. Prosen* | 20 The genius of Transform Your Life* | THE OTHER KEY BIOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS: 21 How did we humans acquire our altruistic moral conscience?* | 22 Fossil discoveries evidence our nurtured origins* | 23 Integrative Meaning or ‘God’* | 24 How did consciousness emerge in humans?* | 25 The truthful biology of life* | • Survey seeking feedback* | MEN & WOMEN RECONCILED: 26 Men and women reconciled* | 27 Human sex and relationships explained* | THE END OF RACISM: 28 The end of racism* | 29 Can conflict ever end?* | RESIGNATION: 30 Resignation* | 31 Wordsworth’s all-revealing great poem* | YOUR TRANSFORMATION: 32 More on the transformation* | 33 Jeremy on how to become transformed* | THE END OF POLITICS: 34 This understanding ends the polarised world of politics* | 35 Left-wing politics leads to death of the human race* | 36 Saving Western civilisation from left-wing dogma* | 37 The meaning of superhero and disaster films* | RELIGION DECIPHERED: 38 Noah’s Ark explained* | 39 Christ explained* | 40 Judgment Day finally explained* | 41 Science’s scorn of religion* | MEANING OF ART & CULTURE: 42 Cave paintings* | 43 Ceremonial masks explained* | 44 Art makes the invisible visible* | • Second survey seeking feedback* | 45 Prophetic songs* | 46 Anne Frank’s faith in human goodness fulfilled* | 47 Humour and swearing explained* | 48 R.D. Laing’s fearless honesty* | ABOUT BIOLOGIST JEREMY GRIFFITH: 49 Jeremy’s biography* | 50 Australia’s role* | 51 Sir Laurens van der Post’s great vision* | 52 Jeremy’s children’s book A Perfect Life* | 53 The ‘instinct vs intellect’ explanation is obvious – long* | 54 The accusation of hubris* | DO WE FAIL OR DO WE MAKE IT? 55 Endgame for the human race* | 56 Why there have been ferocious attacks on the WTM* | 57 Magnificence of the Transformed State – video 1* | 58 Magnificence of the Transformed State – video 2* | From here on are Transformation Affirmations and More Good Info Emails*

These essays were created in 2017-2018 by Jeremy Griffith, Damon Isherwood, Fiona Cullen-Ward, Brony FitzGerald & Lee Jones of the Sydney WTM Centre. All filming and editing of the videos was carried out by Sydney WTM members James Press & Tess Watson during 2017-2018. Other members of the Sydney WTM Centre are responsible for the distribution and marketing of the videos/essays, and for providing subscriber support.