

Finally, the dreamed-of biological explanation of the human condition that ends our species' underlying psychosis and transforms the human race.

**Transcript of interview between journalist and broadcaster
Brian Carlton and Jeremy Griffith, author of '*FREEDOM: The
End Of The Human Condition*' on 15 October 2014**



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During a break in the filming of the interview, the following discussion took place.
To context the discussion, it begins with the introduction from the interview.
The full interview follows this discussion.

The Discussion

Brian Carlton:

My name is Brian Carlton. I'm an Australian journalist, commentator and broadcaster and I'm here with biologist Jeremy Griffith to discuss his forthcoming book, *IS IT TO BE Terminal Alienation or Transformation For The Human Race?* [now titled *FREEDOM: The End Of The Human Condition*].

Before receiving an advance copy of *FREEDOM* I was already aware of Jeremy's work. In fact, I interviewed Jeremy on my radio show about one of his earlier books, and I remember when I opened the interview to the listeners to call in there was so much interest the interview went for almost two hours and I'm really not exaggerating. I know that Jeremy caused a similar response when he spoke on Caroline Jones' famous radio show, *The Search for Meaning*; in that case the interview gained one of the biggest responses Caroline had ever received in the many, many hundreds of programs she made over the years. I think the response was second only to an interview she did with a nun in South America. I also know Jeremy's 2003 book *A Species In Denial* was a bestseller in Australasia. I know because I bought one and read it, several times.

So I am very much looking forward to this discussion.
Jeremy, tell me about this new book you have written.

Jeremy Griffith:

Firstly, this is the ‘Spoonman’ — for many, many years Brian was the compère of a popular radio program on Triple M in Sydney where he was affectionately known as the ‘Spoonman’, the professional stirrer, he was the Wolfman Jack of the airwaves in Australia. So that’s a bit of background on who Brian really is.

When adolescents are about 12 years old, they start seeing the imperfection of life around them and start wrestling with and thinking deeply about it and they soon realise that for some reason adults don’t want to talk about it so they’re left on their own. So at about 12 they actually start trying to understand the human condition. At 9 years old, kids are flailing out at the imperfections of the world and they’re frustrated but they soon change. Going from primary school to senior school at around 12 is actually a recognition that there is a real psychological change occurring at that age. From flailing out at the world in our late childhood they suddenly become sobered adolescents and that’s when they go to senior school. The brain of children shifts from realising that flailing out at the frustration of the imperfection of life gets you nowhere, ultimately you’re going to have to stop and try to understand why the world is imperfect. So, they start thinking deeply, they change from being an extrovert to a sobered introvert.

So around 12 when they go to senior school, this search for trying to understand the human condition, the imperfection of human life, begins, and it deepens. They keep thinking about it, they’ve learnt that the adult world doesn’t even want to talk about it and everyone is pretending everything is fine when they can see quite clearly it isn’t. By the time they get to about 14 or 15 something serious starts to happen, they start to discover the human condition within themselves, the imperfections within themselves, that there’s anger and meanness and selfishness and indifference to others and they’re still thinking completely honestly, they’re still facing the issue of the human condition. When it actually deepens they hit this crisis point, normally around 15 or so when they finally discover the human condition within—they’re trying to face that down and it’s suicidally depressing to try to confront that without an understanding of it. So they go into this crisis that I’ve called ‘Resignation’, when they resign to thereafter living in denial of the human condition. They become an escapist, live a superficial life, they never want to go near that dark corner again. It’s very rare to find any description of a kid going through this because the adult world, as I said, has already resigned, so they don’t want to listen.

But there are some marvellous descriptions of children going through Resignation and this is probably one of the best. It’s from American Pulitzer Prize-winning child psychiatrist Robert Coles and he describes this encounter he had with a child going through this crisis point of Resignation and I think everyone will be able to relate to this:

‘I tell of the loneliness many young people feel...It’s a loneliness that has to do with a self-imposed judgment of sorts...I remember...a young man of fifteen who engaged in light banter, only to shut down, shake his head, refuse to talk at all when his own life and troubles became the subject at hand. He had stopped going to school...he sat in his room for hours listening to rock music, the door

closed...I asked him about his head-shaking behavior: I wondered whom he was thereby addressing. He replied: “No one.” I hesitated, gulped a bit as I took a chance: “Not yourself?” He looked right at me now in a sustained stare, for the first time. “Why do you say that?” [he asked]...I decided not to answer the question in the manner that I was trained [basically, ‘trained’ in avoiding what the human condition really is]...Instead, with some unease...I heard myself saying this: “I’ve been there; I remember being there—remember when I felt I couldn’t say a word to anyone”...The young man kept staring at me, didn’t speak...When he took out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes, I realized they had begun to fill’ (*The Moral Intelligence of Children*, 1996, pp.143-144 of 218).

Now, obviously what had happened was the boy was in tears because Coles had reached him with *some* recognition and appreciation of what he was wrestling with; Coles had shown *some* honesty about what the boy could see and was struggling with, namely the horror and hypocrisy of human behaviour including his own behaviour.

So, that’s a marvellous little capturing of this moment; the child is in his bedroom, he’s lost in himself, he can’t relate to the world, the world’s not acknowledging what he’s wrestling with, he’s dying a million deaths inside himself.

There is a lot more about the process of Resignation that children go through in my book but the essence of it is that it reveals just how terrifying the issue of the human condition really is. These children are actually trying to face it down and can’t. It’s just leading to suicidal depression where they have to jump off this psychological cliff [referring to J.D. Salinger’s 1951 novel *The Catcher in the Rye* which is discussed in the full interview], resign themselves to living in denial of the human condition. So, the problem my book has is that when it brings people back into contact with the human condition they psychologically don’t want to go near it.

Brian Carlton:

That resonates with me. I was that young man. I locked myself in my room listening to music of alienation and at the same time reading everything I could get my hands on in the belief that if I just found out why nobody’s talking about this then I’ll be able to understand it. So, yeah, it absolutely resonates with me listening to music and reading, locked in my room for a couple of years as an early teenager. It was a very real thing.

Jeremy Griffith:

Well, I think a lot of people can remember that and that’s so precious, that’s the benefit of using the Resignation explanation because people can actually remember going through it and once they know they’ve been through it then they’ve got that anchor to know that it’s a terrifying subject.

Brian Carlton:

It’s a life-changing experience, it really is. It certainly was for me.

Jeremy Griffith:

Well, that’s what happens when you tell someone about Resignation, it helps because then people connect for the first time in a long time to that experience.

Brian Carlton:

Well, I wished I'd known then what I know now.

Now, what you've said is pretty terrifying but I remember as a kid listening to rock music and there's one particular song that got me. The band 'Midnight Oil', I think the song is called *Only the Strong* and the opening lines in the song are, 'When I'm locked in my room, I just want to scream'. And as a young kid going through this process, it talked to me, it said to me that there is at least one other human on Earth whose been through what I'm going through now and that spoke volumes to me, just a couple of lines of music was all it took to make me feel a little bit better about this than I did.

Jeremy Griffith:

Yes, someone who reaches you with some honesty.

Brian Carlton:

Absolutely.

Jeremy Griffith:

Exactly like Coles' situation and *The Catcher in the Rye*. That's how lonely it is going through this and, by inference, how dishonest the adult world is. It's all 'resigned' and no one's talking any truth. You find one little bit of truth and you just lock onto it and it saves your life.

Brian Carlton:

True, and indeed that's exactly what happened. I went from being terribly alienated to just a little less alienated which helped a lot.

Jeremy Griffith:

Well that's amazing.

Brian Carlton:

Just the number of times I reflect on the chat we had about your earlier book *Beyond the Human Condition*. It has stuck in my mind for a long time. I see things all the time and I use your explanations to help me see the denial. And I have conversations with people about the massive amount of denial going on and their eyes glaze over and they say, 'What are you talking about?' So, don't underestimate the extent to which your earlier works had an impact on me in terms of how I think about what I'm seeing, how I interpret behaviour. I worked up this ability to be able to work out what a person was like in the first five or six seconds of a conversation with them on the telephone and I could second-guess why they were saying what they were saying and hear the subtext in their words. It was hugely valuable as a broadcaster when you're taking lots and lots of calls from people who are fundamentally strangers to you and they start telling you their life story and you can plug into what they're talking about and how they're talking

about it. And a lot of that came from your books because you are able to walk down the street and observe the denial in people. You can observe the souls who are not real happy with themselves.

Jeremy Griffith:

You've finally got insight into what's happening.

Brian Carlton:

Yeah.

Jeremy Griffith:

You've got the tool to make sense of it at last.

Brian Carlton:

But it works, that's the other thing. When you read your book it sounds esoteric and kind of 'out there' but the trickle-down transfer to everyday life and everyday human relationships and experiences has been hugely valuable. I don't say that 'pissing in your pocket', I'm really not. It did make a huge difference.

Jeremy Griffith:

That's the benefit of hanging in there with this information even though it can be very confronting. But yes, those poems and songs do capture the truth about the state of the world and what the unresigned mind in adolescents can see.

Brian Carlton:

I wish I had your book as a 15-year-old. I really do. I was reading fairly thick, dense books at 14, 15, but I wish I had this one. It would have saved me two or three years of angst, and probably another six or seven years of trying to work out what I wanted to do with my life and how hard I did actually want to change everything. 'I'm not an issues-based crusader' as such but there's so much around that needs fixing and I had this ability or capacity to work out a way where we could do things better. It's my fight, it's my personal fight. I was not going to let it beat me and if I can't quite accept the way the world is then I'm not going to sit down and do nothing. I will use whatever I have at my disposal, which in my case was a microphone and a transmitter, to try and at least make people think about the process of change. But giving up was never an option, let's put it that way.

Jeremy Griffith:

Well Brian, we call people like you 'Ships at Sea', people that didn't properly resign, who didn't pull into a port when the storms came. That's a torturous choice to make because then you're forever tumbled around by the imperfection of life.

Brian Carlton:

But it's honest, Jeremy. I live my life honest with myself and I sleep soundly at night. I'm happy with my choices as difficult as they were and are. I'm personally happy with the choices I made back then. Not easy choices, very difficult.

Jeremy Griffith:

But it does make you a heretic and all the pain that goes with that. As you told me earlier, you tried to play in the corporate world, in the front lines trying to shake up the box.

Brian Carlton:

I've always had issues with people telling me how I should think and what I should say and what opinions I should have. They're very precious things to me and I want to own mine and I've tried as best I could to do that. So I really resent being told to tow any particular line by anybody and I have since I was a child. Ask my mum, she'll tell you, from about the age of eight it was, 'No, I'm going to do it my way because I think my way is better', and if you want an explanation as to why my way is better I'm happy to give that to you, not a problem! But it seemed to me the only way out of this was to be as honest with myself as I could be.

Jeremy Griffith:

That's the strange paradox of the human condition because we do resign but then we pay such a price, becoming such a fraud and so dishonest because we're not looking at things truthfully ever again. We're lost in a sea of bullshit, really, from there on. We knew we'd get to a point not too long after that where we were wishing we could get back to some honesty. So when you don't fully let go and you keep the windows a little ajar, this information speaks to that part of you that didn't let go. Harry Prosen is like that too. He didn't quite shut the windows properly and kept searching all his life for some truth. When it came along in the form of the *Human Condition Documentary Proposal* [a 2004 documentary proposal in which Jeremy outlined all the main biological explanations contained in this book], he read that and just loved it because what he was reading spoke to that part of himself that was unresigned and brought it back to life and it was just so reinforcing. It is like what happened to Coles and the boy in *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Brian Carlton:

Absolutely, and again I relate to that story so vigorously, he might as well have been talking about me. I was that kid and I did a lot of reading of a lot of disciplines. Firstly I had a crack at the various faiths to see if there was any answers there and for me there wasn't. Then science, which had some answers but was ultimately reductionist. I was getting into philosophers and some pretty strange stuff to try and work out whether anybody did have an answer to the human condition, whether there was any kind of coherent description of why I was feeling the way I was feeling and the only thing that even came vaguely close to that was your books.

Jeremy Griffith:

Beforehand, we were talking together and you were saying, ‘Jeremy, if you had a book for children when they’re going through Resignation it would save their life, they’re your natural audience, because once you get talking to adults who are resigned, they’re deaf to this.’

Brian Carlton:

Yeah, throughout my life as a professional communicator and broadcaster I’ve seen the veil of denial go up over people’s eyes when you raise the truth with them about something. They honestly don’t want to know. I thought the early teens, 13, 14, 15, is about the right age to be able to crack through some of that early denial and get to them before they build such a vigorous wall which they’re then locked behind and don’t want to open up; it’s easier just to hide there behind the wall. If you can get to them before they start cementing those bricks in, that will be your generational change I think. It will be kids that age that will respond to what you’re talking about because they’re going through it.

Jeremy Griffith:

It will be great when we can actually take a presentation of this to our resigning kids before they jump off Salinger’s cliff and before they cement those bricks in as you so accurately said. It will be very, very precious.

Brian Carlton:

That’s right.

Jeremy Griffith:

But we have to get a foothold in the real world, the adult world, before we can get some real support for this. So, that’s the conundrum that this book faces, you’ve articulated the whole dilemma and what we’re up against. You’ve also articulated the beauty of, finally, somewhere, some truth appearing in this world that speaks to that part of ourselves that everyone has blocked off. That’s the whole riddle, how do you get through those cemented-in bricks and start the world in the other direction? The point about that song by the heavy metal rock band ‘With Life in Mind’ [discussed in the full interview], like ‘Midnight Oil’s song, is that it speaks some truth about the state of the world.

Brian Carlton:

There are many descriptions of alienation in art, in music, in poetry. I often wonder whether those people who are exploring those areas will understand what you’re talking about more so than, perhaps, a rigid scientifically trained mind.

Jeremy Griffith:

Well the trick with really good art, poetry, music or literature is to allude to the human condition, to take people as close as they can go to the truth without actually confronting it. Because without the explanation of the human condition, the defence for it, it’s just too much.

Brian Carlton:

It's almost a reflection, isn't it; they're reflecting the human condition but not doing anything to explain why it is.

Jeremy Griffith:

Yes, that's right because until you can explain it you really can't take people in too close to the 'fire'. You can only dance in close to it and any good literature does. For example, I wouldn't be surprised if Robert Coles didn't get the Pulitzer Prize for that one paragraph [included above]. It's *that* honest and it's *that* precious. He's a child psychiatrist and he's written a book that lets the truth out and that's just so precious. Why was one of Francis Bacon's triptychs, which sold for \$US142.4 million in 2013 '**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] **sold for \$119.9 million**' (*TIME*, 25 Nov. 2013)? Because they're speaking the truth: *this is us, this is how alienated and dead we really are*. So great art, literature, poetry or music is great because it gets close to the truth. But again, you can't go *right* there until we found the defence for ourselves.

Brian Carlton:

It's scary when that little inside voice comes up and says, 'I remember this, I remember what it was like', and you say, 'Go away, go away again, just please be quiet'.

Jeremy Griffith:

Yes, I'm digging up this moment of Resignation because everyone, like you, can remember it. So that reconnects people to the fearful issue of the human condition and then I've got a foothold to explain and unpack the whole riddle.

Brian Carlton:

You can see why the radio interview went for two hours can't you!

Jeremy Griffith:

I keep trying to make what we're talking about link up with where we were and I'm thinking, shit, this is so good! I want to throw my notes for the talk out the back window! [To the film crew:] Brian is a legend. He's someone really precious to me because it's been pretty lonely doing this job.

Brian Carlton:

I often think about you like that. I think, how can you keep doing this? You just keep pushing on and pushing on and pushing on. You've clearly gathered together some like-minded individuals who understand your ideas and are trying to help you grow the thing. It must be a lonely, lonely, lonely place to be a lot of the time.

Jeremy Griffith:

We've got some wonderful people supporting this because people *can* get through this denial. Once you know this explanation of the human condition, you're defended, so then you're safe. You can safely run around in the realm of the human condition. The problem

is to get people through the ‘deaf effect’ stage so they can start to hear it. [In chapter 1 of *FREEDOM*, readers are warned that the issue of the human condition has been such a difficult subject for humans to confront that reading about it can initially cause a ‘deaf effect’, where it is hard to take in and absorb what is being said. However, with patience and by watching videos of Jeremy talking about the subject of the human condition and re-reading the book, this ‘deaf effect’ wears off, allowing the compassionate and immensely relieving insights to become accessible.] The people who’ve become really interested are those who have got through the ‘deaf effect’, and the truth of the explanations just grew and grew on them. As you said, it just becomes more addictive because you’ve got the tools to unravel everything. You’re seeing through the human condition and that’s really exciting, and that only continues to grow. It’s a slow beginning with this information because there are so many bricks in the wall—we’ve got to be very determined and patient—but it has a fast finish because once people understand this information they won’t want to retreat back into denial. You can’t throw this knowledge away. When you know you’ve got the keys to unlock the whole mystery of what it is to be human, it just grows and grows.

Brian Carlton:

You will inevitably run up against vested interest. People who like the idea that the planet is the way it is because they profit from it in whatever way, be it financially or some other way. People who will want to maintain the status quo, who’ll like to keep things just the way they are because it works for them. You’ll be a threat to established religions, you’ll be a threat to conventional thinking on pretty much everything. All the scientific disciplines, psychology for example, psychiatry. You’re not going to need anywhere near as many of those disciplines if people had this information, you’re just not going to need it. That paradigm shift will be actively resisted and I’m pretty sure you’ve felt that over the past couple of decades.

Jeremy Griffith:

Well we fought and won the biggest in Australia’s history and that was against people with a vested interest in living in Plato’s cave of denial, they didn’t want the truth about humans to come out. In fact, my persecutors actually said, ‘**You are dealing with the personal unspeakable, shaking the black box inside of people and you can’t succeed**’ (personal conversations with Jeremy Griffith, Feb. 1995).

Brian Carlton:

It was curious that the ABC [Australian Broadcasting Corporation] decided to put up a man of the cloth to analyse your work. I thought that was strange.

Jeremy Griffith:

The same thing happened with Darwin. Bishop Wilberforce stood up at the great debate at Oxford and said, ‘Was it your grandfather or grandmother that was related to an ape?’ That’s when Thomas Huxley stood up and said ‘I’d rather be related to an ape than a great man who misused his intellect to deny truth’ and won the debate.

[The following is a more in-depth description of that great debate: If it wasn’t for Thomas Huxley’s staunch defence of Darwin in the great debate that took place at

Oxford in 1860 Bishop Wilberforce's bitter denigration of natural selection may well have prevented any serious consideration of Darwin's idea, as this description of the debate reveals: **'Bishop [Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford] spoke for full half-an-hour with inimitable spirit, emptiness and unfairness...He ridiculed Darwin badly, and Huxley savagely, but all in such dulcet tones, so persuasive a manner, and in such well-turned periods, that I [an observer in the audience] who had been inclined to blame the President for allowing a discussion that could serve no scientific purpose, now forgave him from the bottom of my heart...[Bishop Wilberforce asserted that] Darwin's views were contrary to the revelations of God in the Scriptures'** (*Charles Darwin*, ed. Francis Darwin, 1902, p.236). **'Darwin's fiery young champion [was] the biologist Thomas Huxley...As a final crushing blow [Bishop Wilberforce] turned to Huxley. "Is the gentleman," he asked, "related by his grandfather's or grandmother's side to an ape?" Springing to his feet, young Huxley retorted: "I would far rather be descended from a monkey on both my parents' sides than from a man who uses his brilliant talents for arousing religious prejudice". A roar of rage went up from the clergy, yells of delight from the Oxford students. The day was Huxley's—and Darwin's. All this time Darwin was living a recluse life at his country home in Kent...[where] work poured from his study...[leaving his] critics shuddering in dread of another "ungodly attack" upon the divinity of man...In vain was Darwin's life scrutinized for the moral weakness that his enemies were sure must underlie his free thinking. All they could discover was a gentle old fellow who passed his days amid flowers and with children—his two greatest delights. Never by any word of his was God denied, nor the soul of man'** (*Great Lives, Great Deeds*, Reader's Digest, 1966, p.335, 336). The resistance from the establishment was such that Darwin eventually concluded: **'I have got fairly sick of hostile reviews...I can pretty plainly see that, if my view is ever to be generally adopted, it will be by young men growing up and replacing the old workers'** (*Charles Darwin*, ed. Francis Darwin, 1902, p.244). You can read more about the persecution Jeremy and his work has endured for daring to address the human condition at <www.humancondition.com/persecution>.]

It has traditionally been the people of the church who are fundamentalist in their thinking that haven't wanted to try to understand things. But the biggest vested interest of all is in denial. Once you have resigned to blocking out the issue of the human condition and built that wall of denial you don't want it broken down.

Brian Carlton:

So they'll try and shut you up.

Jeremy Griffith:

They do, they've tried all sorts of things so I and those supporting these confronting explanations of the human condition have to be self-sufficient in everything we do. It's the only way we can have a chance of getting these ideas out there.

Brian Carlton:

An uphill battle but a thoroughly worthy one.

Jeremy Griffith:

That's right, but psychologically we know what we're trying to do which helps. We're trying to turn this corner, the biggest paradigm shift of all, from living in denial to not living in denial. That's what Plato described when you take people out of the cave.

He wrote that **'it would hurt his [the cave's prisoner's] eyes and he would turn back and take refuge in the things which he could see [take refuge in all the human-condition-avoiding dishonest explanations for human behaviour 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] and not let go till he had been dragged out into the sunlight [shown the truthful explanation of our 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.'** Significantly, Plato then added, **'Certainly not at first...Because he would need to grow accustomed to the light before he could see things in the world outside the cave'** (c.360 BC; *The Republic*, tr. H.D.P. Lee, 1955, 515-516). So Plato gave fair warning. You try to drag people out of the cave and you're going to get a flogging. It's just part of the journey. What drives me is my love of this other honest world that's so much better and so much truer. Like you, you're holding on to what you know to be true against a tsunami of bullshit, but as you said earlier, 'What I love is that I'm being honest and I treasure that above all else'.

Brian Carlton:

Absolutely.

Jeremy Griffith:

So that's what drives me too. I just live for this other world where we don't have to be dishonest. That's what got me to these understandings.

Brian Carlton:

As a commentator on all things I have to have a clarity of comprehension, a clarity of analysis and the only way I can achieve that clarity is to be ruthlessly honest even if the conclusion I'm reaching I find personally disturbing or scary or horrifying. Honesty, self honesty, is the important thing. I can't do my job unless I'm honest.

Jeremy Griffith:

Well, the whole of this book is based on that premise, that once you're living in denial you can't find the truth. You can't find the truth with lies, it's just fundamentally impossible. The only way I've got to these answers is by being honest and when you're not living in denial of the human condition you can access all these truths that we've been looking for and they're so obvious.

Brian Carlton:

Yes they are, that's exactly right. It's very simple, it's not hard. The end process, the revelation, if you like, is easy and reassuring and calming and self-accepting. Getting there is the difficult bit. Once you have the revelation, the clarity of it is euphoric almost.

Jeremy Griffith:

All these answers that I've found didn't require a smart brain, it's just that I'm not living in denial. Thinking simply and truthfully is how I found these answers and they're sitting there for anybody and everybody. They're self-evident if you're not wanting

to avoid them. This synthesis is produced from exactly what you just said. They are revelations in the sense that they're there waiting to be revealed. All you've got to do is strip off the denial and they'll flop out. That's all I've ever done.

Brian Carlton:

But that process, the process of stripping off the denial, that's the difficult part. Once you've done that it's relatively simple from there on in I've found. The answers become glaringly obvious to the next thing you have a look at. I hate to use the word 'epiphany' because it has a religious connotation that I really don't want to give it. It's not emotional, well it sort of is emotional, but it's an *intellectual* epiphany. It's an epiphany of mind; my understanding of this is now better than it was, I'm now more complete, I have a more complete understanding of myself, everybody around me, the society at large, the way the planet works. It's a revelation! But again, I hesitate to use that in a religious sense, it's a quantifiably different thing but it has a similar impact on you. You wake up the next morning feeling more invigorated, more able to deal with the world because your level of understanding of it is so much higher.

Jeremy Griffith:

Yes, all I've ever done is taught myself to think like a child, or to think like a stone, as I call it. If I'm not getting to the answer, I'm just not thinking simply enough and letting the child, the simple obvious truth, come out. I just got better and better at that and when you do get to that clean state and just let it come out, it's so obvious it's just stunning. You think well, that's amazing! It is like an epiphany, it's very exciting. I just take one step and I keep learning. That's how I got to all these insights. But when you put the full synthesis together using that device of just thinking truthfully, then you take it back to the cave dwellers, as Plato said, '**they would say that his [the person who tries to deliver understanding of our human condition] visit to the upper world had ruined his sight [they would treat him as if he was mad], and 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**' (*The Republic*, 517). In my case they didn't actually try and kill me, we live in more civilised times than that, but they did everything they could to smash me off the face of the Earth.

So, everything you're saying is making complete sense of everything I've been through and what you in your own life have been through.

Brian Carlton:

Well, you have your truth and you've stuck to your truth and you've fought for your truth and they're all admiral qualities in a person. You can't criticise somebody for arguing their case, especially when the kind of work you're doing is so conceptually new to people. It's always going to be, if I can use the vernacular, 'pushing it uphill'. But good on you for keeping at it because someone has to.

Jeremy Griffith:

You're right. They're actually totally sincere in what they're saying in their denial. They don't know they are in denial.

Brian Carlton:

No, that's right.

Jeremy Griffith:

So, I'm compassionate, I know why they're doing what they're doing but I've got to somehow find a way through that wall of denial and get people to re-access the truth. It is a hard, slow process but I'm no longer criticising them, I'm actually bringing them the understanding. They actually want the reconciling understanding of the human condition but they're never going to find it, they're failure-trapped because they're living in denial. You can't find the truth from inside the cave.

Brian Carlton:

No, that's right.

Jeremy Griffith:

I'm saying, 'Look, I was out here, I found this truth, here it is, it liberates you and all the things you want!' But humans are so committed to denial, they're not receptive to it. As the saying goes, you can knock on a deaf man's door forever. It's a slow process, we've just got to be patient.

Brian Carlton:

One of my favourite expressions for lots of things is 'It's a process, not an event'. I can't think of anything that that saying might apply to more than to your work. It is a process and a long way from being any kind of event, *but* for the individual, when you *get* it, it *is* an event.

Jeremy Griffith:

Yes.

Brian Carlton:

You remember the day, you remember the section of the book, you remember when it happened, it stays with you, it's fresh.

Jeremy Griffith:

As to how long it will take, Teilhard de Chardin once said, '**The Truth has to only appear once...for it to be impossible for anything ever to prevent it from spreading universally and setting everything ablaze**' (*Let Me Explain*, 1966; tr. René Hague et al, 1970, p.159 of 189). And it's true, it just needs a critical mass of influential people to come together and say, 'This book is really seriously important, it really has got through to the other side'. Then all of those who are living in denial and just treating it dismissively, are forced to think again and that's where you get this change of momentum. So, that's why we're making such a huge effort with this book, to get that change of momentum, to get that base group of people who have managed to get through the wall of denial and discover just how honest this book is. Harry Prosen is the first, I mean he's amazingly on the front foot and just saying it like it is. Then we need a few more dominos to fall like that, then suddenly the tide is turning, there is a

base of support. Suddenly it will flow because the world is so hungry for some truth, some answers. Once there is enough of a base of support then the tide changes rapidly because it *is* like a sea of dishonesty out there and this book is an island of sanity. And everyone is looking for just that island, like you were when you were 15. You were scrounging all the libraries, all the great toms looking for some answers.

Brian Carlton:

I got to the point where I was reading Encyclopaedia Britannica, *reading* it, as a book, from the beginning, thinking the answers might be there!

Jeremy Griffith:

It's got to be in here somewhere!

Brian Carlton:

It's not a joke by the way, it's quite literal.

Jeremy Griffith:

I believe you.

The Interview

Brian Carlton:

My name is Brian Carlton. I'm an Australian journalist, commentator and broadcaster and I'm here with biologist Jeremy Griffith to discuss his forthcoming book, *IS IT TO BE Terminal Alienation or Transformation For The Human Race?* [now titled *FREEDOM: The End Of The Human Condition*].

Before receiving an advance copy of *FREEDOM* I was already aware of Jeremy's work. In fact, I interviewed Jeremy on my radio show about one of his earlier books, and I remember when I opened the interview to the listeners to call in there was so much interest the interview went for almost two hours and I'm really not exaggerating. I know that Jeremy caused a similar response when he spoke on Caroline Jones' famous radio show, *The Search for Meaning*; in that case the interview gained one of the biggest responses Caroline had ever received in the many, many hundreds of programs she made over the years. I think the response was second only to an interview she did with a nun in South America. I also know Jeremy's 2003 book *A Species In Denial* was a bestseller in Australasia. I know because I bought one and read it, several times.

So I am very much looking forward to this discussion.

Jeremy, tell me about this new book you have written.

Jeremy Griffith:

Firstly, this is the 'Spoonman' — for many, many years Brian was the compare of a popular radio program on TripleM in Sydney where he was affectionately known as the 'Spoonman', the professional stirrer, he was the Wolfman Jack of the airwaves in Australia. So that's a bit of background on who Brian really is.

Yes, I have written other books, but this is my magnum opus, my major work—and while my earlier books were only launched in the Australian and New Zealand markets, this time I'm taking my understandings of the human condition to the world. *FREEDOM* is due to be launched internationally in 2015, with an unprecedented promotional campaign, including a world tour.

So, the plan is in the next half hour or so, the Spoonman and I are going to tell you how this little backwater of Australia is going to fix the world up with the understandings that are in this book!!!

Brian Carlton:

Yes, I've got to say I don't think I've ever seen promotion material like this book has. The cover features Professor Harry Prosen, former President of the Canadian Psychiatric Association, who says that this is 'The Book That Saves The World'.

And on the back cover Professor Prosen makes this observation, and I'm quoting here [since the change of the book's title this wording has changed slightly]:

'Is it to be, or not to be? That is the question: are we going to make it — is the human race going to find the redeeming and transforming understanding of our 'good and evil'-afflicted human condition — or is our species headed for terminal psychosis and alienation? Humankind is in the balance: will it be self-destruction or self-discovery?'

Well, astonishing as it is, this book presents the 11th hour breakthrough biological explanation of the human condition needed for the psychological rehabilitation and maturation of the human race! It takes humanity from a state of bewilderment about the nature of human behavior and existence to a state of profound understanding of our lives. It is a case of having got all the truth up in one go — understanding has finally emerged to drain away all the pain, suffering, confusion and conflict from the world. This is it — THE BOOK THAT SAVES THE WORLD!'

The words of Professor Harry Prosen.

Jeremy Griffith:

Yes, that is a wonderful statement. The phrase 'To be, or not to be, that is the question' is obviously from Shakespeare, where Hamlet wonders whether it's better to endure the human condition or suicide. It's probably the most famous phrase in the English language, and it's pretty appropriate for the uncertain, to-die-or-not-to-die times we are living in now. Humanity IS in the balance, either we find the psychologically relieving understanding of ourselves, or the human race ends in terminal alienation—and that is the immense importance of my book because it supplies that all-important reconciling and healing understanding of our conflicted condition.

And this understanding HAS only arrived in the nick of time—because it is end game for the human race wherever we like to look!

The left and right wings in politics are now so polarised democracy no longer works. Cynicism and greed is so rampant that there is a debt crisis rotting Europe—and corruption is out of control in the developing world. And there's all the anger and social disintegration in the Muslim world.

As for the environment, this week's *TIME* magazine reports that there has been 'a 52% decline in wildlife populations worldwide from 1970 to 2010' ('Briefing', 13 Oct. 2014).

There is genocide, terrorism, mass displacement of peoples, starvation, runaway diseases, environmental devastation, gross inequality, racial and gender oppression, drug abuse, obesity, family breakdown and above all there is epidemic levels of anxiety, depression, unhappiness and loneliness.

And an exploding world population is only exacerbating all of these problems. Improved forms of management such as better laws, better politics and better economics — and even better self-management, such as new ways of disciplining, suppressing, organising, motivating or even transcending our troubled natures — have all failed to end the march towards ever greater levels of devastation and unhappiness in humans. In short, the situation is now *so* dire, *so* desperate that the Earth just cannot absorb any further devastation from the effects of our behaviour, nor the human body, for that matter, cope with any more debilitating stress, or our mind endure any more psychological distress.

As one recipient of my book said, **‘Yes, I think you would get a 95% sign up to the proposition that the human race can’t continue as it is.’**

And another, **‘There is no doubt *Homo sapiens* is teetering on the biological brink, in dire need of psychological rehabilitation and maturation.’** He’s obviously referring to Harry’s comment on the back of the book.

And last week Harry received an initial response to my book from an American psychotherapist who referred to **‘a growing number of clients I see who report a sense of despair and apprehension, not just about their own lives, but about our future as a species.’** Interestingly, Harry responded, **‘I absolutely agree with your comments about anxiety over the state of the world now vibrating through everyone, including myself! The world is craving some real honesty and bravery and thank goodness *IS IT TO BE* [now called *FREEDOM*] delivers it.’** Which is nice of him to make that comment.

Yes, this psychologically reconciling and healing understanding of the human condition in my book IS the **‘11th hour breakthrough’** that the human race needs.

Brian Carlton:

I agree, given the state of the world a book, your book, that brings understanding to human behaviour could not possibly be more timely or more important.

So, Jeremy describe the understanding of the human condition in your book that brings about the psychological transformation of the human race and that does ultimately save the world.

Jeremy Griffith:

Brian, I think I have to begin by trying to explain what the human condition is, which is also how my book begins, trying to connect the reader with what the human condition actually is.

The reason I say ‘try to’ connect the reader is because the human condition is actually such a terrifying issue for humans that many people now seriously believe it doesn’t even exist!

So, the first thing I need to explain is what exactly is the human condition, and why are we so terrified of it?

With regard to what the human condition is, the truth is that behind every wondrous scientific achievement, sensitive artistic expression and compassionate act lies the shadow

of humanity's darker side—an unspeakable history of greed, hatred, rape, torture, murder and war; a propensity for deeds of shocking violence, depravity, indifference and cruelty. The reality is, we humans have been the most ferocious and destructive creatures to have ever lived on Earth! That's a pretty stiff indictment but it's nevertheless true.

And it is precisely this duality of what has historically been referred to as 'good' and 'evil' in the human make-up that has troubled the human mind since we first became fully conscious, thinking beings: are we humans essentially 'good' and, if so, what is the cause of our destructive, insensitive and cruel so-called 'evil' side? *Why* do we thinking, reasoning, rational, immensely clever humans behave so seemingly *irrationally* and non-sensibly, in fact, so abominably and cause so much suffering and devastation? What is the origin of the dark, volcanic forces that undoubtedly exist within us humans? What is it that makes us such a combative, ruthless, hateful, retaliatory, violent, in-truth-psychologically-disturbed creature?

In everyday terms, why when the ideals are so obviously to be cooperative, selfless and loving are we so *competitive, aggressive and selfish*? Indeed, we're, *so* ruthlessly competitive, selfish and brutal that human life has become all but unbearable and we have nearly destroyed our own planet? And the question is, does our inconsistency with the ideals mean we are essentially bad? Are we some flawed species, an evolutionary mistake, a blight on Earth, a cancer in the universe—or could we possibly be divine beings?

So that's the dilemma of the human condition. Now, to reveal how absolutely terrified we are of what it really is—and I say '*really* is' because a lot of people refer to the human condition without engaging with what it really is—I want to describe what happens to teenagers when they first try to confront the issue of the human condition.

I should add that my book also begins with this description of what happens to teenagers when they try to face down the human condition.

And there is a very good reason why my book begins this way, and why I want to talk about it early in this talk with you. It's because almost every aspect of our behaviour is driven by our fear of the human condition, so to understand human behaviour, which is the objective of my book, we need to be made aware of this deep fear we have of it, and talking about teenagers trying to confront the human condition is the best way I know of to reveal that terror.

Of course, the problem this creates for the reader of my book is that this description of our fear of the human condition is very difficult material for the reader to have to face straight up at the very beginning of the book, and in fact many will find it *extremely* difficult to face. Actually, many will find their mind can't take in or hear what is being said because it's so confronting, and they won't be aware of this, but when that happens, they'll think the book doesn't make sense, or is badly written or something.

Brian Carlton:

Yes, I noticed you start the book with a description of the 'Resignation' process that adolescents go through and I went through it myself. I was thinking it might strike the reader as all a bit weird, a bit difficult, if they've never even heard of Resignation—and it is also fairly daunting stuff with all those descriptions by the psychiatrist R.D. Laing of our alienation and Francis Bacon's painting of our tortured state, and so forth. It's fairly confronting stuff Jeremy.

Jeremy Griffith:

Yeah, it's both a very unusual introduction to a book about human behaviour and it is very off-putting, indeed psychologically deafening or unhearable for the reader, but *again* to explain human behaviour I have to connect the reader with what the human condition *really* is—otherwise there's no point in writing the book.

We've sent advance copies of *IS IT TO BE* to numerous scientists and science commentators and because of this—what I call the 'deaf effect' response people have when they first start reading my book about the human condition—I expect many of them will initially find the book impenetrable, but I also hope that some will persevere and discover how incredibly clarifying the book is of human existence, and that they will then tell others and the tide will turn against any initial dismissiveness of my book.

It's like trying to give someone who suffers from a phobia about snakes a book that cures snake phobia, when they're not aware that they suffer from the phobia. But because they're unaware they've got this phobia, when I ask 'Well why don't you ever go outdoors?', they say, for example, 'Well I like living indoors because I like carpets and square walls and I like going through doorways, in fact, going through doorways is what made humans stand upright in the first place!' and rubbish excuses like that! They've got all these theories based on denial of their phobia which is what the human race has and what I've got to dismantle. So I obviously have to make them aware of their snake phobia or in our case their fear of the human condition. Anyway, I give them this book that introduces them to their snake phobia in order to explain how to get rid of it.

Well, most will open it and then slam it shut, saying 'I'm not going to look at that book!' That's just what's going to happen!

So to counter that inevitable reaction a few have to hang in there, they have to hold the book open until they get over the shock and discover how amazingly explanatory and relieving it is of their snake phobia—or in this book's case, of their human condition—at which point they can tell others that they should also persevere through the deaf effect stage.

Brian Carlton:

Okay, so Jeremy we don't want to face the truth about ourselves but we actually need to if we are to truly understand ourselves.

Jeremy Griffith:

That's right. My book explains why we humans are inherently good; that we aren't evil villains but in fact the heroes of the whole story of life on Earth, so this book of mine has got a wonderful conclusion but to present that exonerating and liberating explanation here I first have to connect people to what the human condition is, and the best way I know of to do that is to describe what happens to us when we are teenagers and try to confront the human condition.

This problem of the resistance that the human mind has to reading about what the human condition really is, is SO important—because the reader HAS TO BE aware that there is going to be a problem when they first start reading my book in order for them to be prepared for that reaction. So I do need to talk about this resistance a little bit more.

I used the snake phobia example, but there's actually a much, much better example,

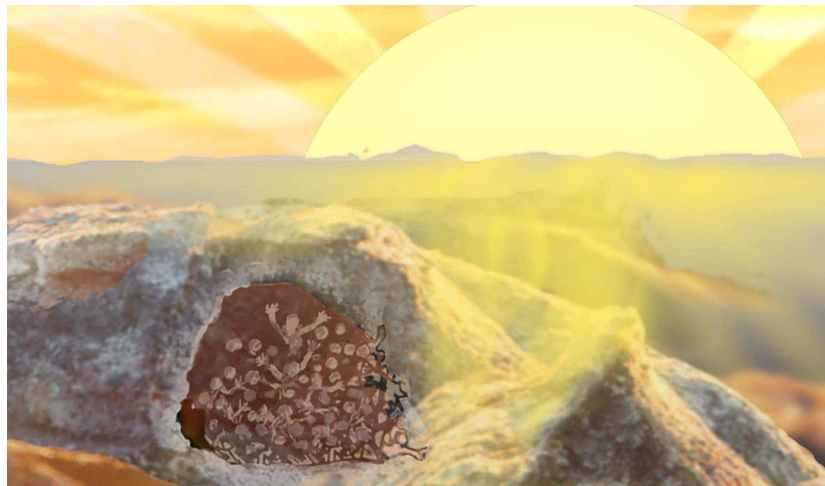
which was provided by the Greek philosopher Plato way back some 360 years before Christ. He was an amazing philosopher.

Alfred North Whitehead—one of the most highly regarded philosophers of the twentieth century—described the history of philosophy (philosophy being the study of **‘the truths underlying all reality’** (*Macquarie Dictionary*, 3rd edn, 1998)) 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). So Plato is the best there is when it comes to philosophy, the study of the truths underlying all reality.

Okay, so what lay at the core of all Plato’s writing? What was his central insight? Because presumably that is going to be the most significant insight yet presented about human reality.

Well, Plato’s greatest work is *The Republic*, and the central concept in *The Republic* is his analogy for our human condition—he actually used the term ‘human condition’, the earliest I’ve ever seen it used—of humans having to live deep **‘underground’** in a **‘cave’**, hiding from the **‘painful’** issue of **‘the imperfections of human life’**.

So what Plato has to say will be very revealing. This is what he wrote: **‘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’** (c.360 BC; *The Republic*, tr. H.D.P. Lee, 1955, 514). Plato described how the cave’s exit is blocked by a **‘fire’** that **‘corresponds to the power of the sun’** (p.282), which the cave prisoners have to hide from because its searing, **‘painful’** light would make **‘visible’** the unbearably depressing issue of **‘the imperfections of human life’** (516-517), the issue of the human condition.



Computer graphic by J. Griffith, M. Rowell & G. Saller © 2009 Fedmex Pty Ltd

Most significantly, in terms of what I’ve been talking about of the ‘deaf effect’ resistance to reading about the human condition. Plato then went on to describe what happens when someone **‘escapes from the cave into the light of day’** and **‘sees for the first time the real world and returns to the cave’** to help the cave prisoners **‘Escape into the sun-filled setting outside the cave [which] symbolizes the transition to the real world...which’**, he said, **‘is the proper object of knowledge’** (*Encarta Encyclopaedia*, written by Prof. Robert M. Baird, accessed Jul. 2008; see <www.wtmsources.com/101>), which it is, to finally understand ourselves. Plato wrote that **‘it would hurt the cave prisoner’s eyes and he would turn back and take refuge in the things which he could see, 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] and not let go till he had been dragged out into the sunlight [namely shown the truthful explanation of our 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. Certainly not at first...Because he would need to grow accustomed to the light before he could see things in the world outside the cave' (*The Republic*, 515-516). So Plato said he wouldn't be able to see a single one of the things he was now told were real—the deaf effect is going to be *very* great.

Here Plato has given us a much better description of our denial of the human condition and of our resistance to having it exposed than my snake phobia analogy. But the point is, our species' suffers from an unspoken psychosis and there will be massive resistance to having it exposed. As Harry Prosen says, denials typically fight back with a vengeance when they are faced with exposure.

Brian Carlton:

Yes, I remember when I first read one of your books I went through a stage where I couldn't quite get my head around it, I got about half of it and it was a little confusing and a little dense but I went back, I didn't give up. I kept reading it and in time your explanations did start to become clear and it made a hell of a lot of sense to me.

Jeremy Griffith:

That's exactly what people need to do. The way to overcome the deaf effect is to not give up, in fact what will make all the difference is to patiently re-read the presentation and you'll be astonished to discover that the fog does begin to lift, that it all does begin to make sense, whereas initially what was presented didn't seem significant and you thought the explanation must be rubbish or badly written or something.

And I've learnt that the other effective way to overcome the human mind's initial resistance to discussion of the human condition is to hear me talking about it, which is why we're making this video. It helps a lot to see someone walking around freely in the realm of the human condition and talking openly with others about it like we are. It's very reassuring and helps to subside the subconscious fear of the subject that we humans have.

Again, as Plato warned the cave prisoner, he said he has to **'grow accustomed to the light' 'before he can see things in the world outside the cave'**.

So that's why I have to begin the book with some way of connecting the reader to the issue of what the human condition really is, and that best way is to describe this terrifying, in fact suicidally depressing, encounter adolescents have with the issue of the human condition both in the world around them and within themselves—because from there we can make sense of all human behaviour.

When adolescents are about 12 years old, they start seeing the imperfection of life around them and start wrestling with and thinking deeply about it and they soon realise that for some reason adults don't want to talk about it so they're left on their own. So at about 12 they actually start trying to understand the human condition. At 9 years old, kids are flailing out at the imperfections of the world and they're frustrated but they soon change. Going from primary school to senior school at around 12 is actually a recognition that there is a real psychological change occurring at that age. From flailing out at the

world in our late childhood they suddenly become sobered adolescents and that's when they go to senior school. The brain of children shifts from realising that flailing out at the frustration of the imperfection of life gets you nowhere, ultimately you're going to have to stop and try to understand why the world is imperfect. So, they start thinking deeply, they change from being an extrovert to a sobered introvert.

So around 12 when they go to senior school, this search for trying to understand the human condition, the imperfection of human life, begins, and it deepens. They keep thinking about it, they've learnt that the adult world doesn't even want to talk about it and everyone is pretending everything is fine when they can see quite clearly it isn't. By the time they get to about 14 or 15 something serious starts to happen, they start to discover the human condition within themselves, the imperfections within themselves, that there's anger and meanness and selfishness and indifference to others and they're still thinking completely honestly, they're still facing the issue of the human condition. When it actually deepens they hit this crisis point, normally around 15 or so when they finally discover the human condition within—they're trying to face that down and it's suicidally depressing to try to confront that without an understanding of it. So they go into this crisis that I've called 'Resignation', when they resign to thereafter living in denial of the human condition. They become an escapist, live a superficial life, they never want to go near that dark corner again. It's very rare to find any description of a kid going through this because the adult world, as I said, has already resigned, so they don't want to listen.

But there are some marvellous descriptions of children going through Resignation and this is probably one of the best. It's from American Pulitzer Prize-winning child psychiatrist Robert Coles and he describes this encounter he had with a child going through this crisis point of Resignation and I think everyone will be able to relate to this:

'I tell of the loneliness many young people feel...It's a loneliness that has to do with a self-imposed judgment of sorts...I remember...a young man of fifteen who engaged in light banter, only to shut down, shake his head, refuse to talk at all when his own life and troubles became the subject at hand. He had stopped going to school...he sat in his room for hours listening to rock music, the door closed...I asked him about his head-shaking behavior: I wondered whom he was thereby addressing. He replied: "No one." I hesitated, gulped a bit as I took a chance: "Not yourself?" He looked right at me now in a sustained stare, for the first time. "Why do you say that?" [he asked]...I decided not to answer the question in the manner that I was trained [basically, 'trained' in avoiding what the human condition really is]...Instead, with some unease...I heard myself saying this: "I've been there; I remember being there—remember when I felt I couldn't say a word to anyone"...The young man kept staring at me, didn't speak...When he took out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes, I realized they had begun to fill' (*The Moral Intelligence of Children*, 1996, pp.143-144 of 218).

Now, obviously what had happened was the boy was in tears because Coles had reached him with *some* recognition and appreciation of what he was wrestling with; Coles had shown *some* honesty about what the boy could see and was struggling with, namely the horror and hypocrisy of human behaviour including his own behaviour.

So, that's a marvellous little capturing of this moment; the child is in his bedroom, he's lost in himself, he can't relate to the world, the world's not acknowledging what he's wrestling with, he's dying a million deaths inside himself.

There are a lot of other descriptions of going through this tight corner of Resignation in my book.

In fact, that sublime classic of American literature, J.D. Salinger's 1951 novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, is a masterpiece because, like Coles, Salinger dared to write about that forbidden subject for adults of adolescents having to resign to a dishonest life of denial of the human condition—for *The Catcher in the Rye* is entirely about a 16-year-old boy struggling against Resignation. The boy, Holden Caulfield, complains of feeling **'surrounded by phonies'** (p.12 of 192) and **'morons'** who **'never want to discuss anything'** (p.39), of living on the **'opposite sides of the pole'** (p.13) to most people, where he **'just didn't like anything that was happening'** (p.152), to wanting to escape to **'somewhere with a brook...[where] I could chop all our own wood in the winter time and all'** (p.119). He knows he is supposed to resign—in the novel he talks about being told that **'Life...[is] a game...you should play it according to the rules'** (p.7), and to feeling **'so damn lonesome'** (pp.42, 134) and **'depressed'** (multiple references) that he felt like **'committing suicide'** (p.94). As a result of all this despair and disenchantment with the world he keeps **'failing'** (p.9) his subjects at school and is expelled from four for **'making absolutely no effort at all'** (p.167). About his behaviour he says, **'I swear to God I'm a madman'** (p.121) and **'I know. I'm very hard to talk to'** (p.168).

And then one day he meets an adult who dares to rat on the world of denial and reveal some truth about what all adults are doing and that made a huge difference to his life, as it did for the child with Robert Coles. It brought tears to the child's eyes because the adult had finally admitted some truth. In Holden's words it **'really saved my life'** (p.172). This is what the adult said: **'This fall I think you're riding for—it's a special kind of fall, a horrible kind... [where you] just keep falling and falling [utter depression]'** (p.169). The adult then spoke of men who **'at some time or other in their lives, were looking for something their own environment couldn't supply them with...So they gave up looking [they resigned]...[adding] you'll find that you're not the first person who was ever confused and frightened and even sickened by human behavior'** (pp.169-170). Yes, to be **'confused and frightened'** to the point of being **'sickened by human behavior'**—indeed, to be **'suicid[ally]'** **'depressed'** by it—is the effect the human condition has if you haven't resigned yourself to living a relieving but utterly dishonest and superficial life in denial of it.

And interestingly, at the end of *The Catcher in the Rye*, which is where the title of the book is derived, Salinger describes how Holden Caulfield says, **'I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody's around—nobody big, I mean—except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff'** (p.156). So he's **'the catcher in the rye'** and that is, in fact, what *FREEDOM* does, it provides the understanding that children are trying to find—*'Why isn't the world ideal and why is everyone being so dishonest and not even admitting that's a fact!'*

Adolescents die a million deaths and Holden Caulfield just wants the pain that adolescents go through to stop forever and no more children to have to ever go through it. That requires the explanation of the human condition because if you can explain to children what they are going through that will stop them from having to die a million deaths, become depressed, and the riddle of the human condition *can* finally be explained to them now. So this book, *FREEDOM*, is **'the catcher in the rye'** that Holden Caulfield dreamed of.

I should say that unable to acknowledge the process of Resignation, adults typically

blamed the well known struggles adolescents go through on the hormonal changes that accompanies puberty, the so-called ‘puberty blues’—even terming glandular fever, an illness that often occurs in mid-adolescence, a puberty-related ‘kissing disease’. These are evasive, denial-complying, cave-dwelling excuses because it wasn’t the onset of puberty that was causing the depressing ‘blues’ or glandular fever, but the trauma of Resignation. For glandular fever to occur, a person’s immune system must be extremely rundown, and yet during puberty the body is physically at its peak in terms of growth and vitality—so for an adolescent to succumb to the illness they must be under extraordinary psychological pressure, experiencing stresses much greater than those that could possibly be associated with the physical adjustments to puberty, an adjustment, after all, that has been going on since animals first became sexual. No, the depression and glandular fever experienced by young adolescents are a direct result of the trauma of having to resign to never again revisiting the unbearably depressing subject of the human condition.

There is a lot more about the process of Resignation that children go through in my book but the essence of it is that it reveals just how terrifying the issue of the human condition really is. These children are actually trying to face it down and can’t. It’s just leading to suicidal depression where they have to jump off this psychological cliff, resign themselves to living in denial of the human condition. So, the problem my book has is that when it brings people back into contact with the human condition they psychologically don’t want to go near it.

Brian Carlton:

That resonates with me. I was that young man. I locked myself in my room listening to music of alienation and at the same time reading everything I could get my hands on in the belief that if I just found out why nobody’s talking about this then I’ll be able to understand it. So, yeah, it absolutely resonates with me listening to music and reading, locked in my room for a couple of years as an early teenager. It was a very real thing.

Jeremy Griffith:

Well, I think a lot of people can remember that and that’s so precious, that’s the benefit of using the Resignation explanation because people can actually remember going through it and once they know they’ve been through it then they’ve got that anchor to know that it’s a terrifying subject.

Brian Carlton:

It’s a life-changing experience, it really is. It certainly was for me.

Jeremy Griffith:

Well, that’s what happens when you tell someone about Resignation, it helps because then people connect for the first time in a long time to that experience.

Brian Carlton:

Well, I wished I’d known then what I know now.

Jeremy Griffith:

Yes, that's the benefit of using Resignation to illustrate our fear of the human condition because most people have some recall of having gone through a traumatic experience at that time, and the Resignation explanation makes sense of that.

I now want to point out the consequences of deciding never to confront the human condition again because it means we're adopting an extremely superficial existence, because, in truth, any thinking at a deeper level brings our mind into contact with the unbearable issue of our seemingly horribly flawed state or condition.

'There's a tree with lovely autumn leaves; isn't it amazing how beautiful nature can be, I wonder why some things are beautiful while others are not—I wonder why I'm not beautiful inside, in fact *so* full of all manner of angst, self-obsession, indifference and anger...aaahhhh!!!!' That's how superficial our mind is. It learns that any thinking will bring us into contact with the human condition so we'd better stop *any* thinking.

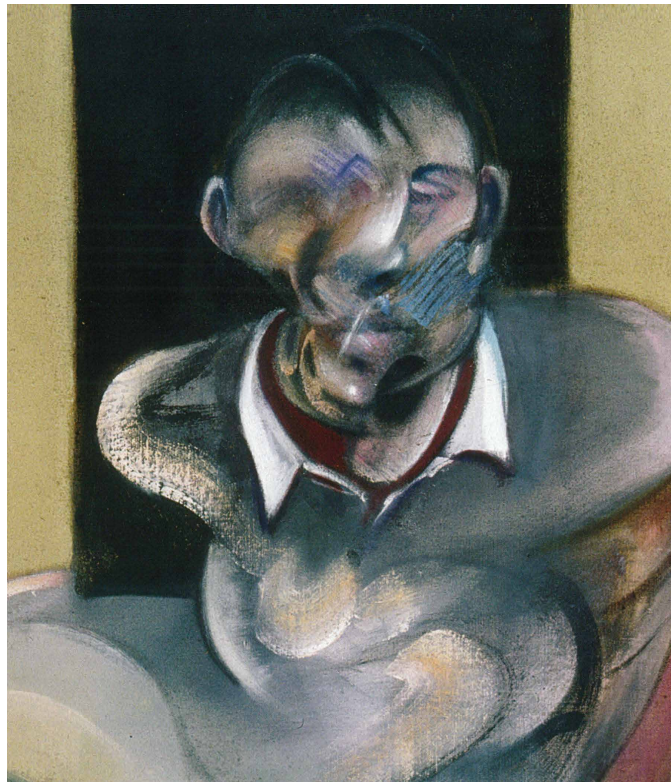
As the comedian Rod Quantock once said, '**Thinking can get you into terrible downwards spirals of doubt**' ('Sayings of the Week', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 Jul. 1986). And as all the following Nobel Laureates wrote, Albert Camus said that '**Beginning to think is beginning to be undermined**' (*The Myth of Sisyphus*, 1942); and Bertrand Russell said, '**Many people would sooner die than think**' (Antony Flew, *Thinking About Thinking*, 1975, p.5 of 127). And T.S. Eliot wrote that '**human kind cannot bear very much reality**' (*Burnt Norton*, 1936). That's how superficial we are. Most people would sooner die than think. So we live on the absolute meniscus, superficial surface of existence, not prepared to think deeply at all, and extremely alienated from all the truth and beauty that's in our world.

So, now we can understand these incredible comments made by the great Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing which are deadly truthful about how alienated we are, as he describes: '**Our alienation goes to the roots. The realization of this is the essential springboard for any serious reflection on any aspect of present inter-human life**' (*The Politics of Experience* and *The Bird of Paradise*, 1967, p.12 of 156), which is what I've been saying; we need to confront the human condition, be reconnected with what it is if we're going to make sense of human behaviour.

Then he goes on, '**We are born into a world where alienation awaits us**' (ibid. p.12), because we encounter the human condition and learn to block it out and become superficial in our thinking. He continues '**We are potentially men, but are in an alienated state [p.12] ...the ordinary person is a shrivelled, desiccated fragment of what a person can be [p.22] ...The condition of alienation, of being asleep, of being unconscious, of being out of one's mind, is the condition of the normal man [p.24] ...between us and It [our true selves or soul] there is a veil which is more like fifty feet of solid concrete**' (p.118). 'Fifty feet of solid concrete', that's how on the surface we live, that's how much is repressed that we don't want to face within us. '**The outer divorced from any illumination from the inner is in a state of darkness. We are in an age of darkness. The state of outer darkness is a state of sin—i.e. alienation or estrangement from the inner light** [ibid. p.116] ...**We are all murderers and prostitutes... We are bemused and crazed creatures, strangers to our true selves, to one another [pp.11-12].**' '**We are dead, but think we are alive. We are asleep, but think we are awake. We are dreaming, but take our dreams to be reality. We are the halt, lame, blind, deaf, the sick. But we are doubly unconscious. We are so ill that we no longer feel ill, as in many terminal illnesses. We are mad, but have no insight [into the fact of our madness]**' (*Self and Others*, 1961, p.38 of 192). '**We are so out of touch with this realm [where the issue of the human condition lies] that many people can**

now argue seriously that it does not exist' (*The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*, p.105). Which is what I said earlier on, that many people aren't aware of the human condition and what it really is.

In my book I've included this amazingly tortured painting by the Irish artist Francis Bacon. It's unmistakable that he's depicting the agony of the human condition in his twisted, smudged, distorted, death-mask-like—alienated—faces and tortured, contorted, stomach-knotted, arms-pinned, psychologically strangled and imprisoned bodies. It's some recognition of the incredible integrity/honesty of Bacon's work that in 2013 one of his triptychs sold for \$US142.4 million, becoming **'the most expensive work of art ever sold at auction, breaking the previous record...by Edward Munch's *The Scream* [another exceptionally honest, human-condition-revealing painting] sold for \$119.9 million'** (*TIME*, 25 Nov. 2013).



Detail from Francis Bacon's *Study for self-portrait*, 1976

So that's how superficial, artificial, fake and phony our lives have become as a result of living in denial of the human condition. When we resign we pay a huge price, becoming incredibly superficial and artificial and now we can understand why—because of this terrifying fear we have of never wanting to encounter that suicidal depression ever again.

This is all pretty deadly stuff but we're in the business now of trying to engage with what the human condition really is. These are amazing lyrics by a young American heavy metal band called 'With Life in Mind' and it really reveals how in denial we are of the exhausted state of the human race and of our planet because this is written, obviously, by an unresigned mind, a mind that hasn't blocked out the truth of our condition. So it's very revealing. This is what an unresigned mind thinks when it looks out at our world, which is what young adolescents can see. Once we're resigned and blocking it out as adults, we can't see it any longer. 'With Life In Mind' shows what an unresigned mind can see

about our real plight and superficial existence and that's what we have in these clearly unresigned, denial-free, honest lyrics from their 2010 *Grievances* album: **'It scares me to death to think of what I have become...I feel so lost in this world', 'Our innocence is lost', 'I scream to the sky but my words get lost along the way. I can't express all the hate that's led me here and all the filth that swallows us whole. I don't want to be part of all this insanity. Famine and death. Pestilence and war.** [Famine, death, pestilence and war are traditional interpretations of the 'Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse' described in Revelation 6 in the Bible.] **A world shrouded in darkness...Fear is driven into our minds everywhere we look', 'Trying so hard for a life with such little purpose...Lost in oblivion', 'Everything you've been told has been a lie...We've all been asleep since the beginning of time.' 'Why are we so scared to use our minds?', 'Keep pretending; soon enough things will crumble to the ground...If they could only see the truth they would coil in disgust', 'How do we save ourselves from this misery...So desperate for the answers...We're straining on the last bit of hope we have left. No one hears our cries. And no one sees us screaming', 'This is the end.'**

Saying **'We've all been asleep since the beginning of time'** echoes all that Laing said about the extent of our blocked-out, alienated condition; and saying **'Everything you've been told has been a lie'** reiterates the extent of the dishonest denial in the world, especially in science, today; and saying **'So desperate for the answers'** confirms how incredibly important are all the **'answers'** about our human condition that are presented in this book. If there was ever a collection of words that cuts through all the dishonest pretence and delusion in the world about our condition these lyrics from **'With Life In Mind'** surely do it!

Brian Carlton:

Now, what you've said is pretty terrifying but I remember as a kid listening to rock music and there's one particular song that got me. The band **'Midnight Oil'**, I think the song is called *Only the Strong* and the opening lines in the song are, **'When I'm locked in my room, I just want to scream'**. And as a young kid going through this process, it talked to me, it said to me that there is at least one other human on Earth whose been through what I'm going through now and that spoke volumes to me, just a couple of lines of music was all it took to make me feel a little bit better about this than I did.

Jeremy Griffith:

Yes, someone who reaches you with some honesty.

Brian Carlton:

Absolutely.

Jeremy Griffith:

Exactly like Coles' situation and *The Catcher in the Rye*. That's how lonely it is going through this and, by inference, how dishonest the adult world is. It's all **'resigned'** and no one's talking any truth. You find one little bit of truth and you just lock onto it and it saves your life.

Brian Carlton:

True, and indeed that's exactly what happened. I went from being terribly alienated to just a little less alienated which helped a lot.

Jeremy Griffith:

Well that's amazing.

Brian Carlton:

Just the number of times I reflect on the chat we had about your earlier book *Beyond the Human Condition*. It has stuck in my mind for a long time. I see things all the time and I use your explanations to help me see the denial. And I have conversations with people about the massive amount of denial going on and their eyes glaze over and they say, 'What are you talking about?' So, don't underestimate the extent to which your earlier works had an impact on me in terms of how I think about what I'm seeing, how I interpret behaviour. I worked up this ability to be able to work out what a person was like in the first five or six seconds of a conversation with them on the telephone and I could second-guess why they were saying what they were saying and hear the subtext in their words. It was hugely valuable as a broadcaster when you're taking lots and lots of calls from people who are fundamentally strangers to you and they start telling you their life story and you can plug into what they're talking about and how they're talking about it. And a lot of that came from your books because you are able to walk down the street and observe the denial in people. You can observe the souls who are not real happy with themselves.

Jeremy Griffith:

You've finally got insight into what's happening.

Brian Carlton:

Yeah.

Jeremy Griffith:

You've got the tool to make sense of it at last.

Brian Carlton:

But it works, that's the other thing. When you read your book it sounds esoteric and kind of 'out there' but the trickle-down transfer to everyday life and everyday human relationships and experiences has been hugely valuable. I don't say that 'pissing in your pocket', I'm really not. It did make a huge difference.

Jeremy Griffith:

That's the benefit of hanging in there with this information even though it can be very confronting. But yes, those poems and songs do capture the truth about the state of the world and what the unresigned mind in adolescents can see.

The point I'm making overall is that now that we are aware of how terrified we are of the issue of the human condition I'm now finally in a position to explain everything about our behaviour.

For example in chapter 2, having got in place our fear of the human condition it allows me to explain the reason why biologists have not been able to make any real progress in understanding human behaviour—because they are all resigned and living in

denial of the human condition and so they're not thinking truthfully. You can't find the truth with lies; you can't find the truth if you're living in the cave of denial.

And in chapter 3, now that the reader is connected to the fact that we're living in denial of the human condition it allows me to actually explain the human condition because that explanation is actually fairly obvious, all that has been blocking access to it is our fear of the human condition. And I'll be telling you what the explanation of the human condition that is presented in chapter 3 (and summarised in chapter 1) is in a moment.

And in chapter 4 I'm able to explain the integrative meaning of existence, which our denial of the human condition has also been blocking access to.

In chapters 5 and 6 I'm able to explain the obvious explanation for the origins of our altruistic moral nature, the 'voice' of which is our conscience, because again that truth has hitherto been blocked by our fear of the human condition.

In chapter 7 I'm able to explain how and why humans became conscious when other animals haven't, and the true nature of consciousness. Again you will see that these explanations are relatively obvious but they have been blocked by denial of the human condition.

In chapter 8 I'm able to describe the whole psychological journey that the human race has been on from our ignorant ape ancestor stage some 8 million years ago right up to the present psychologically upset state of us *Homo sapiens sapiens*—and again, this story has never been able to be told before because everyone's been living in denial of the human condition.

And finally in chapter 9 the ability now for the human race to be transformed from living in denial of the human condition to living free of that horrific state depended on overcoming the historic denial of what the human condition really is and its explanation!

Brian Carlton:

Okay Jeremy, so now can you give us a quick sketch of what this wonderful explanation of the human condition in chapter 3 of your book is that 'saves the world'? What is the human condition?

Jeremy Griffith:

Firstly, I need to explain that historically we've used the excuse that we humans are competitive, aggressive and selfish because of our animal heritage; that we have savage animal instincts that make us fight and compete for food, shelter, territory and a mate—but this can't be the *real* cause of our divisive behaviour because descriptions of our human behaviour, such as egocentric, arrogant, deluded, optimistic, pessimistic, artificial, hateful, mean, immoral, guilty, evil, depressed, inspired, psychotic, alienated, all recognise the involvement of our species' unique fully conscious thinking mind—that there is a *psychological* dimension to *our* behaviour. We don't suffer from the genetic-opportunism-based, non-psychological *animal* condition, but the conscious-mind-based, psychologically distressed *human* condition.

This article has just come out this week in the *Smithsonian* (Rick Potts, 'The Moral Dilemma We Face in the Age of Humans', 7 Oct. 2014)—it actually puts forward a theory to explain the human

condition, it says that we are such a successful species because we are proficient problem solvers, which is code for we are fully conscious beings, able to understand cause and effect. It then says that the reason we are so aggressive and competitive is because we can't trust others to exercise self-restraint, which forces us to match their competitiveness. But how and why were we humans able to become conscious when other animals haven't, and even more importantly, what was the psychological consequences of us becoming conscious? What is the psychosis-addressing-and-explaining, real biological explanation of our present competitive and aggressive human condition?

These aren't answers, it's no wonder everyone's lost faith in science's ability to bring understanding to our lives—science has become a farcical joke, it's stalled and festering—and it's leaving humanity stalled and festering because scientists are all resigned to living in denial of the human condition and you can't explain the human condition from a position of lying. As Plato said, you've got to be outside the cave of denial to explain the human condition.

As chapter 2 of my book reveals, all the existing biological theories on human behaviour are not interested in actually explaining human behaviour, rather they're interested in trying to avoid the human condition. So when you read the latter part of chapter 2 it's a complete demolition of all the current theories in biology of human behaviour, they're all completely superficial and fake and dishonest.

So let's get serious, what is the real psychosis-addressing-and-explaining biological explanation of the human condition that's presented in chapter 3 of my book? And as I've intimated it's actually a very obvious truth.

In Genesis in the Bible it says Adam and Eve were once living in the Garden of Eden, presumably living in an idyllic, happy, pre-human-condition, cooperative, loving state, which is how we acquired our altruistic moral instincts. How we actually acquired these moral instincts through nurturing, the expression of which is our conscience, is explained in chapters 5 and 6. The bonobos are a living example of a species that are on the threshold of living in that state.

So, we were once living in this cooperative, Garden of Eden-like state, then we took the fruit from the tree of knowledge, presumably meaning we became conscious. The tree of knowledge is a symbol/representation of the search for understanding. Then in that story it says that as a result of taking the fruit from the tree of knowledge we became 'evil' and 'full of sin' and were 'banished', thrown out of the Garden of Eden. So that's the best we've been able to explain it.

Now, let's look a bit more closely at that. Genesis says that we were once living in a cooperative, loving, innocent, pre-human-condition, Garden-of-Eden-like state and then we took the fruit from the tree of knowledge and became conscious. With the benefit of what science has been able to teach us about how nerves and genes process information we can analyse that. Well, actually the explanation of the human condition is right there in front of us because clearly if we were once instinctively orientated like other animals (governed by a gene-based learning system), and then we became conscious (which is a nerve-based learning system which can understand cause and effect, is a self-adjusting system) obviously that self-adjusting system needs to challenge

the already established instincts for the management of our life. So there's going to be a clash emerge between them. The conscious mind has to challenge the instincts because it's now become proficient in understanding cause and effect and it needs to find an understanding of life.

Brian Carlton:

This is a curious mind.

Jeremy Griffith:

Yes, this is a curious mind, it's now needing to understand. So we're in parallel with the Genesis story at this point where Adam and Eve, to metaphorically describe original humans, took the fruit from the tree of knowledge and became conscious. But clearly once they became conscious, they became a self-adjusting system, they are managing their life from a base of understanding of cause and effect. The best way to explain how this clash manifested itself between the emerging conscious mind and the already established instinctive mind is to use a little analogy.

We already know that birds follow instinctive flight paths, like the storks that fly up around the coast of Africa and nest on the rooftops of Europe. They've learnt this flight path through natural selection. Obviously the birds that had a genetic make-up that inclined them to fly over the Sahara all got frizzled so now all these storks instinctively know to fly around the coast. They know exactly where to fly and not to fly, but they don't *understand* where they should and shouldn't fly.

Now we'll call one of these storks Adam Stork as this analogy relates to the story of the Garden of Eden, but this story has a different ending. So we want to know what happens if we put a fully conscious, self-adjusting brain such as humans have on the head of this stork. We're going to jump in an ultralight and watch the equivalent of the human condition emerge.

So Adam Stork has a conscious mind now and he's following the instinctive flight path which goes along the coast of Africa but he's starting to think for himself. He looks down and sees an island with some apple trees and he thinks, 'Why not fly down there and have a feed of apples?' He hasn't any knowledge yet, so he knows no reason why he should or shouldn't do that, and he's only going to find knowledge by experimenting in different understanding. So he thinks, 'Why not?', and carries out his first grand experiment in *self*-adjustment based on trying to understand the world. He veers off course and heads down towards the island.

Now obviously his instinctive self—because his instinctive flight path doesn't go down to the island but straight up the coast—is going to, in effect, try to pull him back onto the flight path. We're watching Adam Stork from an ultralight and we can see him hesitate. He's flown off towards the island and his instincts are starting to, in effect, criticise him. Our instincts can tell us when we need to have a drink or have some food and our conscious mind can override that or not. So now old Adam Stork is in a dilemma. Does he obey his instincts and fly back on course and never search for knowledge? Or does he persevere with his search for knowledge?



Well, clearly he can't just fly back on course. I mean, he *could* fly back on course and feel good and not feel condemned anymore by his instincts but he'd never find knowledge, so he's got to persevere. So he hesitates and then decides 'No, I've got to do what I've got to do. I can't, in effect, throw my brain away.' So he perseveres with his search for knowledge and heads down towards the island which means his instincts criticise him even more loudly and he's in this bind between his instincts and his emerging need to understand.

Ideally at that moment, before 'the shit hit the fan' if you like, before everything became messed up, he should have sat down on a limb with his instinctive self as it were, and had a little discussion and said, 'Now listen, you acquired your perfect orientation of where to fly through natural selection, through the gene-based learning system which can give a species orientation, but an orientation is not understanding. I'm now using a conscious mind which can *understand* cause and effect. It's based on the nerve-based learning system where you have memory and once you have memory you have the basis for understanding cause and effect. I'm an insightful learning system. You're perfectly *orientated*, but you don't *understand* where we should and shouldn't fly. So by all means tell me when I'm off course but don't criticise me.' But you see, he's in a catch-22, he

hasn't got any knowledge yet with which to have this reconciling conversation. He doesn't even know about nerves and genes. Science hasn't even been invented so he's got no ability to explain himself.

So, what did Adam Stork naturally, unavoidably do? There were three things, I suggest, he couldn't avoid doing.

First of all, if he couldn't refute the criticism emanating from his instinctive self, he had to block it out. So, he put his hands over his ears and said 'I'm not going to listen to you'. So denial became a major part of his make-up which is alienation. He's blocking out these criticisms or orientations coming from his instinctive self.

The second thing is he gets angry towards the criticism. He tries to restrain his anger but he says, 'Listen mate, get off my case! *I'm not bad!* You're implying I am and I'm not but I can't explain *why* I'm not', so he gets aggressive.

And thirdly, his ego, which just means conscious thinking self in the dictionary, becomes embattled. It becomes centred or *centric*, focused on trying to validate itself. So he's now become egocentric, forever looking for reinforcement, anything that will relieve him from this criticism. So he's desperate for relief from this incessant criticism, to get a win out of a game of sport or get some success. He's hungry for reinforcement. He's egocentric, insecure, in need of reinforcement.

So, old Adam Stork has become angry, egocentric and alienated as an unavoidable consequence of having set out in search of knowledge.

Brian Carlton:

Presumably he's being criticised also by the storks who have continued going up the coast on their instinctive path.

Jeremy Griffith:

That's right.

Brian Carlton:

So, it's not just an internal criticism, a self criticism but there's external abuse, even, for breaking the rules; you're doing something different to the way we've always done it.

Jeremy Griffith:

That's right. And since the natural world is a 'friend', in fact, of his original instinctive self because he grew up with the natural world, by association it's also condemning him, so everybody's on his case; the other storks who just want everybody to obey the instinctive flight path, and the natural world. Everything is condemning him. He's actually good, but he can't explain why he's good.

Imagine if you're living in a village and for some reason you have to plant thistles, but you can't explain why you've got to plant them and the whole town is right against anyone planting weeds. So, just imagine after a couple of days. I mean, they are going to be putting dead cats in your letter box and when you go down to the shop they're going to turn their backs to you and you're going to be ostracised. You can't explain to the rest of

the village that you're good and not bad. You planted thistles, everyone thinks you're bad but in fact you're not but you can't explain it! It's a terrible situation.

The conscious thinking mind is arguably nature's greatest invention, the most amazing creation! And the conscious mind *needs* to find knowledge, ultimately self knowledge, understanding of the human condition. In this case, understanding of why Adam Stork had to fly off course. He's going to have to invent science, he's going to have to discover how nerves are different in the way they process information to the gene-based learning system. One is an orientating system, the other is an insightful system but without that understanding he has no ability to explain himself.

Obviously we're not migrating birds so our instinctive orientation wasn't to a flight path but actually to behaving cooperatively and lovingly which, as chapter 5 explains, was acquired through nurturing, and the bonobos are living on the threshold of that state. *Our* instincts are to be cooperative and loving. So, it was an absolute double whammy for us because immediately when we started flying off course, in effect, and challenging our instincts and becoming unavoidably angry, egocentric and alienated, which are all divisive traits, our instincts doubly condemned us. They want us to be cooperative, loving and *selfless* and we're now competitive, aggressive and *selfish*. So it was a double whammy. As soon as we started to challenge the instincts we became *upset*. Upset is a better word than evil because there is no criticism anymore, we can understand that we *are* psychologically upset. Psyche means soul or instinct and our instinctive self or soul has been condemning us so we buried it. We became *psychotic* and our mind or nerve-based learning system became *neurotic*. We started living in denial, blocking out the truth, we became psychotic and neurotic.

These are unavoidable consequences of acquiring a conscious mind and setting out in search of knowledge in the presence of our instinctive self. We couldn't explain ourselves, we couldn't defend ourselves until we'd invented science and since the conscious mind emerged some two million years ago in the human journey, we've been living for some *two million years* unjustly condemned.

So, if the person who had to plant thistles was going to find it unbearable living in that village after one day or one week, imagine what two million years has done to us. We have been unjustly condemned for some two million years!

In the story of Genesis it says that we once lived in the Garden of Eden in an innocent and cooperative state. Then we took the fruit from the tree of knowledge and became conscious. At that point in the Genesis story we were condemned as evil and were thrown out! But in *this* story, who is the hero? Adam Stork is the hero because he had to have the courage to defy his instincts and persevere with the search for knowledge. That marvellous song from the musical *The Man of La Mancha* says we had '**to march into hell for a heavenly cause**' (Joe Darion, *The Impossible Dream*, 1965) which perfectly captures the paradox of being a human. We had to suffer becoming upset, angry, egocentric and alienated in order to find knowledge.

So, since the conscious mind is arguably nature's best invention, Adam Stork is actually the *hero* of the whole story of life on Earth, because the conscious mind had to

endure this corruption, this unjust condemnation, in order to fulfil its potential and become a competent understanding system.

Brian Carlton:

It's a difficult conversation to have with Adam Stork though isn't it, to explain that to him so he would understand what's going on and indeed to his colleagues who are still continuing up the coast and not knowing what this lunatic is doing.

Jeremy Griffith:

Yes, but what's difficult about sharing this understanding is that because humans are living in denial of the human condition, they're so committed to not looking at the psychology of our psychosis that we don't ever admit it. As R.D. Laing said, '**We are so out of touch with this realm** [where the issue of the human condition lies] **that many people can now argue seriously that it does not exist**' (*The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*, p.105). That's how fearful we are of the whole subject area.

So, as it says in chapter 2 of my book, all the current biological explanations don't recognise that there's a psychological element to our behaviour. The explanations that say we're aggressive because we have '**red in tooth and claw**' animal instincts ignore the obvious fact that we suffer from the human condition, not the 'animal condition'. We've never been able to defend ourselves with understanding and that's been the case for two million years, but at last we can.

I began by saying that there's this volcanic frustration inside of humans, but now we can understand where that's come from. Sure, we've certainly tried to retrain or 'civilise' it, but it's still underneath there and it comes out in war and sex and so on. But despite all that upset, this explanation says that humans are the hero of the story of life on Earth, not the villains we have been portrayed as for *so* long.

So amazingly, this finally dignifies humans, it brings the reconciling, healing understanding of the human condition that we've always needed. And it is an obvious truth when you sit down and look at our equation in an honest way.

Brian Carlton:

So, Jeremy how do we translate that understanding into a transformation of who we are?

Jeremy Griffith:

Well, you will recall that Adam Stork wouldn't have become psychologically upset if he could have explained why he had to fly off course, defy his instincts. It follows that now that he can explain himself all his upset, his anger, egocentricity and alienation, subsides. The psychoanalyst Carl Jung was forever emphasising that '**wholeness for humans depends on the ability to own their own shadow**', which is what we can do now. We can understand where the dark volcanic forces in us come from. The ancients had emblazoned across their temples, '**Man know thyself**', well we can now know/understand ourselves. As Harry Prosen has said in his Introduction, '**I have no doubt this biological explanation of the human condition is the holy grail of insight we have sought for the psychological rehabilitation of the**

human race. You have to read chapter 9 to learn just how this wonderful transformation occurs, but to read just one description of it: **‘This is like seeing the world for the first time, it’s like waking up from a nightmare, it’s like 100 tonnes being lifted off your shoulders.’**

Yes, the burden of guilt has finally been lifted from the human race. This is our moment of liberation, this is liberation day.

Brian Carlton:

Jeremy, you’re doing really important work. I say that as a fellow human, with the condition. Keep at it. People, read the book, read the book more than once. Some people like reading books or want to read a book multiple times because they enjoy it. This is one you almost need to read two or three times to fully get the gist of what you’re talking about. I wish you the best with your endeavour. We need it. It’s been a great pleasure. It’s good to catch up with you again Jeremy.

Jeremy Griffith:

Likewise, it’s really precious. Thanks very, very much Brian.

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