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# Rhinegold Live at Conway Hall

Guest Editor: Louise Greener

‘The Rhinegold LIVE recital series turns three this year – and what a wonderful three years it’s been!

We’re delighted to partner with Conway Hall, and in our time together have presented some of the leading artists of our generation on Conway Hall’s stage. Launching with cellists Julian and Jiaxin Lloyd-Webber back in April 2015 (which turned out to be Julian’s last ever filmed performance before retiring), the past three years have seen us adventure through a number of disc launches, young artist showcases and incredible repertoire.

The series’ format is unique in that we present rush-hour recitals in 50 minute vignettes, followed by a short Q&A with the artists; the aim is that the earlier start time, free tickets and shorter format make it an accessible culture-fix on the way home and encourage those who might not usually take a punt on a classical recital stop and think ‘hey, this is actually something I can commit to’. Preceded by a free drink reception, the social aspect encourages a real community spirit, and we’re absolutely delighted that through our free tickets we are facilitating access to classical music and attracting a new audience. It’s amazing to look around the hall and see a real mixture of city commuters, creatives, students and die-hard classical recital-goers all in one room.

Curated by the editors of *International Piano*, *Classical Music* and *Opera Now* magazines, the series aims to present some of the world’s leading artists in a chamber atmosphere. We build our own stage in-the-round to get everyone closer to the music and the hall’s intimate setting and wonderful acoustics make it a truly lovely recital experience for artist and audience alike. Full to capacity (we’re very fortunate in that all of our recitals have ‘sold out’), there is an incredible atmosphere, and our appreciative audience don’t hold back!

Highlights include the wonderful Lloyd-Webbers; Maestro Andrew Litton’s first solo piano performance in 40 years (*A Tribute to Oscar Peterson*); Carolyn Sampson’s *Fleurs* disc launch (for which we hand-crafted 8ft paper flowers to dress the stage) and the National Opera Studio’s young artist showcase, introduced by the charismatic (and hilarious) Nicky Spence.

2017 sees us celebrate Melvyn Tan’s 60th birthday year, showcase the National Opera Studio’s class of 2017, and look ahead to pianist Sam Haywood’s second disc launch on the Hyperion label. I do hope you might join us for a glass of wine and an hour of truly beautiful music; I can think of no better way to spend a weekday evening...



**Louise Greener** is Event Manager at Rhinegold Media & Events, overseeing the Music and Drama Education Expo and the Rhinegold LIVE recital series. Her career started at Rhinegold in 2009 as title manager of *International Piano* magazine. A challenge set by Rhinegold MD, Ciaran Morton, led her to launch the Rhinegold LIVE recital series in April 2013 – she has since produced recitals and disc launches with Julian and Jiaxin Lloyd Webber, Andrew Litton, Carolyn Sampson, Allegri Quartet, Jennifer Pike and Artur Pizarro.



# Poetic Naturalism – a New Understanding of Life and the Universe

**Christopher G. Street**



## WHAT IS NATURALISM?

Naturalism<sup>1</sup> is a philosophy or ontology<sup>2</sup>, about the nature of reality, typically associated with atheism. Naturalism says there is only one world, the natural world, exhibiting patterns called the laws of nature (TBP156 – see Notes). These laws are discoverable by the methods of science and empirical investigation. Empirical evidence<sup>3</sup> is knowledge acquired

by means of the senses, particularly by observation and experimentation. Naturalism affirms there is no separate realm of the supernatural, spiritual, or divine. There is no cosmic or transcendent purpose inherent in the universe or in human life (TBP207, 235, 381). We find traces of Naturalism in Buddhism<sup>4</sup>, in the atomists of ancient Greece and Rome, and in Confucianism<sup>5</sup> (TBP242).

**Chris Street** is a life-long atheist and has been President of AtheismUK since June 2014. He has been a committee member of Dorset Humanists since 2007. In 2015 Chris was awarded a Master of Science in Medicinal Chemistry. He has worked in commercial roles for much of his career and more recently in teaching and tutoring science and mathematics.



## WHAT IS POETIC NATURALISM?

Sean Carroll introduced the term ‘Poetic Naturalism’<sup>6</sup> in his 2016 book ‘The Big Picture: On the Origins of Life, Meaning and the Universe Itself’.<sup>7</sup> Carroll is a theoretical physicist and Research Professor of Physics at Caltech, who blogs at Preposterous Universe.<sup>8</sup> Poetic Naturalism means there are many ways of talking about the world. We talk about ‘causes’ and ‘reasons why’ things happen, but those ideas aren’t part of how nature works at its deepest levels. They are emergent phenomena – how we describe our everyday world (TBP159).

Naturalists have disagreements about what they mean by naturalism. At one end of the naturalism spectrum are the ‘mad-dog’ eliminativist naturalists like Alex Rosenberg<sup>9</sup> (I arranged for Rosenberg to speak to Atheism UK at Conway Hall in 2012<sup>10</sup>). Rosenberg writes, in the ‘Atheists Guide to Reality’,<sup>11</sup> that “there is no moral difference between right and wrong, good or bad; there is no chance we have free will”.<sup>12</sup> Carroll summarises Rosenberg’s position as: “the world is just a bunch of particles”, “people are not conscious” and “there is no such thing as morality”.<sup>13</sup>

At the other end of the naturalism spectrum are naturalists such as Sam Harris<sup>14</sup> who say that “science can be used to discover meaning and morality”<sup>15</sup> or there are “objective moral guidelines that tell you how to behave”.<sup>16</sup>

Carroll calls his ‘judicious middle ground’<sup>17</sup> in the ongoing naturalism debate, ‘poetic’ naturalism. Answering questions about morality and meaning, such as; ‘How do we go about deciding what is right and wrong?’ and ‘What is meaningful?’, is not the same as the way we discover what is true and false.<sup>18</sup> Moral

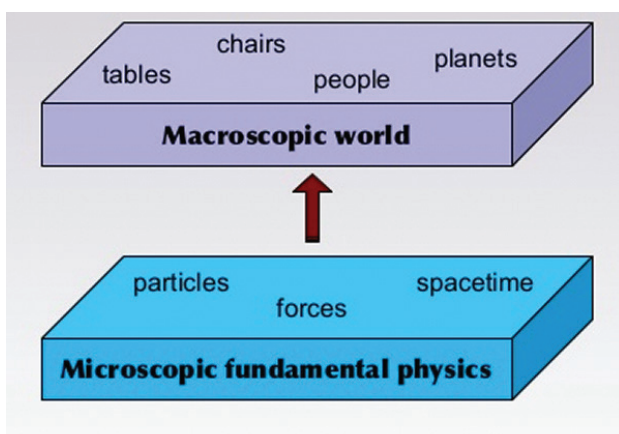
principles may be real (or at least as real as the rules of chess<sup>19</sup>), but they are subjective, not objective – so moral realism<sup>20</sup> is wrong.<sup>21</sup> Carroll agrees with Sharon Street’s [not my wife!] Humean constructivism view,<sup>22</sup> that different people can construct different moral principles (TBP6524). Whitley Kaufman argues that Carroll has “not convincingly shown that morality is not objectively true within a naturalistic worldview”.<sup>23</sup>

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MACROSCOPIC & MICROSCOPIC WORLDS

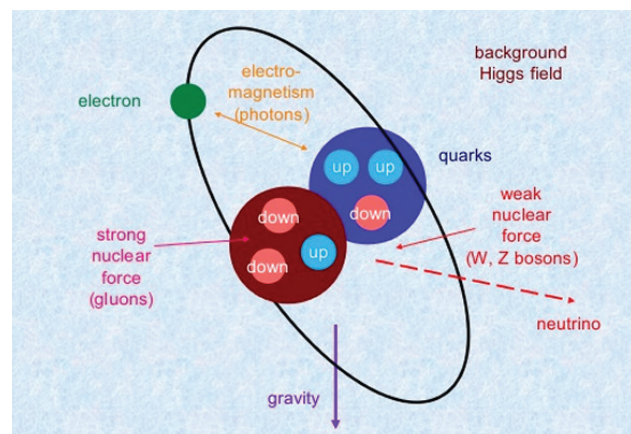
Why does the macroscopic world – the world of tables, chairs, people and planets and everything else, seem so different from the underlying microscopic fundamental physics? The microscopic ‘everyday’ world comprises four particles (up and down quarks,<sup>24</sup> neutrinos<sup>25</sup> and electrons<sup>26</sup>), four forces (weak and strong nuclear<sup>27</sup>, electromagnetism<sup>28</sup> and gravity<sup>29</sup>), space-time<sup>30</sup> and the Higgs field (discovered in 2012).<sup>31</sup> The compatibility of the microscopic and macroscopic world can be explained by ‘emergence’. Emergent theories describe different kinds of things and concepts than more comprehensive theories from which they emerge.<sup>32</sup>

## THE CORE THEORY DESCRIBES EVERYDAY LIFE

Frank Wilczek<sup>33</sup> (a Nobel prize winner<sup>34</sup>) in his book the ‘Lightness of Being’,<sup>35</sup> combined Einstein’s general theory of relativity<sup>36</sup> with the Standard Model<sup>37</sup> to give the ‘Core Theory’ of particles and forces.<sup>38</sup> Carroll makes a bold statement: Core Theory describes “everything going on within you, and me,



‘Macroscopic world emerges from Microscopic world’  
by SM Carroll, Source: <https://goo.gl/vLrCOR> 24.30 m



The Microscopic ‘Everyday’ World: Four Particles, For Forces, Space-time, Higgs Field

by SM Carroll, Source: <https://goo.gl/vLrCOR> 22.50 m

The diagram shows the equation for the action  $W$  in the Core Theory, with red arrows and labels identifying its parts:

- quantum mechanics**: points to the  $[Dg][DA][D\psi][D\Phi]$  terms.
- spacetime**: points to the  $d^4x$  integration measure.
- gravity**: points to the  $\sqrt{-g}$  metric determinant.
- other forces**: points to the  $-\frac{1}{4}F_{\mu\nu}^a F^{a\mu\nu}$  term.
- matter**: points to the  $i\bar{\psi}^i \gamma^\mu D_\mu \psi^i$  term.
- Higgs**: points to the  $(\bar{\psi}_L^i V_{ij} \Phi \psi_R^j + \text{h.c.})$  and  $-|D_\mu \Phi|^2 - V(\Phi)$  terms.

$$W = \int_{k < \Lambda} [Dg][DA][D\psi][D\Phi] \exp \left\{ i \int d^4x \sqrt{-g} \left[ \frac{m_p^2}{2} R - \frac{1}{4} F_{\mu\nu}^a F^{a\mu\nu} + i\bar{\psi}^i \gamma^\mu D_\mu \psi^i + (\bar{\psi}_L^i V_{ij} \Phi \psi_R^j + \text{h.c.}) - |D_\mu \Phi|^2 - V(\Phi) \right] \right\}$$

and everything you see around you this minute. And it will continue to be accurate, a thousand or a million years from now... hopefully by then we will have better, deeper concepts, but the concepts we're using now will still be legitimate in the appropriate domain" (TBP2503).

### **"THE LAWS OF PHYSICS UNDERLYING EVERYDAY LIFE, ARE NOW COMPLETELY KNOWN"**

Carroll makes more bold statements about the Core Theory: The laws of physics underlying everyday life are the 'Core Theory' (TBP6960) which underlies "everything we witness in our everyday lives, including ourselves" (TBP3441) and some aspects of astrophysics<sup>39</sup> and cosmology<sup>40</sup> (TBP3014). "It seems overwhelmingly likely to be true, that the laws of physics underlying everyday life, are now completely known" (TBP2826).

### **CORE THEORY RULES OUT SOULS & LIFE AFTER DEATH**

The Core Theory rules out the possibility of souls (TBP2514). There can be no immaterial soul that could possibly survive the body. When we die, that's the end of us; there is no life after death and no chance of being reincarnated into another life. The Core Theory also means that bending spoons with the power of the mind (TBP2455), and astrology (TBP172), are ruled out.

### **OUR BABY UNIVERSE?**

Could our universe have had a beginning without a 'cause'? Our universe just popping into existence from nothing seems implausible as this would violate conservation of energy laws which say you cannot get energy where no energy exists (TBP3191). It's wrong to say the universe comes from 'nothing' (TBP3183).

In a peer-reviewed paper written by Carroll, one scenario for the formation of our universe, is the

'Baby Universe' hypothesis. In this idea, our observable universe evolved from a parent universe which was both eternal and empty.<sup>41</sup> At the 'Big Bang', 13.8 billion years ago, our parent universe pinched off (a quantum fluctuation<sup>42</sup>) a part of its spacetime; to form our 'baby universe'. Baby universes start out small, with low entropy,<sup>43</sup> then they expand and cool, creating an arrow of time.<sup>44</sup> The universe inflated, generating a tremendous amount of energy, then over billions of years formed stars and galaxies.<sup>45</sup>

### **THE UNIVERSE IN A CUP OF COFFEE**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics<sup>46</sup> states that the total entropy ('disorder') of a closed system never decreases, it stays constant or increases as time passes (TBP952). Entropy in the universe continually increases. If entropy or disorder is always increasing, how did the universe ever produce anything as complex as life on Earth? Carroll describes how the universe evolved, using a cup of coffee as an analogy. The universe started out very simple, like a cup of coffee with coffee on the bottom and cream floating on the coffee. The universe became complex and life emerged, like cream swirling and intermingling with the coffee, creating complex tendrils of coffee and cream. Finally, in the far future, the universe will become simple again, devoid of stars and galaxies – the cream and coffee become fully mixed together – making the coffee-cream system simple again (TBP3537).

### **AT THE ORIGIN OF LIFE HOW DID CELLS FORM?**

Naturalism has begun to explain the origins of life. How did these early lifeforms make cells? Fatty acids<sup>47</sup> have a water loving (hydrophilic) head and a water avoiding (hydrophobic) hydrocarbon tail (TBP4026). Two fatty acids bond with glycerol<sup>48</sup> and phosphate to form membrane phospholipid bilayers – which can spontaneously form cells. The cell is needed to



protect DNA<sup>49</sup> (deoxyribonucleic acid), proteins and metabolic pathways etc. from the external environment (TBP3963).

### POWER FOR LIFE

How was the first life on Earth powered? One theory is that deep sea alkaline hydrothermal vents<sup>50</sup> attracted positively charged protons<sup>51</sup> (TBP4124). The protons were formed from neutral hydrogen atoms by loss of the negatively charged electron, leaving a positively charged proton in the nucleus. The repulsion between protons produced a proton-motive force (TBP3876). When protons are pumped through ATP Synthase<sup>52</sup> protein, ATP<sup>53</sup> (Adenosine triphosphate) is formed. In bacteria, animals and plants, ATP is the main source of energy, which is needed to build up or break down molecules.<sup>54</sup>

### LIFE IS POWERED BY SUNLIGHT AND PROTONS

In photosynthesis<sup>55</sup> plants use photons of light from the sun to strip off electrons from water molecules. Water splits to give positively charged protons and oxygen (TBP3861). The proton-motive force pumps protons through ATP Synthase, which is embedded in the phospholipid bilayer membrane. The proton pump provides energy for ATP molecules to be manufactured from ADP<sup>56</sup> (Adenosine diphosphate) and phosphate (TBP3861).<sup>57</sup>

### AT THE ORIGIN OF LIFE WHAT MADE DNA?

Today the Central Dogma of Biology<sup>58</sup> states that DNA stores information as genetic code. m-RNA<sup>59</sup> (messenger Ribonucleic acid) then copies this information to assemble proteins. When life started, how was DNA made? Maybe RNA came *before* DNA (RNA World hypothesis<sup>60</sup>), in evolutionary terms, since RNA can both store information *and* make proteins (TBP4211).

Life is not a substance, nor a spirit or élan vital<sup>61</sup> (life force), it's a process (TBP3493).

### COGNITIVE BIASES

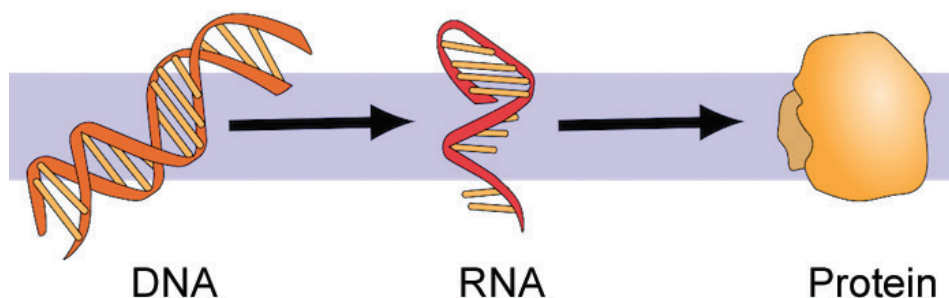
If there were a supernatural element that played a role in our everyday life in some noticeable way, it's very, very likely we would have noticed it. The late Victor Stenger<sup>62</sup> has pointed out that prayers would work, but they don't.<sup>63</sup> It just seems weird that this kind of thing would be so crucial and yet so difficult to notice in any controlled scientific way.<sup>64</sup>

We should all try to guard against our individual cognitive biases<sup>65</sup>, the things we want to be true. The existence of life after death, for example, might be wonderful. Many people have a cognitive bias in favour of that. And yet I don't think that is true. The best we can do is try to be honest.<sup>66</sup>

### TIGHTROPE OF EPISTEMIC HUMILITY

"Life" and "consciousness" do not denote essences distinct from matter; they are ways of talking about phenomena that emerge from the interplay of extraordinarily complex systems. Purpose and meaning in life arise through human acts of creation, rather than being derived from anything outside ourselves. Naturalism is a philosophy of unity and patterns, describing all of reality as a seamless web (TBP241).

What happened at the big bang or at the start of life on Earth? We don't really know! There are lots of theories and we are still working that out. That's the strength of science and naturalism. The willingness to say we don't know everything. We've got to figure lots out. We walk a tightrope of epistemic humility. It's easy to say 'we know everything' or 'we know nothing'. What is harder to say is 'we know some things, and here is the dividing line between what we know and what we don't know'.<sup>67</sup>



Central Dogma of Biology:  
DNA makes RNA makes  
Protein

Source: <https://goo.gl/ml2StZ>

Location: TBP4194

Image source:

<https://goo.gl/4Vg4pV>

## NOTES

TBP followed by numbers in brackets is the location in S.M Carroll (2016), *The Big Picture: On the Origins of Life, Meaning and the Universe Itself*, Oneworld Publications, Kindle edition. All images and links accessed February 2017.

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# Is it Time to Rethink the 'University'?

Professor Dennis Hayes



The 21st century has seen a plethora of Jeremiads on the theme 'what are universities for?' Whatever their specific focus, they reflect a contemporary crisis of meaning within the academy and in wider society about the nature and purpose of the university. The 'neo-liberal marketization' of higher education has been said to 'commodify' and turn into a business an education that was previously valued for its own sake. We are said to be in a period of 'post-academia' and are witnessing the end of the liberal arts university. Others argue that, historically, there is little evidence of any 'golden age' of liberal academia and often the best education was vocationally-oriented. Opponents and apologists for University PLC can claim some history to support their arguments but fail to place them within broader historical discussions of what the university is. Fads and fashions cloud academic

writing on the university and reading history backwards is the norm. Looking back at major attempts to redefine the university reveals how the idea of the liberal university came into being and how it was, for a short time, a reality. Today's socio-cultural crisis of meaning about education allowed the term 'university' to be used in a Humpty Dumpty way by vice-chancellors, academics and commentators, meaning what they want it to mean.

On my bookshelves is a swathe of indignant tomes about the state of the contemporary university with titles like *Killing Thinking: The Death of the Universities*; *The End of Knowledge in Higher Education*; *The University in Ruins*; *Degrees of Nonsense: The Demise of the University in Ireland*; *Consuming Higher Education: Why Learning Can't be Bought*; *American Higher Education in Crisis*?



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*What Everyone Needs to Know; From University to Uni; The Changing University?; What Are Universities For?; Academic Freedom in an age of Conformity: Confronting the fear of knowledge* and even one of my own, *The McDonaldization of Higher Education*, and most recently *What's Happened to the University? A sociological exploration of its infantilisation*. The classic jeremiad about the university is, of course, Allan Bloom's international best-seller from 1989, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*.

There is also a literature of 'salvation' books with titles like *Universities: The Recovery of an Idea; The New Idea of a University; For a Radical Higher Education* and so on – even my new book *Beyond McDonaldization: visions of higher education* is, in part, a 'salvation' text.

### **THE CRISIS OF MEANING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Some academics have made a career out of studying higher education, most notable among them being Ron Barnett, who, over his academic career, has produced over a dozen books and numerous articles on the idea of a university. Always interesting, they have run with every theoretical fad and fashion from post-modernist uncertainty and supercomplexity theory to a metaphysical consideration of eight 'possible' universities in *Becoming a University*. These are the metaphysical university, the scientific university, the entrepreneurial university, the bureaucratic university, the liquid university, the therapeutic university, the authentic university and the ecological university.

These books and articles are indicative of an intellectual crisis – we have lost the idea of a university. Because of this crisis universities have slowly adopted new purposes beyond the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. The focus on the so-called 'student experience' and a desire, and in the UK a requirement, to show that university research has social and economic 'impact' are two of the most dangerous and destructive expressions of the new idea of a 'university'. In this context the vocationalisation of the 'university' will continue and higher 'education' will continue to be nothing more than higher 'training'.

### **'SNOWFLAKES' AND THE DIMINISHED IDEA OF HUMAN BEING**

In 2008 I co-authored a book entitled *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education* which discussed a unique 'therapeutic turn' in education. In essence this made teachers and other professionals see every child and young person as vulnerable, as a potential victim. The new form of professional relationship that resulted can be described as 'T2V' or giving 'Therapy to Victims'. Initially, the therapeutic turn in education was a spontaneous expression of the therapeutic culture in which we live. It began with a concern with children and young people's low self-esteem, then with bullying, stress and teenage unhappiness. What was happening was the pathologising of normal childhood and adolescent behaviour, emotions and moods. A continuing stream of educational initiatives then followed including formal lessons on the 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)' pedagogic initiatives like 'circle time' and 'happiness' and 'mindfulness' classes. Ofsted and the New Labour, Coalition and Conservative governments became obsessed with child safety. Pupils were taught they must never be upset and that education was all about them and their emotional lives. This generation has now matriculated and they worry they might be emotionally upset and unable to cope with ideas that challenge their comfortable and comforting beliefs. They have been labelled the 'Snowflake Generation' but it is not the students' fault. Over the past decade we have seen the institutional construction in all educational sectors of young people as diminished human beings who are essentially vulnerable.

The Snowflake Generation's worries are misplaced as they are coming to what I have labelled the 'therapeutic university' where unthreatening 'Welcome Weeks' are replacing 'Freshers' Weeks' and an army of counsellors are ready to help students in the terrible transition from home to the big school that university was becoming; where anti-stress activities and counselling abound and where there are 'puppy rooms' where stressed students can rest and recover from exam stress by petting therapy dogs. All this is easy to lampoon but the infantilisation of students has spread to the curriculum.

Demands for 'trigger warnings' on courses and course material that might upset someone have

dramatically and suddenly increased. I first became aware of them three years ago through reading an article by the US-based journalist Jenny Jarvie in the *New Republic* (Jarvie, 2014). Student Unions have taken them up and even the University of Oxford has them on its law courses. The call for 'safe spaces' for debate have gone from being a rare demand for some minority groups to one for all students. The online magazine *spiked* has focused on their increase in their analyses for the Free Speech University Rankings (FSUR).

The continuing call for 'trigger warnings' is absurd when it has been shown they actually harm any truly vulnerable student by taking away the possibility of facing up to issues. But snowflakes are unmoved by facts. Similarly, the idea that you need safe spaces encourages feelings of vulnerability in a tyrannical way. Is it now unquestionable that students will be hurt by ideas and must be protected from anything that offends their feelings? It can only stunt intellectual growth which requires the clash of ideas and coming to terms with arguments that students may find offensive.

Generation Snowflake grew up in a society and a culture dominated by concerns about self-esteem, self-reliance, bullying, psychological hurt and mental health well (see Fox, 2016). When this generation arrived at university they were unprepared for intellectual challenges and unwilling to accept any debate and any ideas that made them feel in anyway uncomfortable. This might not be of any concern if the academy was not defined by the pursuit of knowledge without fear or favour. Universities cannot engage in this pursuit if they are concerned with not being offensive and not hurting anyone's feelings.

What is curious is that writers on academic freedom ignore or perhaps play down the impact of the therapeutic culture which dominates wider society and the university.

### **FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

Vanessa Pupavac has documented – in a detailed historical and global survey – the loss of the Enlightenment vision of humanity's potential and its replacement by a diminished idea of human being. This has led to a decline in the support intellectuals and politicians give to free speech. This decline is paralleled by a decline in academic freedom.

The Enlightenment view of a common humanity seeking rational understanding through communication has been replaced by 'linguistic governance'. Linguistic governance expresses a view of humanity as constituted by vulnerable citizens who must be protected: 'the concept of vulnerability involves anticipatory victimhood and the imperative to take preventative action' (Pupavac, 2012: 227). The result is restrictive legislation, speech codes, 'no platform policies' and censorship.

### **CAN WE SAVE A SECOND ORDER VALUE?**

In his chapter in *Why Academic Freedom Matters* and in his book *What's Happened to the University?* Frank Furedi argues that 'Academic Freedom' is now, and at best, a 'second order value'. It is traded off against a range of other values often embodied in university mission statements such as 'diversity', 'inclusion', 'sustainability', 'impact' and 'employability'. Furedi sees the defence of academic freedom, as the defining value of the university, as the first step in a fight to restore academia.

But we need uncompromising warriors in this fight because academic freedom is always qualified by its seeming defenders. In December 2016 staff and students from the University of Aberdeen produced a manifesto *Reclaiming Our University*. The section on academic freedom begins with a statement similar to my understanding of what academic freedom means: "(s9) Academic freedom is exemplary. In everything they do, academics in our university seek to live to the fullest extent a freedom that, in a democratic society, is available to every citizen. Thus academic freedom is not distinct from the freedom of the citizen; it is an intensification of that freedom."

Excellent, then in the next section we read:

"(s10) We have to trust that members of our academic community, whatever their rank or status, will exercise their freedom wisely."

This qualification is a 'but' that can be widely and not wisely interpreted. There is a strange linguistic function in such 'buts'. When people say "I believe in free speech and academic freedom but it must be used inoffensively or wisely" then the 'but' negates the previous part of the proposition and it now reads "I do NOT believe in free speech and academic freedom". Both are absolutes and we must uphold them with no 'ifs' or 'buts'.



## BACK TO THE FUTURE OR BEGIN AGAIN?

Whether salvation of the existing university is possible depends on overcoming the crisis of meaning which requires, first and foremost, understanding that we are facing a wider political and socio-cultural attack on ourselves as autonomous knowing subjects. Without understanding this there can be no successful arguments to ensure the future of the university.

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# The Question of Iran

Masoud Ahmadi



In recent days we have heard a lot about the new American Administration's approach to Iran. Much can be said about the merits of the new policy and where it is going to lead. The Iranian regime apologists and advocates of appeasement argue that a tough stance will lead to war which, considering the disastrous interventions in Iraq (2003) and Libya (2011), will in turn lead to further disaster in the Middle East and probably more terrorism by the likes of ISIS. Proponents of this analysis fail to admit that appeasing the dictatorship in Tehran for over three decades is a reason behind the chaos in the Middle East.

The other option, the option of war, is disastrous, yes, but what about a Third Option. Simply put, this third option suggests that the social ills and the level of repression in Iran show that the regime is weak and crumbling from within. If the West stops supporting the regime against the wishes of the people of Iran, they will be able to bring about democratic change that is beneficial not

only to Iranian people but also to the region and the wider world. This option was first proposed by Maryam Rajavi, the Iranian opposition's president elect for the transition period, during a conference in the European Parliament in December 2004. The uprisings in 2009 proved her correct, but the new US administration of that time failed to see this, and the people of Iran, and of course the region, paid a heavy price for Obama's misguided policies that led to the current dilemma in the Middle East and to the rise of President Trump in the US.

For a long time the West has been appeasing Tehran in the vain hope that the so called 'moderates' will emerge and Iran and its terror machinery would be contained. The main outcome of this policy has been the carnage that we see today not only in the Middle East but also in Europe and the rest of the world. The book *Islamic Fundamentalism – the New Global Threat* was published in 1992 by a senior member of Iran's parliament in exile, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). The

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author, Mr Mohammad Mohaddessin, heads the Foreign Affairs Committee of NCRI. In other words, since 1992 the leaders of the world were warned about the menace of a regime of mullahs (equivalent to medieval theocratic rulers) who control the massive resources of a rich country like Iran, and how this menacing phenomenon would affect the rest of the world.

Early in January this year we heard that one of the two pillars of the Iranian regime died. Rafsanjani has been dubbed as a moderate leader by many media outlets which fail to mention his life record. He was the chief of the army during the Iran-Iraq war; an eight year war, the longest in recent history, that resulted in a million dead and many more wounded and maimed, in addition to over 1000 billion USD of damages to both countries. During his time as commander in charge of the armed forces, i.e. the regular Army and the IRGC (Islamic Republic Revolutionary Guards), he was the mastermind of recruiting children who he described as “disposable soldiers”, for the war.

After the war, when Ayatollah Khomeini died, Rafsanjani and Khamenei removed the position of Prime Minister and divided the power between themselves; the latter becoming Supreme Leader and Rafsanjani became President.

In his time as President he organised extrajudicial killing of dissidents inside and outside of Iran, ordering and closely following the murder of several hundreds of Iranians including Professor Kazem Rajavi, NCRI's ambassador to Switzerland in Geneva in 1990, Iran's former Prime Minister Shapoor Bakhtiar in France (1991), and Mohammad Hossein Naghdi, NCRI's Representative in Rome (1993). He was also involved in the mass execution of over 30,000 political prisoners in the summer of 1988. In addition, he was wanted by courts in Germany (for the assassination of Kurdish leaders in 1992) and Argentina (for the bombing of a Jewish centre in 1994), for links to terrorist activity in these countries. He was also behind the bombing of Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996 (19 American servicemen died). The case of the bombing of the Jewish centre in Buenos Aires is still causing controversy in Argentina and prosecutors are following it.

Rafsanjani was also a mastermind behind Iran's nuclear program. On 27 October 2015 in an interview with Iran's official news agency IRNA about Iran's nuclear programme he said: “Our basic doctrine was always a peaceful nuclear application, but it never left our mind

that if one day we should be threatened and it was imperative, we should be able to go down the other path”; i.e. the nuclear weapons path.

Now if this is the record of the ‘moderate’ in this regime then you can guess what sort of creatures are the ‘hard-liners’.

Now let's look in brief at Iran's history since before the revolution in 1979. Iran under the Shah was despotic. No opposition was allowed to exist and there was a phoney parliament, almost all the MPs were members of the party created by the Shah, called Rastakhiz. He seized absolute power after a coup d'état against the only democratically elected prime minister of Iran, Dr Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953. The young Iranians, like everywhere else in the world, wanted to take part in the system of running the country and when the opportunity came in 1978-79 they poured into the streets and demanded change. Because of a lack of democratic institutions during the time of the Shah, the mullahs who were in control of an existing network of mosques were in the position to usurp the leadership of the movement. Ayatollah Khomeini took control at the helm while the ordinary people trusted him, as people would naturally trust an Archbishop in the UK. But he betrayed this trust and a much more aggressive repression, compared to the time of the Shah, started in Iran.

The young Iranians who were the backbone of the 1979 revolution did not want this. They were calling for fair and free elections, a genuine republic rather than a theocracy, rule of law, an end to the death penalty, and the guaranteeing of all sorts of freedoms and rights including freedoms of association, assembly, and speech, the right to choose your own clothing, and the right to elect and be elected regardless of sex, ethnicity, skin colour or religion.

Obviously Khomeini and his cohorts could not accept this. He had a vision that he had published in a book called ‘Absolute Rule of the Clergy’. Like Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, in this book Khomeini talked about his vision of an Islamic Caliphate under his rule. Iraq was for him like Austria was for Hitler, the first step to this global caliphate. Eight years of war with Iraq was to “capture Jerusalem via Karbala” (the holy city south of Baghdad), according to Khomeini.

What Khomeini failed to achieve during the Iran-Iraq war was given to his successor by the coalition war in 2003. To gain the support of Iran for the war with Iraq, the coalition, i.e. the US and UK governments, made



a deal with Iran in Geneva days before the start of the bombings. The coalition agreed to crush the Iranian opposition members in Iraq and in Europe in exchange for the Iranian regime staying out of Iraq. But the mullahs, deceitful as they have always been, did not keep their part of the deal and infiltrated Iraq with Revolutionary Guards and its Qods (Jerusalem) Force branch. That is the main reason behind the current situation in Iraq and the rise of ISIS. When in 2014 al-Baghdadi announced his plan for the creation of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) I started writing in social media that it is foolish of the American Administration to attempt to side with the de facto Islamic State of Iran, Iraq and Syria (ISIIS) to push back ISIS.

Following President Bush's mistakes, the Obama administration, from 2009, went into extremes in neglecting international law and making concessions to Iran in order to make a deal on the nuclear front. The price of this misguided policy has been dire.

One such price was paid by the Iranian opposition members in Camp Ashraf, Iraq. In 2004 they were recognised as 'protected persons' under Geneva Conventions by the coalition. They were foreigners in an occupied land and the coalition had a responsibility to protect them. But in 2009 when President Obama took office he was as determined to leave Iraq as he was to make a deal with Iran on the nuclear front. Hence the residents of Ashraf were put under the thumb of Iranian regime proxies in the Iraqi government of Nuri al-Maleki. Since 2009 over seven lethal attacks were carried out against these refugees. Three attacks in Camp Ashraf, the home they had built over 26 years, and then after they were forced to leave their home for what was dubbed a TTL (Temporary Transit Location) in a camp ironically called 'Liberty', four more rocket attacks there resulted in a total loss of 177 lives (some 28 were killed by a medical blockade of both camps). International Liberty Association became involved in an international campaign for the humanitarian task of transferring the residents of Camp Liberty to safe third countries. And this was accomplished in September 2016. A few dozen were taken to EU countries and most, nearly 3000, of them were finally transferred to Albania. A great achievement indeed.

During this period the perseverance, integrity and ingenuity of the residents of Ashraf, now referred to as "Ashrafis", turned them into symbols for the people of Iran who are thriving for freedom and better living conditions.

The other price of the misguided policy vis-à-vis Iran was, and is, being paid by the people inside Iran. The regime's human rights violations have been condemned 63 times by various UN bodies; the latest last December in the General Assembly. The Iranian regime, being the number one executioner of people per capita, has been condemned numerous times by numerous rights organisations for public and arbitrary executions, mistreatment and torture of prisoners, stoning, gauging out eyes, cutting off hands and limbs, and incriminating activists of any sort; human rights, children's rights, women's rights, workers' rights, and environmental activists, as well as journalists. Photos of public hangings and amputation machines haunt the civilised world.

Recently, pictures of Iranians sleeping in graves shocked the world. Iran is one of the richest countries in the world. Yet over 70% of the people live below the poverty line. This includes teachers and workers whose salaries are far below the poverty line defined by Iran's officials.

The workers, teachers, nurses, bus drivers, ... who demonstrate in Iranian cities at every opportunity they can find, have a common slogan: pay our wages and salaries instead of sending the money to Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, and ...

What can be done?

Evicting IRGC from all countries in the Middle East is the first move. Iran's economy is under the thumb of IRGC. If IRGC is recognised for what it is, a terrorist entity that is terrorising the people in Iran and the region, then their funding can be monitored and curtailed significantly. Western companies must refuse to deal with this terrorist entity. In simple words to stop terrorism, we must freeze their funds.

Next, keep Iran under check until executions end. The world must stop dealing with the Iranian regime unless its human rights record improves. Executions must stop, particularly the execution of children.

Iran, given the socio-economic conditions there, is like a volcano ready to erupt. In June 2009 we could see the lava flowing from this volcanic society. By curtailing resources of the oppressors, the IRGC and VEVAK (Iran's suppressive intelligence apparatus), democratic change in Iran can soon become a reality. The death of Rafsanjani, a significant pillar holding the regime together, has also provided new opportunities for the people of Iran and of course the rest of the world.

Nigel Sinnott

# Conway's Journey Round the World, 1883–84: Part 3



Conway deals with South Australia in three lines: “We stopped half a day in beautiful Adelaide, where I was able to pass a few happy hours with a family of dear friends I had known in London.”[98]

The ship’s next stop was in Albany, on the south coast of Western Australia. After being taken ashore, Conway looked around, spotted a newspaper sign, and had a chat with the editor (C. J. Ashwell?) of the *Albany Mail*, which had started earlier that year (1883).

Albany, Conway observed, was “delightfully primitive”. He added: “The walls were placarded with notices signed by two justices of the peace, giving a list of names of persons (Europeans) to whom it is forbidden to sell alcoholic drinks. A law forbade selling liquor to aborigines, only about twenty of whom were left at Albany.”[100]

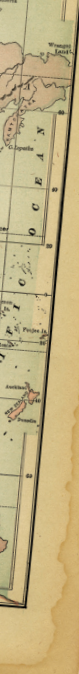
He joined about six other passengers from the ship and went for a walk outside the settlement. They soon met a dozen full-blood Menang Noongar people, “and I observed that their best talker in English dropped and inserted her ‘h’ in cockney style”. Conway explained:

They were all related to each other, and were in trouble because one of their number had been locked up for fourteen days. The prisoner’s wife walked in proud distress, a conscious object of compassion. Finding that she spoke English fairly well, I asked her what had been her husband’s offence. “Deserted his master,” she answered. “It is wrong, it is wrong,” said the oldest of the men.[100]

The Aborigines put on performances, for which they were paid, of their very impressive skills with boomerangs, spears and waddies. One man could hit a shilling on a stick with a spear thrown from 15 metres away. They also consented to be photographed.

Conway described the group as follows:

They all wore garments of kangaroo skin, those of the men falling behind and leaving them in front naked except for the groin cloth. The women were thickly wrapped from below the shoulder to the knee. Neither sex had stout legs. The feet of the women were delicate and shapely. The group presented a pathetic appearance, and it was painful to observe the repugnance of the Australian whites generally regarding them. Were it not for the filthy skins and blankets on which the British prudes insist, they would by no means be repulsive. They possess considerable intelligence and humour. One need only read Brough Smith’s [sic: Smyth’s] book on the Australian aborigines to recognize the remarkable character of their legends and folk-lore. We paid them well for entertainment, but for which our half day in Albany would have been dull, and left them squatting in a row, backs to fence, each with his and her clay pipe.[102–103]



From Albany the ship headed into the Indian Ocean, and Conway recalled:

On our voyage towards Ceylon our ship sailed a whole day through thick masses of floating lava, which rattled perpetually against the hull. Now and then we passed floating palm-trees which had been hurled and then perhaps drifted until they were a vast distance from Krakatoa, where they were uprooted. Their leaves were still green, and on them perched many different birds.[105]

Buckets were lowered from the ship to gather pieces of pumice for souvenirs.

In mid-December Conway reached Ceylon, which he calls “the land of my dreams”. He explains that “I had studied the Sinhalese Buddha and Buddhists, and knew I was leaving behind Anglo-Saxonism – cruel, ambitious, canting, aggressive – to mingle with people who knew ‘the blessedness of being little.’”[108–109]

One thing marred his arrival, and is best told in his words: “There are in Colombo several ‘vile’ houses depending for patronage on travellers. When our ship arrived, agents came out on the tender and went about recommending those houses, declaring that the inmates were all Christians.”[119]

Otherwise he was not disappointed, “But I was too sophisticated to adapt my mind at once to the extreme unworldliness of the Buddhists. To find philosophers living in thatched cottages with earth floors was an astonishment.”[109]

On Christmas afternoon Conway found himself giving a talk, at their request, to young Buddhists and Hindus on birth legends of Jesus and the Buddha. It felt a bit unreal: “Was it a dream. How had I got there? Was I in any sense the same as the Methodist youth who thirty-two years before had left his home beside the Rappahannock to preach Methodism?”[129]

From Ceylon, Conway took the Teheran for India, arriving first in Madras. His account of India is very detailed, and of about 140 pages, so I cannot possibly do it justice here. But I should probably mention that, when he was in Sydney, Judge Windeyer had told Conway that he would find “the evidences of Theosophy irresistible”, and Sydney Professor John Smith said he had been impressed by his interviews

with Madame Blavatsky. So, writes Conway, “I promised him and his wife, to whom I owed much for their hospitality, that I would investigate the matter.”[196]

Moncure and Ellen had met Blavatsky before, in London, but I think this was before the establishment or invention of Theosophy. His next meeting, in early 1884, is worth mentioning in his own words. Please bear in mind that he had just visited Saint Thomas Mount, near Madras, where Saint Thomas, the doubting Thomas of the New Testament, was believed to have ended his days.

The centre of the Theosophic cult is Adyar. On the gateway was written, “Headquarters of the Theosophical Society”. At the entrance of the park was the dilapidated carcass of a blue pasteboard elephant, which it appeared some Madras believer had set up on a recent Theosophic anniversary. The carriage-road wound through a leafy park up to a handsome bungalow. . . . The “Countess” Blavatsky was cordial, and urged my remaining till the morning. I accepted her invitation so far as the rest of the evening was concerned, and was there nearly six hours. . . . Another person present was Mr. W. T. Brown of Glasgow, a young man of pleasant manners, who told me some of his marvellous experiences; but when I intimated that I would like to carry away some little marvel of my own experience, the reply unpleasantly recalled vain attempts made through many years to witness a verifiable spiritualistic “phenomenon”. I was once more put off with narratives of what had occurred before I came, and predictions of what might occur if I should come again. There was a cabinet shrine in which letters were deposited and swift answers received from the wonderful Mahatmas; but when I proposed to write a note, I was informed that only a few days before the Mahatmas had forbidden any further cabinet correspondence. I said that was just my luck in such matters; wherever a miracle occurs I was always too soon or too late to see it. My experience was that of Alice in the Looking-glass – “Jam yesterday, jam to-morrow, but never jam to-day.”



Mme. Blavatsky had been forewarned by Professor John Smith of my visit, and as a shrewd reader of thoughts saw that I regarded the new order against letters as aimed at my investigation. I was careful, however, not to say that I thought it unreasonable for the Mahatma to foreclose the cabinet test just as his omniscience knew that one was coming who needed the wonders so much more than the convinced already. My self-restraint in not pressing the point in company pleased her.[196, 197–198] . . .

When I left in the evening for Madras, Madame Blavatsky said merrily that she would make me an “astral” visit in London. I reminded her that I had in the morning looked with doubt on the footprint of St. Thomas, the disciple who would not believe in the existence of his Mahatma without touching him, and that his sceptical spirit is still in the earth.[203]

From Madras Conway went to Calcutta, in time for the Exposition there and the centenary celebrations of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. He went to the theatre to see Buddhist and Hindu plays and even a Parsee opera. And on 18 January he saw the viceroy, the Marquess of Ripon, holding court in the imperial council chamber. He was, however, appalled at the sight of goats and kids being sacrificed to Kali. He also visited Delhi, Agra, Allahabad and Bombay. In Bombay he stayed at the English Club, and while visiting the Elephanta caves met an old acquaintance, Alexander Agassiz, marine zoölogist and fish specialist, and son of the palaeontologist Louis Agassiz.

“In India,” Conway wrote, “I steadily realized not only that the true religion was that of Zoroaster, but that fundamentally the only practicable religion is the struggle of Good against Evil. That is what everybody is necessarily doing.”[339]

From Bombay Conway travelled to Aden and then to the Suez Canal but, because of news of an outbreak of cholera in Bombay, passengers on the *Peking* were not permitted to land in Egypt. “Even the mails,” he wrote, “were not admitted, and an urgent dispatch was sent to the canal bank in a bottle. My hope of passing a week in Palestine was thus defeated.”[343]

They proceeded to Venice, but were quarantined for four days. When the passengers were allowed on shore, Conway found that the carnival was beginning. He then travelled, presumably by train, to Paris, where “the Mardi-gras mirth and grotesquerie were in full glory”.[344]

Conway writes that he was back at home in Bedford Park, west London, on Wednesday 13 March, but 13 March 1884 was a Thursday. (It was a leap year!)

“On my return to England,” he wrote, “I found the nation profoundly moved by the death of General Gordon in the Soudan.”

The mingled grief and rage was something like that which filled New England when John Brown was executed in Virginia, but as Gordon was slain in fair combat while invading a foreign country there was none to rage against except the government. The Prime Minister (Gladstone) had to defend himself as well as he could in a case where the attack was animated solely by a recrudescence of the crusading spirit. “Chinese Gordon”, as he has been called, was now spoken of by the national clergy as “Our Christian Soldier”. The wrath of the clerical aristocracy, reinforced by that of the Queen herself, seemed about to flood the Soudan with a deluge of blood... [345]

After corresponding with his friend, Quaker M.P. John Bright, and reading more about Gordon’s campaign against the Mahdi and the fall of Khartoum, Conway writes: “I reached the conclusion that if one scratches an Englishman with a Moslem spear he will find a crusader.”[348]

Moncure Conway was minister of South Place from 1864 to mid-1884 and from late 1892 to mid-1897. His wife Ellen died in December 1897 (New York).

At the age of 75, while working in Paris on a biography of Jean Calvin, Moncure Conway died, on 15 November 1907. He was cremated at Père Lachaise cemetery and on 1 December there was a memorial meeting at South Place.

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(Text numbers in square brackets refer to pages in Conway's *My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East*.)

To see Nigel Sinnott's biography please refer to page 13 of Vol 121 No.11 of the Ethical Record.

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Edited version of the original, longer article agreed with the author.

## VIEWPOINT

# RESPONSE TO RAY WARD

A response to Ray Ward's viewpoint published in November 2016's ER (Vol 121, no. 10: 20-21) regarding Jan William's article 'Prostitution: Chalk and Cheese', which appeared in October 2016's ER (Vol 121, no. 9: 10-12).

Ray Ward attacks my article on the Nordic Model using sweeping statements unsupported by research evidence. He claims that prostitution has always been present but provides no evidence for this, whereas Lerner (1986) says 'It is likely that commercial prostitution derived directly from the enslavement of women and the formation and consolidation of classes. Military conquest led, in the third millennium BC to enslavement and sexual abuse of captured women.' (p133) Ray Ward further claims that attempts to eliminate prostitution have failed, giving no evidence. However, street prostitution – often cited as more dangerous – has been more than halved in Sweden, according to a government evaluation of the first ten years of the law criminalising sex buyers (Raymond, 2013: p73). This found no evidence that prostitution had been driven underground (as Ray Ward asserts); Raymond (p64) specifically refutes this: 'What critics usually mean is that prostitution has been driven to an indoor site or the internet, which they imply are more clandestine and dangerous situations for women. These are hardly underground... prostitution requires a buyer and

a seller to come together at a time and location for the sexual act.'

Ray Ward ignores important aspects of prostitution noted in my talk, especially the endemic racism and trafficking, violence and unsafe working conditions (ibid and Pai, 2013) and single parenthood. Any unbiased evaluation must deal with these; I have not space to do so here.

## STARTING IN PROSTITUTION

Contrary to Ray Ward's view that women freely choose prostitution, most start as vulnerable adolescents. Figures from around the world are sometimes much higher, but in the UK 33% were 'looked after' children, 50% started under the age of 18, 50% were homeless, 50% were coerced and 72% had been abused as children. These figures come from the government's (2004) consultation and from a study by Eaves (2012). Survivor Rachel Moran explains that youth is commodified and sought after in prostitution – the most vulnerable being most used. Answering the brothel telephone, the most frequently asked question was, 'How old is the youngest girl you have?' Faced with extremely limited choices, young people in horrific situations need a 'survival strategy' (Wilson, 2009: p166) in order to stay alive, rather than, as Ray implies, entering prostitution in preference to taking up a normal job offer.

Overall, multi-faceted poverty (debt, low welfare benefits, homelessness, addiction, violence, coercion, family breakdown, cut-off care, poor mental health, low educational attainment and discrimination) is a key driver into prostitution as described in the government's 2014 Literature Review. Ken Loach's 2016 film 'I Daniel Blake' illustrates this.

I did not and do not suggest, as Ray Ward asserts, that sex should only occur in meaningful relationships.

### **DYING IN PROSTITUTION**

Ray contests my assertion of exceptionally high mortality in prostitution. Roger Matthews, criminology professor at South Bank University says, 'Street prostitution is the most dangerous occupation you can be involved in. The majority of street women have suffered life-threatening violence. Ipswich confirmed this.' (Review in The Guardian by Julie Bindle, in reference to the five prostitutes murdered by sex buyer Steve Wright (Bindle, 2008).) 'Such women are 18 times more vulnerable to homicide than other women, and suffer regular abuse from pimps, punters and passers-by. Over the past decade, at least 89 women in prostitution have been murdered, and that is thought to be a low estimate.' A Canadian study in the Seattle Journal for Social Justice indicated homicide rates among prostitutes are 40 times higher than average for all women (Mathieson et al., 2015). Note that Steve Wright, presenting as a 'nice punter' would not have shown up on 'harm reduction' schemes such as Ugly Mugs which share information on violent punters.

Sweden has operated the Nordic Model for 15 years; its effect on prostitute homicide rates is clear (P. White, 2015). Since its introduction no women have been murdered in prostitution. Only one prostituted woman was murdered, by an ex-partner, not by a client. The Netherlands, where prostitution was legalised in 2000, reported 127 women murdered in prostitution in the 30 years prior to 2013. Germany, from 2002-15 recorded 69 murders and 28 attempted murders of prostituted women. Spain, where prostitution was decriminalised in 1995, has seen 31 prostituted women murdered. All these murders are almost exclusively by pimps and punters.

Nikki Holland, Assistant Chief Constable, National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Prostitution

and Sex Work said 'In the UK we have had 153 murders of prostitutes since 1990, which is probably the highest group of murders in any one category.'

As well as homicide, prostitute deaths are due to suicide, drug overdose, pimp violence, and STIs. Any woman in prostitution is likely to die young.

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN PROSTITUTION**

Mathews asserts that 'Numerous studies on women in street prostitution highlight the fact that most are dependent on heroin, crack cocaine, or both, and that all but a tiny minority want to stop selling sex.' (Quoted by Bindle (2008).)

Prostituted women use drugs for several reasons. A woman with a drug habit may prostitute to finance it. Pimps may encourage or force a woman to use drugs, in order to exert control, especially with children and young people. Prostituted women may use drugs to escape the painful reality of their lives.

### **POOR MENTAL HEALTH IN PROSTITUTION**

A woman's normal response to a stranger groping her, let alone penetrating her, is alarm, disgust, fear. This is the essence of prostitution – groping and penetration by strangers, over and over again. Just to exist in prostitution, she must suppress normal, involuntary responses and embrace that stranger, tell him she's enjoying it and he's wonderful. This requires dissociating from her feelings, from her true self, causing long-term psychological harm. Many women need drugs to endure it. In a nine-country study, 68% met the criteria for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, a similar prevalence to that among war veterans. 57% reported rape, 73% assault and 64% threats with a weapon, all from punters. 13% reported no punter violence.

### **STEREOTYPES**

Ray Ward suggests that prostitutes are stereotyped as downtrodden victims, yet it is he who buys into the fake stereotype of the 'happy hooker' portrayed by Brooke Magnanti in her (2013) book. The extensive evidence of widespread early abuse, entrapment, violence, coercion, substance abuse, mental health problems, STIs and high mortality is undeniable. 'Happy Hookerdom' is specifically refuted by survivor Geena Leigh, prostituted for 19 years in Australia:



'I didn't meet one woman who enjoyed what she was doing. Everyone was trying to get out.' (Leigh, 2014)

### **BIASES – MAGNANTI'S BOOK**

Ray Ward is for once correct in asserting 'Writers come with a bias and look to find ways for the numbers to fit their preconceived notions of what the truth should be,' – this applies particularly to his own unsubstantiated opinions.

Ray Ward cites solely Magnanti's book which – like Ray – uses opinions, not evidence, to justify and glamourise prostitution. Her financial interest is clear, both as a sex seller and a popular writer. She thereby damagingly betrays the majority of prostituted women who had little real choice.

Reviews of Magnanti's book were mixed. The Guardian was positive, unsurprisingly since it was written by Catherine Hakim who brought us the idea of 'erotic capital', stating 'Today, the financial returns of attractiveness equal the returns of qualifications. Many young women now think beauty is just as important as education', not perhaps a view accepted by those entrusted with the care of young women. Magnanti's book was criticised for bad science, e.g. in relying on the work of discredited Michael Bailey, who was investigated by his university and demoted, having to repeat his experiments and finding different results the second time around. Melanie McGrath (Telegraph) pinpointed that Magnanti stated:

"Even in peer-reviewed research it's important not to take statements at face value", while doing precisely that with research that appears to support her (Magnanti's) views. I listed 23 unsubstantiated assertions in the first four chapters, e.g. "It is well known that the majority of street prostitutes in the UK are British and almost all the rest are EU nationals." No source. "Women take HR treatment to enjoy good sexual health." No further elucidation. (McGrath, 2012)

Is this work to rely on as a sole source?

### **CONCLUSION**

The debate continues. Most countries around Britain now have the Nordic Model. Legalisation and decriminalisation have been shown to make

matters worse (Raymond, 2013: p17-79).

It is a polarised and politicised debate. One side makes enormous profits by exploiting people in prostitution and justifying it in a propaganda war. According to the UN, human trafficking, much of which is prostitution, is the world's third most profitable trade after the illicit trades in drugs and arms. No wonder prostitution has many defenders. Apart from the obvious beneficiaries (pimps, traffickers, brothel-owners), hotels, banks, security services, laundries, advertisers, cabdrivers, clubs, pornographers etc. also profit. The cost is to health and social services, already squeezed. Those damaged are mostly women and girls.

The other side of the debate is the voices of survivors (like Geena Leigh and Rachel Moran) and evidenced, peer-reviewed, published research. It is peopled by volunteers and people mostly living on academic or charity salaries.

Who do you choose to believe? If you have been a sex buyer or porn-consumer then you already have an inbuilt bias established by your own behaviour. You can only have an informed opinion if you confront this. The sex industry affects us all. We all need to take the time and trouble to look at the evidence.

*Jan Williams*

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**THE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION IS £35 (£25 IF A FULL-TIME STUDENT, UNWAGED OR OVER 65)**

# THINKING ON SUNDAY

Start at 11.00 unless specified otherwise.

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<b>Mar 5</b>	<b>One Nation, Under Trump?</b> • <i>Professor Sarah Churchwell</i>
<b>Mar 12</b>	<b>How Should the West Handle North Korea?</b> • <i>Simon Buckby</i>
<b>Mar 19</b>	<b>East West Street: Genocide in WWII</b> • <i>Philippe Sands</i>
<b>Mar 26</b>	<b>Surveying Religious Beliefs</b> • <i>Katie Harrison</i>
<b>Apr 2</b>	<b>Mensheviks and Bolsheviks 1917 – 1923</b> • <i>Francis King</i>

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# THE CONWAY COLLECTIVE

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<b>Mar 1</b>	<b>TURNING WORLDS dance co.: Semaphore#selfies</b> • 19.45 to 21.00
<b>Mar 11-25</b>	<b>Making Monologues</b> • Three Saturday workshops 11.00 to 14.00
<b>Mar 13</b>	<b>The Testing Ground – a Dance Theatre Performance</b> • 19.45 to 21.00

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# OTHER EVENTS

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<b>Mar 2 - Apr 30</b>	<b>20 millisieverts per year</b> • An exhibition about Fukushima by Lis Fields • Launch reception, Thursday 2 March, 18.00 to 19.30. Followed by a screening of Nuclear Japan, 19.30 to 22.00. • Presented by Conway Hall
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For ticket prices and other information, please visit [www.conwayhall.org.uk](http://www.conwayhall.org.uk)



## CONWAY HALL SUNDAY CONCERTS

Start at **18.30** unless specified otherwise.

<b>Mar 5</b>	<b>Fibonacci Sequence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Biber, Enescu, Schumann and Brahms</i></li></ul>
<b>Mar 12</b>	<b>Children Workshop with Manus Noble (guitar)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>14:00 to 15:00</i></li></ul>
<b>Mar 12</b>	<b>Treitler Quartet</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Ravel, Dutilleux and Grieg</i></li></ul>
<b>Mar 19</b>	<b>Duo des Alpes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Brahms, Martinů and Debussy</i></li></ul>
<b>Mar 26</b>	<b>Chamber Philharmonic Europe</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Mozart, Schubert and Borodin</i></li></ul>
<b>Apr 2</b>	<b>Ensemble Metamusika</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Catoire, Weinberg, Prokofiev and Shostakovich</i></li></ul>
<b>Apr 9</b>	<b>Children Workshop with Alena Lugovkina (flute)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>14:00 to 15:00</i></li></ul>
<b>Apr 9</b>	<b>Lawson Trio</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Haydn, Rebecca Clarke, Cheryl Frances-Hoad and Schumann</i></li></ul>

For ticket prices and other information, please visit [www.conwayhall.org.uk/sunday-concerts/](http://www.conwayhall.org.uk/sunday-concerts/)