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GOOD ADVICE FROM DONALD ROOOM



Alexandra Stein's article on the (now not-so-hidden) epidemic of cults worldwide (see p.3) analyses their structure and the reasons for their often terrible effectiveness. Freethinkers, being already sceptical, don't need Donald Rooum's advice but, tragically, there are millions 'out there' who certainly do. Would they'd take it.

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Library and Learning Manager

A new full time Library and Learning Manager, Sophie Hawkey-Edwards, will start on Monday 20 July. Sophie is a professional librarian with varied experience of delivering and promoting library and learning services. She is relocating from Glasgow.

Obituary – Albert Adler

Jean Blaine, his niece-in-law writes:

It is with deep regret that we report the death on 15 May 2015 of Albert Adler at the age of 89. Albert passed away peacefully and quietly at Homerton Hospital following a short illness. Albert was a primary school teacher by profession, who married late in life after looking after his elderly mother. After his wife died, Albert became a member of Conway Hall Ethical Society and enjoyed coming to the Sunday Lectures and the fellowship of the other members, for whom he felt a deep respect. He was a very private man, who valued learning and thought, being an avid reader. He stood by his principles to the end. Albert was cremated with no ceremony or anyone in attendance, in accord with his final wishes.

Note. Albert submitted occasional pieces for the *Ethical Record* which were usually rather witty. He was keenly interested in the lectures he attended. {Ed.}

CONWAY HALL ETHICAL SOCIETY

Reg. Charity No. 1156033

Founded in 1793, the Society is a progressive movement whose Charitable Objects are: **the advancement of study, research and education in humanist ethical principles.**

We therefore invite to membership those who, rejecting the supernatural, are in sympathy with the above objects. In furtherance of these, the Society maintains the Humanist Library and Archives. The Society's journal, *Ethical Record*, is issued monthly. At Conway Hall the educational programme includes Sunday lectures, discussions, evening courses and Sunday concerts of chamber music. Memorial meetings may be arranged.

The annual subscription is £35 (£25 if a full-time student, unwaged or over 65)

CULTS AND BRAINWASHING **The hidden – and not so hidden - epidemic**

Alexandra Stein

Lecture to the Ethical Society, 7 June 2015

As I was preparing this talk I considered what my latest examples might be – this is the part I always have to update as so many new cults come and go. So, the groups I've come across this week that fit my definition of a cult are:

ISIS, of course, and related Islamist extremist groups, with their continuing recruitment. The latest from the UN is that over 22,000 of ISIS's fighters come from fully half the countries in the world.

Jewish cult (sect, if you prefer) **BELZ** with their new edict on women not driving cars to pick up their kids at school – and all the female interviewees claiming they were quite happy with that.

The **LYNDON LAROCHE** right wing and antisemitic and anti-British cult – there was a recent inquest here in London about the death and, some suspect, murder, of Jeremiah Duggan, a young man from Golders Green.

And then there are the yoga cults I've been running into where you start attending a yoga class and end with having to more or less constantly meditate on the person of the leader. Several of these I've recently dealt with have female leaders.

Let's not forget the so-called 'personal growth' cults: How to be a better person, more effective, more 'conscious'. There's endless versions of these, many like baby Scientologies, or **LANDMARK**, which itself was spawned from Scientology.

And as I was walking through past Birkbeck and SOAS the other week at lunchtime, there were the Hare Krishnas or **ISKCON**, serving their free food. But I know that the free food is free because the labour that makes and sells that food is free. And hungry. And permanently exhausted. Finally is the US Bible-based **ATI** cult: these are right-wing fundamentalists, with tentacles that reach into the highest echelons of the US government.

I'd like you to see that there is something for everyone. Perhaps some of you here are interested in philosophy, for example, and have happened upon the **SCHOOL OF ECONOMIC SCIENCE** cult.

As for me, I got interested in cults and brainwashing because, well, because I was in one. For ten long and dreary years I was part of **THE O**, a so-called Marxist-Leninist group based in the mid-western United States. When I emerged, almost 25 years ago, from this dreadful experience I decided to try to understand how such a crazy thing could have happened to me. How could I, as an intelligent, independent, curious, and thoughtful person, have given up my critical abilities for so long?

First I wrote a memoir, **INSIDE OUT**, detailing my experience in order to

understand it. Later I went on to earn a doctorate studying the topic and I now teach and write about it.

The Family Threatened

What is it about these groups? And why is it that they so often seem to threaten family relationships or the wellbeing of the children within them? They are a fixture of modern life. Sad anniversaries roll by: last year saw one of the most gruesome: the 30th anniversary of the murder of over 900 people, including 276 children, at Jonestown where Jim Jones forced his followers to take poison while trapped in the jungles of Guyana.

Cults come in a great variety of forms: from the largely religious examples above, to political cults on both right and left – including terrorist groups that train suicide bombers – and from get-rich-quick to personal growth groups. Although they are not all violent, they do share common structural and ideological features that create situations in which they are able to exert extraordinary levels of control over their members.

After the horrors of World War II, followed swiftly by Stalin and Mao's totalitarian regimes, scholars did ground-breaking work to try to understand the forces at work that produced extreme obedience to charismatic leaders. This period saw, among others, Hannah Arendt's great work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*; Milgram's extraordinary experiments where ordinary people administered seemingly excruciating electrical shocks to strangers, and Robert Jay Lifton's insightful work on brainwashing crystallized in his eight criteria for Totalist Thought Reform. There have now been seven decades of scholarship on the topic, including, most recently by scholars like myself who have themselves been victims of this process.

The Cults Hierarchical Structure

Although some scholars dismiss the concepts understood by the terms 'cult' and 'brainwashing', these organizations and processes of extreme control have not abated. What are cults, and how do they work? A useful definition of a cult builds on the work of Lifton, Singer, Arendt and others and encompasses the following five points:

- The group is led by a charismatic and authoritarian leader
- It has a closed, steeply hierarchical inner structure
- The group adheres to an exclusive or total belief system
- Processes of coercive persuasion (or brainwashing) are used to retain followers
- Followers are exploited

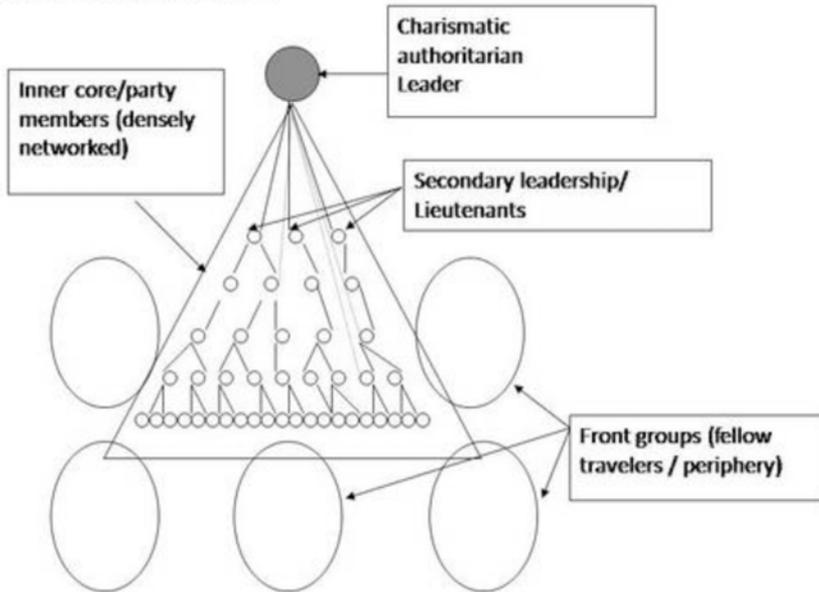
Cultic or ideologically extremist groups are controlled by a *leader who is both charismatic and authoritarian*. Both charisma and authoritarianism (or bullying) are required as they are the source of the group's central organizing dynamic of 'love' and fear. For example, this is how a former member of the Newman Tendency political cult described its leader:

I liked him! I would have a problem disliking him now, even after what I already know about him. If he sat down right there next to me,

I'd say, "Hey Fred, how are you doing? Are you still corrupting people?"

At the same time this former member recounted how Newman would 'unleash the dogs' on followers who were not toeing the line.

Structure of a totalist system



The inner structure of a cult is *closed, and steeply hierarchical*. At the top sits the leader whose every whim must be obeyed. Followers must renounce ties to outsiders – unless they can be recruited or used in some way. Yet within the group itself, belying the stereotype of close ‘community’ that exists within cults, followers are, in important ways, isolated from each other, allowed to communicate only within the narrow confines of the group’s belief system.

Doubters are Intimidated

In fact, if within-group relationships become too close, they are often broken up in order to prevent competing with the primary relationship to the leader or group as a whole. And woe betide the follower who expresses doubts, or worse, who leaves and criticizes the group -- then, as for example with the Scientology Disconnect policy -- they are fair game for threats, intimidation and shunning. Jenna Miscavige, a woman who was raised in Scientology (and has now left) illustrates both of these forms of isolation. She tells how she was separated from her parents from the age of 12 while they were all still in the organization. Her parents finally left Scientology when she was 16, but she, having been “thoroughly engulfed in the beliefs of the Church since birth decided not to go with them. Not only was I not allowed to speak to them, I was not allowed to answer a phone for well over a year, in case it was them calling me.”

While the inner structure is rigid and closed, looser front groups often (though not always) exist in cults for recruitment, funding and influence purposes. Arendt refers to these as ‘transmission belts’ between the inner world of the cult and the rest of the world. Sociologist John Lofland documented hundreds of front groups (from youth groups to businesses to media ventures) run by The Unification Church in his classic study, *Doomsday Cult*.

The closed hierarchy is supported and represented by an *exclusive belief system*, also known as a *total or extremist ideology*. This all-encompassing belief system rejects all other points of view entirely, claiming to have the one truth that explains everything for all time. The single truth is a reflection of the single point of power of the leader, and often changes at the leader’s whim. Lyndon LaRouche’s political cult, currently recruiting on US campuses, is a good example of this: he veered from a leftist Trotskyist stance early in his career to the right-wing, antisemitic position he now holds as head of the Worldwide LaRouche Youth Movement.

The cultic total ideology is also used to justify followers’ separation from loved ones in the name of a higher commitment. In *A Life in Orange*, Tim Guest quotes Bhagwan Rhajneesh, the leader of the cult he grew up in: “In a commune you will not be too attached to one family – there will be no family to be attached to.” This removal from one’s family would supposedly enable the children to “have a richer soul”.

Processes of *coercive persuasion* or *brainwashing* are used to isolate followers and control them through a combined dynamic of ‘love’ and fear. These processes take place within the isolating cultic structure and can lead to group members following the group’s orders even when it puts their own interests or even their lives at risk. Many isolating, weakening and influence strategies are used in this effort such as sleep deprivation, control of relationships, lack of privacy, control of information, diet, and so on. Isolation -- especially from very close relationships, as described above -- is of particular importance. The fundamental process is to induce in the follower a traumatic state known as *fright without solution* which is more fully described below.

Finally, as a result of these processes, followers are exploited. Regardless of what the group may claim, the flow of resources in cultic groups moves upwards to the leadership, typically in the form of money and other material assets, labour and sexual favours. For example, both the FLDS leader Warren Jeffs and Joseph Kony of the Lord’s Resistance Army are thought to have at least 60 wives. Groups such as Scientology or the Unification Church have amassed global fortunes. Financial gain is, however, merely a useful by-product of what I consider a cult leader’s fundamental motivation: that of seeking guaranteed attachments. And of course, once a leader has succeeded in controlling group members’ attachment to him or herself, then other benefits can accrue: sex, financial wealth and political power among them – though there is definite variation in if and how leaders take advantage of these possible benefits.

While resources flow *up*, orders and ideology flow *down* to the followers. But not all followers need to be controlled entirely as long as they contribute in some

way – thus many groups have peripheral members who may give money, time or other resources through front organizations. However, when consolidated in the group most followers may demonstrate uncritical obedience, regardless of their own survival needs. The ISIS recruits and suicide bombers are extreme and tragic cases of the utter loss of self-interest of these deployable agents, with, of course, terrible consequences for their victims.

How do followers become controlled, and why don't they just fight back or leave? Attachment theory can help us to understand this. This theory states that an evolutionary adaptation fundamental to humans is the drive to seek proximity to others (initially as infants to caregivers) in order to gain protection from threat, thus improving chances for survival. A child seeks its parent when ill, tired, frightened, or in any other way under threat. The parent then functions as a safe haven for the child from whom they may gain protection and comfort. But once comforted, the child eventually wishes to explore its world again, and now the parent functions as a secure base, from which the child explores and to which they can return when protection and comfort is once again needed. Similar dynamics take place with adults in their very close relationships with spouses, partners or close friendships.

However, attachment relationships do not always function well. In particular, when the caregiver is not only the source of potential comfort, but also the source of threat, a relationship of disorganized attachment results. Seeking comfort from the source of fear is a failing strategy: it not only brings the individual closer to the source of fear, instead of escaping the threat, but it also fails to produce the required comfort, thus impeding a later exploration phase from a secure base. The person freezes -- like a deer in the headlights. They are in the *fright without solution* situation; they cannot escape the threat. This failing attachment strategy causes dissociation and disorientation regarding the relationship in question. It creates what is termed a *trauma bond* or disorganized attachment; the individual is in a state of trauma and can no longer think clearly about their condition. This is a dynamic we often see in relationships of controlling domestic violence, in child abuse, or in the Stockholm Syndrome where kidnap or hostage victims identify with their captors.

Mental Dissociation Created

In these situations of *fright without solution*, there are severe impacts on how the mind processes experience: cognitive processing in the neo-cortex and language areas of the brain is impeded while the older areas of the brain -- the brain stem and central nervous system -- continue to record sensory information. It is in this creation of dissociation that the group can hijack the follower's normal survival instincts -- the group unhooks the follower's perception of experience from their ability to think about what is happening, and so can now insert their own ideology and orders. Thus it is in this separation of cognitive from emotional or sensory processing that the power and dangers of brainwashing lie.

Within cultic groups the isolation of followers from the outside world and from trusting relationships with others in the group, leaves the group as the sole safe haven available to the follower. Cults will involve followers in numerous group activities, and discourage them from maintaining relationships with family and

friends outside of the group. As involvement in the group increases, and outside involvements decrease, the group can then ramp up its demands. Part of this stage is also to induce fear, or some other kind of threat. This can be fear of the outside world, fatigue, fear of some kind of apocalyptic event, or any other form of threat. In certain religious cults stories of a wrathful God serve this purpose, while in the Lord's Resistance Army rape and simple physical terror are used. Sometimes simple exhaustion, or bullying that one is not working hard enough at one's 'development' may be the sources of threat.

Once the follower is isolated, the arousal of fear causes them to turn to the group -- their only remaining safe haven -- to seek comfort and protection, even though it is the group itself that is causing the fear. This is the emotional glue that binds the follower. In the ensuing *fright without solution*, with the follower's thoughts disoriented and dissociated, the group can now further insinuate its exclusive belief system and exert even more control over the follower. This is the cognitive impact -- the follower's disoriented thoughts are colonized by the group. The follower may now become a deployable agent, and, with their own survival needs no longer in play, they can carry out the group's orders. It is in this context that those incomprehensible actions -- such as suicide bombings -- take place. As one Newman Tendency member said, "I remember feeling like I would take a bullet for Fred."

What helps to break the situation of *fright without solution* is alternate trusting or attachment relationships that allow an escape, a solution to the threat which in turn allows the person to think clearly again, to reintegrate their thought processes. It is thus imperative that the cult prevent any such trusting relationships from developing. This is why we can predict that cults will systematically attempt to interfere in followers' close relationships.

It is vitally important to understand these dynamics to which most of us are vulnerable -- they operate based on universal human (and usually adaptive) responses of seeking comfort and connection when afraid. We must teach young people these mechanisms in order that they may protect themselves from these predatory groups. As Solomon Asch said:

The greater man's ignorance of the principles of his social surroundings, the more subject is he to their control; and the greater his knowledge of their operations and of their necessary consequences, the freer he can become with regard to them.

THE HUMANIST LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

The Humanist Library and Archives are open for members and researchers on Tuesdays to Thursdays from 1000 - 1700. Please inform the Librarian of your intention to visit. The Library has an extensive collection of new and historic freethought material.

When evening courses are running, the Library will remain open on selected evenings. These will be advertised on the website.

Tel: 020 7061 6747. Email: library@ethicalsoc.org.uk

BUYING AND SELLING SEX

Jonathan Norton

A London Thinks event, 13 May 2015

I went to the debate about Sex Work, at Conway Hall. On the escalator at Holborn I went past lots of adverts for a law firm that specialise in employment issues, and promise to defend the rights of anyone who suddenly loses their job. That would be anyone in ‘mainstream’ employment, of course.

I’ve never been to Conway Hall before, but I’d seen the big ‘Ethical Society’ sign visible on Theobalds Road. I had the idea that ethical societies were a relic of Victorian provincial Liberal high-mindedness, which had a long decline and finally went extinct by the time the Liberal Party itself was cut down to its post-1945 stump of 6 MPs, which it’s now nearly returned to. I derived this idea from an Aldous Huxley novel where a moralistic old phoney ends up booked to do a speaking tour of ‘Northern Ethical Societies’. Inside Conway Hall there is a strong aroma of 1920s intelligentsia, but it’s the Advanced Thought variety, gently patronised by Huxley’s friend Bertrand Russell — the sort of thing that T.S.Eliot found terribly inadequate for dealing with the horror of modern life. A CND meeting was in progress in the Bertrand Russell Room. A drinks reception with a display of Croatian paintings was in the Brockway Room. The English Collective of Prostitutes were handing their leaflets out to anyone entering the building.

The Hall got filled up, and then on the stage (beneath the inscription TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE) the discussion got underway. It was chaired by Samira Ahmed, the Channel 4 News presenter. She might have been the one criticised for the interview with Melissa Gira Grant last year, for asking too much for personal stories rather than sticking to broader questions. If she was that interviewer then she has taken on the criticism and this time tried to stay on wider issues. Because not everyone in the audience would want to appear in a broadcast of the event, there was no live streaming and we were asked not to take pictures of other attendees.

The debate can be divided up in to 5 questions that were put around the group.

1. What do the statistics tell us? Is it true that the average age at which women enter the sex industry is 15?

It was agreed there was a lack of data on the consumers, but there was also disagreement over what was reliable information about the workers. Fiona Broadfoot and Rebecca Mott emphasised that they had been coerced in to starting young, and that 12-13 was normal in their experience. On the other side, Margaret Corvid and Pandora Blake stressed that most women entered the industry over the age of 18, and Niki Adams supported by giving 18-25 as the age range. Someone mentioned that international studies put 21 as the average age of taking up sex work. There was a dispute over which studies were reliable, and obviously both parties had their preferred researchers.

2. How do you feel about the use of the word ‘prostitute’ and the newer alternative ‘sex worker’?

Pandora mentioned that the term ‘sex worker’ was introduced by a feminist in

1979. The point is to centre on the idea of workers within an industry, who should then be regarded as entitled to employment rights and protections as much as anyone else. Fiona said, “It’s not sex, it’s abuse; it’s not work, it’s oppression” and got applause, which indicated that there was an equally strong divide in the audience about the subject. Fiona also said that in her experience the consumers were often quite clear they wanted girls, and they wanted adult women to pretend to be girls if that was all that was available. Margaret said that we need to reject the simple dichotomy of sad slave/happy hooker and accept there was a continuum of attitudes, and that, as in any other job, your feelings about the work can change over time. She said the majority take part by choice and consent.

Fiona strongly disagreed. Along with Rebecca, she insisted that whatever sex workers might say when they were stuck in the routine of it all, we should “ask them in 20 years” when they would be ready to admit it was a sham and they wanted to get out but simply didn’t think about it. Niki said she was happy with either term, and also stated that physical harm existed in other industries. [This got a negative reaction from parts of the audience. She repeated the idea several times, and it’s developed in more detail in Melissa Gira Grant’s book *Playing The Whore*. The argument is that there are other occupations, and also leisure pursuits, in which serious physical harm can occur; yet no one wants to ban them. It’s essentially a libertarian argument that the individual should be free to weigh his or her own risks.]

3. What is to be done?

Everyone agreed that criminalising sex workers was a bad thing, but the reasoning was different. For Fiona and Rebecca what was important was providing an exit route for prostitutes to get out of the industry. For the others, what was important was giving them the chance to work without threats from the law, so they could avoid having to deal with pimps and other exploiters. Fiona was appalled by what she saw in the red-light district in Amsterdam, and said she thought that putting women for sale “like a steak in a window” was dehumanising and also led to “sexual deviancy”. She used the latter term a few times in the debate, she never explained it, and the audience seemed mostly bemused by it. Pandora replied that Holland has legalisation not decriminalisation, which apparently just makes things easier for the exploiters [I missed the reasons for that point] and she also stated that the women Fiona would have seen in the windows were the freest in that country, as they would be working alone.

Nikki said that trafficking was misrepresented; very few trafficked illegal migrants were coming over to work in the sex industry, compared to agriculture and other areas. Fiona and Rebecca favoured “the Nordic Model” (the Swedish approach of banning the purchase of sex, criminalising the consumers), whereas the other 3 were strongly against it and preferred the New Zealand model of decriminalisation. They argued about whether the Nordic Model had reduced violence against sex workers (once again it becomes a matter of which researchers you prefer to read). Fiona said that she’d worked freelance without a pimp for many years, and she hadn’t been any safer or in control of her life. Niki made the point again that exploitation occurs in many industries, and

Rebecca retorted that there are not many industries where workers have a daily risk of being raped or murdered. Pandora reiterated that the Nordic Model has been around for 16 years and there is no evidence it makes women safer [murmuring disagreement from the audience.]

Fiona talked about the desperate women she had known when working in a parlour in Edinburgh, where the walls were covered in porn and many of the girls were on heroin. Niki tried to do the argument about risk in other professions, and got bad audience reaction again. It was getting a bit tense and there was a fair bit of noise, people shouting interjections I couldn't make out. Niki's final point was that at least it was an income for women who had no other options.

4. What do you think about the involvement of men in the industry, and how prevalent is drug use?

Niki said that legal sanctions against vulnerable independent women just gives controlling men more power. Lots of women work for worse wages. Fiona argued that the answer was to give women more opportunities. [Things getting noisy again, tension between the panellists, shouts from the audience.] Fiona said that it is simply violence against women that leads to a "sexually deviant society". Margaret talked about her work as a dominatrix, which provoked a heckle from the back of the room: "It's not the same thing!" She went on to say that violence against prostitutes was due to "whorephobia" [gasps of incredulity from some quarters], which she defined as the misunderstanding of women who do sex work. She said "Pimp culture can be destroyed by destroying rape culture".

Pandora said that pimps would be the last people to benefit from decriminalisation. She added that she was not denying that "the industry is rife with capitalist patriarchy", and a culture of male entitlement, but the answer was to give the women more power in the industry and society (Melissa Gira Grant develops this argument as well, that modern sex workers can use the internet and support networks, so that they don't need the pimps at all). Rebecca reiterated that women who work alone can still be victims of abuse, and that consumers are "making a choice to buy another human" [murmuring of support]. Niki came back to saying it was better than no income at all. Pandora praised the New Zealand model again, where there can be background checks on brothel managers, and workers can sue them for sexual harassment.

5. Some women feel strongly that sex work is 'not just another job'

Samira mentioned she had interviewed girls involved in the Rotherham grooming case. It was clear to her that they hadn't had much choice, yet the police treated them as consenting participants in what went on. This point went around again and everyone repeated their positions, while Niki did make clear that she regarded the Rotherham case as simple child abuse and nothing to do with sex work as she was defending it. Fiona and Rebecca spoke about the disappearances and suicides they'd known about.

Reference:

Playing the Whore: The Work of Sex Work (2014) by **Melissa Gira Grant**, Ppk 144 pages, ISBN: 9781781683231

BRIAN COX IN CONVERSATION WITH ADAM RUTHERFORD

A London Thinks event at Conway Hall, 18 June 2015

Marella Santa Croce

In anticipation of a stimulating evening I bought train tickets from the Midlands to hear a well-known physicist speak: my hopes were dashed! The famously charismatic man was flagrantly drowned by his colleague who seemed to spend most of Cox's time talking.

After Dr Rutherford had spent some time telling us about genes, Professor Cox turned to the unsolved question of how life began. He spoke briefly of rocks from space and of what constituted consciousness. Reminding us of Descartes' view that the pineal gland is the mediator of consciousness, the professor mused on the Philosopher's search for the master gland in his contemporary Rembrandt's painting 'The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Deijman'.

Cox said that visible were two galaxies, 80 billion light years apart, one 40 billion light years away from us and the other 40 billion years in the opposite direction; both galaxies were at the same temperature to within one part in 100,000, so it's surmised they must have been in contact shortly after the time of the Big Bang. Bringing the question of the existence of a singularity to the fore, Professor Cox asked whether there was perhaps a singularity that had started the inflationary expansion of the universe. When he was able to speak for longer than an extended interjection, the Professor asked us to consider what was *before* the Big Bang, to conceive of the Universe as older than 13.8 billion years, to conceive of something eternal.

One particularly interesting point in the evening was the taking of the discussion microphone by a friend of the late Peter Mitchell, who is currently working on writing up the Nobel Prizewinner's correspondence and unpublished papers. Professor Cox judged the term *plasma*, which Mitchell had employed as constituting the greater part of the Universe, to be incorrect. The discussion led into where the earth's water had come from and Cox talked about meteorites bearing water descending on the planet and that water can be trapped in rock. The Rosetta comet's water had been informative on this head.

The evening ended on a note of audience/chair discussion on the endlessly questing nature of science, which involved everyone, not just the academics.

WATFORD AREA HUMANISTS

What is Humanism? How do you live without a god?

A discussion on this new book by Michael Rosen (writer, broadcaster) and Annemarie Young (writer books for children).

1100 am Saturday 4 July

at the Reason Coffee Shop & Bookstore, 116 The Parade, Watford, WD17 1BD

watford.humanist.org.uk

All welcome

VIEWPOINTS

WL Craig's 8 Reasons for God

Thank you for your treatment of Craig's 'Reasons' (N. Bacrac, May *ER* p 10). You say on p 12 that "Whether time itself is finite or infinite is up to physics to decide". I don't see that time is physical. To me it is a mental concept, the 'measure of change according to before and after.'

You say on p 15 that "Intentionality began as soon as animal brains could form associations in their perceptions vital for their survival, even before consciousness developed in them." I would call consciousness "I-am-ness", or the sense that I am. This comes first and seems basic to animals, including us. I should distinguish it from the brain insofar as the brain runs off on its own task without our say-so. We must learn to control it. I would think my identity is not my body-mind but my consciousness or Iamness, which I recognise through the brain.

On p 11 you have "(b) the atheist's *simple* starting point: a mind-less *material* universe having the potential for evolving life and mind..." I don't see how that is simple. You surely don't think matter is simple. Different materialist philosophers have different ideas of matter. What we call matter is to me images and impressions concocted in the brain from our senses. Dogs, for example, sniff around and must have different ideas of matter insofar as their senses are different from ours.

Advaita Vedanta, or non-dualism, distinguishes between phenomenon and noumenon, and yet regards them as one, rather as our reflection in a glass is one with us.

Adrian Peeler - Great Missenden, Bucks

Norman Bacrac writes: I thank Adrian Peeler for his letter and have these comments on it:

Para 1. Time is certainly a mental concept, probably *a priori* (ie before the experience of any *individual*, as Kant said) but maybe all humans *inherit* it as a necessary framework which evolved for coping with life's events (your 'before and after'). Perhaps then our innate concept of time is an *a posteriori* consequence of 100 million years of moving about in a world where time is a physical reality; thus the concept does grasp a fact about the objective world, though it's unable to reveal the age of the universe — that *will* need physics.

Para 2. Artificial Intelligence workers have yet to devise any learning process *requiring* the addition of consciousness to make it function. The possibly unconscious brain of an animal might learn and then make good use of the associations it detects in its environment. Talking of dogs – didn't Pavlov's one learn that the sound of a bell *meant* dinner-time?

Para 3. I believe the fundamental laws of matter are simple even though their consequences are complex, in the same way that the rules of chess are simple but there's a vast library of chess lore consequent upon them. To find the basic laws of matter will require much recondite mathematics and ingenious experimentation, which will likely take us way beyond the concoctions of our sense impressions.

Para. 4. I regard matter as having a dual aspect: (i) the physical aspect, discoverable by science and (ii) the subjective or conscious aspect, known by introspection; (ii) being wholly dependent on (i) for its existence and activity.

Moral Sentiments

I do not support Chris Purnell's criticism (Viewpoint, p19) of Norman Bacrac's article (*WL Craig's 8 reasons for God – refuted*, p10, both in *ER* May 15), but Norman has missed a trick in not invoking the concept of 'moral sentiments', that is: instinctive feelings of right and wrong.

These feelings are 'implicit utilitarianism', in that they incorporate what has been conducive to past survival. Pleasure itself is an evolved response; for those who enjoy what they are doing tend to do it better. The vervet story is also an example of altruism in that by emitting the signal, the vervet has given away his position, increasing his risk of predation, but usually lives to reproduce.

John Edwards - Orington

Critiques of Theology Still Needed

Norman Bacrac's talk to CHES on 19 April 2015, on the subject of the theology of William Lane Craig (see *ER*, May 2015, p 10), was in the best traditions of the Society. It continued our long-standing practice of combatting those theological arguments which are weak and specious; and it did so by the perennially valid methods of referring to the latest findings in science and to the logical implications of those findings. This practice has distinguished the Society right from when it became an openly secularist organisation in the C19; and, since that time, there have been many notable examples, at our meetings and in our journal literature, of attack on theological positions of a philosophically dubious character.

Of these attacks, Norman's is the most recent instance. Such work must continue. At present in Britain, approx. 49% of the population are religious believers, and their beliefs are almost entirely of a theistic kind. Hence plenty of effort is still required to critique theological postulates — with the precision shown by Norman — without concern for either (so-called) political correctness or the psychological consequences on believers of being subjected to unflaggingly rigorous reasoning.

Tom Rubens - London N4

Capital Punishment

Evan Parker's arguments for the reintroduction of capital punishment (*ER* June 15, p.3) fail to convince when one considers the main arguments against the death penalty. First, it does not deter homicides. US states which have the death penalty have far higher murder rates than the UK which does not. Second, to take the life in cold blood of another human being, no matter how evil, degrades the executioner as much as it degrades the executed person. Third, no person, no matter how evil, so long as he or she is alive, is incapable of moral development.

The finality of the death penalty ends the possibility of moral growth. Fourth, and a decisive argument against the death penalty, is its irreversibility. Unlike other punishments, if one subsequently finds that the executed person was

innocent one can never bring him back to life whereas one can compensate a prisoner for having been wrongly imprisoned. Given that all judicial systems regularly make mistakes, this really gives immense strength to the arguments against any reintroduction of capital punishment.

Chris Purnell - Orpington

Should Insecticides be Banned?

It was very interesting to read the article *Bees and Planet under threat* (ER June p24) and that the Mayor of London and the GLA advocate increasing bee-keeping in London. One sentence, "There are many reasons for the decline of bees" struck me. *It is an ethical issue* that our government has not banned the insecticides that destroy our bees. These are banned in other European countries.

There's no point in planting more wild flowers and having more bee hives if this goes on unchecked. There is a campaign by Friends of the Earth for the government to ban these insecticides.

Dorothy Forsyth - Eastbourne

A STOIC PARABLE

John Anderson

God (a proponent of virtue ethics) and the Archangel Gabriel (of the consequentialist persuasion) were enjoying the sort of argument habitual with philosophers and higher beings generally. "The problem with judging an action on its outcome," said God, "is the impossibility of predicting what may happen in the remote future."

"Whereof one cannot speak— ——" began the Archangel, only to be cut short by an Almighty Imperious Gesture.

"Let me finish. Let me finish. I'll give you a for-instance. You remember the case of Max Havergo who saved 21 children from a house fire at the cost of his own life – a selfless action with an excellent result – perhaps you would claim it as a moral bargain. But let's watch what happens next."

So, settling down in cloudy comfort for a few aeons, they watched.

Among the rescued was Adam Goodfellow, who grew up and begat Samuel Goodfellow, who begat Gareth who begat Darren and so on and so on to the birth of the last of the line: Tron Gadflow. Tron proved an ill favoured young person, somewhat spotty and with thick pebble glasses. Naturally he grew up to be a very brainy scientist and possessed of an inveterate misanthropy. After winning the Nobel Prize for biology he went ahead and developed a virus of unfeasible virulence and released it. Within three short years the human race was extinct.

"Well" said God, "that was as bad an outcome as ever I saw – so much for consequential ethics."

"Hang on! Hang on!" responded the Archangel. "Who ever said that the elimination of the human race was a bad thing?"

SANTAYANA AS SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PHILOSOPHER (II)

Tom Rubens

Lecture to the Ethical Society, 12 April 2015

(Concluding the article which appeared in the June *Ethical Record*)

Santayana's Timocracy

The timocracy would be liberal in the best sense of the term: in addition to supporting the arts and sciences, it would favour 'noble idiosyncrasies' and display 'a great diversity of institutions ... a stimulating variety in ways of living'. It would not 'depress humanity nor wish to cast everybody in a common mould'.

His views on who would be eligible to join the timocracy are central to his discussion of aristocracy and democracy. Everyone, he says, would have an equal chance to become a timocrat but, because of natural inequality, only some would actually be able to. The same would apply to every other social level. What Santayana is advocating, then, is a society which provides the same opportunities to all, but which recognises that not everybody will be able to make the same use of these opportunities. 'People would be born equal, but they would grow unequal.'

His insistence on inequality in natural capacity leads him to accept the aristocratic argument that any highly developed society will be, in certain key respects, inevitably hierarchical. Rank and position will vary with ability-level. Also, because differentiation is a natural process, the acceptance of it produces greater psychological contentment than is found in a society where everyone is impelled by the illusion of equal capacity.

Such a belief can only lead to gross miscalculation and, even more importantly, to disappointment and unhappiness when, in the crucible of experience, that illusion evaporates. Santayana argues that, quite simply, one person is happier for occupying a minor and subordinate position, another for occupying a major one. Thus differences in status should be gladly condoned by all members of society if they are the product of equal opportunities, and if they are not abused. Everyone should recognise the position to which he or she is best suited in the social whole.

Not All Equal But All Happy

He likens the ideal society to a family 'where all are not equal, but where all are happy.' (This, incidentally, is reminiscent of a point made by Aldous Huxley, that the Christian idea that all men were brothers did not imply that all were of equal capacity.) Santayana goes on: '**The privileges the system bestows on some must involve no outrage on the rest, and must not be paid for by mutilating other lives or thwarting their natural potentialities.**'

The timocracy heading this system would have as its main objective 'the glory and perfection of the state as imagination and philosophy might conceive it. This glory and perfection would not be a benefit to anyone who was not in some degree a philosopher and a poet.' The 'common citizen' would contribute to this objective as far as his ability allowed. In so doing, he would participate in the

virtue of the timocracy and express his loyalty to it: **For the humble to give their labour would then be blessed in reality, and not merely by imputation, while for the great to receive those benefits would be blessed also, not only in fact but in justice.**

Note the phrases ‘common citizen’ and ‘humble’. There’s no doubt that, for all its liberalism, Santayana’s view of man owes a good deal to classical and medieval perspectives. What’s striking is that he can draw on these perspectives so cogently in the midst of 20th century conditions. He’s definitely opposed to any notion of pure or absolute democracy: a position best summed up in his view that most people have no vocation in the strict sense and are, in Schopenhauer’s phrase, *Fabrikwaaren der Natur*.

Nevertheless, there is a place in his thinking for what might be called *qualified* democratic values. He acknowledges the frequency of corruption and selfishness in non-elected governments, and defends popular action to end abuses of power. Further, he thinks that timocracy should be answerable to the people in the normal democratic manner. He sees democratic processes as being, at their best, safety mechanisms to avert injustice and decadence at the top level.

However, that there should be a top level is not called into question. Santayana points out that any government, whether elected or not, can do good only if it contains people of exceptional capacity and integrity; and that the problem of finding such people confronts a democratic system just as much as it does any other. He writes: ‘All just government pursues the general good; the choice between aristocratic and democratic forms touches only the means to that end ... Everything depends on the existence or non-existence of available practical eminence.’ He goes on to define this eminence:

Eminence is synthetic and represents what it synthesises. An eminence not representative would not constitute excellence, but merely extravagance or notoriety ... [It is] an activity just to all extant interests and speaking in their total behalf. And...A government is not made representative or just by the mechanical expedient of electing its members by universal suffrage. It becomes representative only by embodying in its policy, whether by instinct or of high intelligence, the people’s conscious or unconscious interests.

Charismatic Leadership

Democracy, then is no automatic guarantee of good government. Like an aristocratic system, it may or may not produce it. In considering what Santayana says about the nature of eminence, some of us may be reminded of the plays of Shakespeare, particularly *King Lear* and *Henry V*. Santayana’s own examples of representative leaders include Alexander, Alfred and Peter the Great. Here we are very much into the subject of what Max Weber calls ‘charismatic leadership’.

Moreover, let’s note that in the current political system which regards itself as the most democratic in the world – that of the United States – the concept of natural eminence is in fact central. For all the official emphasis on the sphere of the common man, there is an underlying recognition that leaders should be above-average and uncommon. Thus the place that a Washington, a Lincoln or a Roosevelt occupies in the American mind is in effect equivalent to that occupied by outstanding individuals in non-democratic systems.

Santayana's preference for aristocratic values over democratic ones carries wide cultural implications. Great culture and civilisation, he maintains, are essentially the work of a few: 'Civilisation ... has not sprung from the people; it has arisen in their midst by a variation from them'. And as to whether it can be produced by a society based on totally egalitarian standards, his conclusion is certain: 'It doubtless cannot. What we have rests on ... leadership and imitation, on mastership and service'.

In weighing these arguments, it's instructive to consider the roots of all the major styles and genres in Western art – especially those in music, architecture, painting, drama and poetry. Few will be found to have originated in mass-culture, or to have been preserved and enhanced it. Equally, perfection in these genres has rarely been attained at the level of popular practice. The phenomenon of 'the master' – the Shakespeare, the Dante, the Rembrandt, the Michelangelo, the Bach – has little place there.

Santayana's hierarchical view of culture leads him to examine the problem of differences in cultural capacity within any given society. The openness and frankness of his views on this subject are similar to what we find in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and, to a lesser extent, in writers such as Ibsen and Proust. He says

The greater eminence the few attain, the less able are the many to follow. Great thoughts require a great mind and pure beauties a profound sensibility.... Culture is on the horns of this dilemma: if profound and noble, it must remain rare, if common it must become mean.

We might ask how this argument is to be reconciled with his earlier one that the common citizen can contribute to culture, and in a spirit of comprehension and loyalty. The two positions are to some extent harmonised by the qualification placed on the earlier one: that the average person contributes according to his ability. But this does not mean complete reconciliation; and Santayana seems to envisage a situation where there will unfortunately be some areas of non communication between the highly endowed few and the majority.

The More We Own, The More We Are Owned

Turning now to more peripheral aspects of his thinking, he makes a number of telling observations about industry and economics. In general, he feels that modern Western society produces too much, and is far too occupied with acquisitiveness. This is of course by now a familiar argument, one reinforced by the current environmentalist movement. However, at the time Santayana was writing, the period of unprecedented economic development in Western Europe and North America prior to World War One, the view point was far from fashionable. Santayana's basic attitude to economics is that of the cultured ascetic, the man given mainly to meditation, the arts and leisure. 'In a world composed entirely of philosophers', he says, 'an hour or two of manual labour - a very welcome quantity - would provide for material wants; the rest could then be all the more competently given to a liberal life.' But naturally Santayana would be the first to acknowledge that a world consisting entirely of philosophers is no more a future probability than it is a present fact.

His critique of acquisitiveness is a simple one: **‘Wealth must justify itself in happiness. Someone must live better for having produced or enjoyed these possessions.’**

Happiness and a better life mean a broadening and ennobling of the mind, and Santayana denies that modern industry has, by and large, led to this. He also notes something which isn’t obvious to a lot of people: that a fundamental tension exists between prosperity and freedom. The more we own, the more we are owned; the wider our economic commitments, the fewer chances we have for liberal pursuits. The ancients, he claims, understood this better than many moderns.

His mainly negative view of modern industrial society is not, however, a final one. He imagines the possibility of urbanisation and technology developing to the point where they would become absolutely monstrous and alienating. People would ‘spread over the land and abandon the great cities to ruin, calling them seats of Babylonian servitude and folly.’ He acknowledges that if such a thing were to occur, it would do so only in the distant future, because, in the early C20, ‘the tide of commercialism and population continues everywhere to rise.’ But he is sure these tendencies are not permanent, and that the present experiment in civilisation is not the last the world will see.

Santayana is remarkably prescient here, anticipating the disillusionment with urbanisation and technology which are so much a feature of present-day environmentalism. However, whether such disaffection will lead to a ‘back to the land’ movement is a question yet to be answered.

There’s another respect in which his writing strikes an ominous note. He speaks out against war at a time when, in Europe at least, conflict was not an imminent possibility. But what he has to say about the subject was to be gruesomely borne out only a decade later, with the coming of the first World War. ‘It is war’, he asserts, ‘that wastes a nation’s wealth, chokes its industries, kills its flower, narrows its sympathies.’ World War One did all these things. In particular, it decimated the most gifted section of the young male population, and the effects of that were to be felt throughout European society for an entire generation. Santayana concludes that to delight in war is ‘a positive crime in a statesman’.

However, despite these strictures, Santayana (like Freud) feels that there is an aggressive instinct deeply ingrained in human nature – ‘a love of conflict, of rivalry, and of victory’ – and that it should therefore be allowed some outlet. In the international arena, the outlet could be sport. ‘Sport is a liberal form of war stripped of its compulsions and malignity; a rational art and the expression of a civilised instinct’. These comments are highly appropriate, given that the Olympic Games had only recently been revived. It’s unfortunate, nevertheless, that this development did not contribute to the avoidance of war.

As to how to avert armed conflict, Santayana sees the only possible solution in terms of reason backed by might. If two or three powerful governments could unite to enforce the decisions of an international tribunal set up to preserve peace, then war could be abolished. This concept is of course similar to those

that were to underlie the League of Nations and the United Nations. However, Santayana isn't optimistic about the achievement of permanent world peace, because of what he sees as the narrow self-interestedness of most governments. In hindsight, we have to acknowledge that his scepticism is well founded. Unlike some of his contemporaries, he wasn't deeply surprised when the first World War broke out, and rightly saw that the event would kill the facile belief in unlimited progress which had prevailed in some circles up to that time.

The Universe 'An Irrational Engine'

In closing, I'd like to refer back to Santayana's materialism. Since it underpins all his other positions, it inevitably gives rise to cosmic perspective. He viewed man as 'the product and the captive of an irrational engine called the universe.' That universe, then, is a material engine. Also, it is one sustaining many different momentums, most having nothing to do with this planet or with man, and totally beyond human control. Hence man finds himself situated among forces which are indifferent to his existence and wellbeing, and which are, in this sense, chaotic. For Santayana, the purpose of human society and culture is to create order – a cosmos – as a contrast and riposte to the surrounding chaos. This order is a material phenomenon, consisting of human bodies, their materially determined thoughts and activities, and the objects they create.

He defines this order in further ways in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (published in 1900). 'In the bosom of the intractable infinite', he writes, 'lies the cosmos of society, character and art – like Noah's ark floating in the Deluge'. Also, it is 'an oasis ... within Nature'. This cosmos represents satisfaction of the human will, and the will's achievement in understanding itself. He concludes:

What we should do is to make a modest inventory of our possessions and a just estimate of our powers in order to apply both, with what strength we have, to the realisation of our ideals in society, in art and in science. These will constitute our Cosmos.

The nature and future course of society and culture are, it seems to me, nowhere better apprehended than in these lines published 115 years ago.

Long-Time CHES Member

TOM RUBENS

has recently completed a NOVEL entitled **MIXED PICTURE**
which has been published by Austin Macauley

The novel explores: ignorance and knowledge; lust and love; political safety and danger; the need for culture and the need to escape loneliness; the complexity of philosophy, and of personal sensibility. It presents a poignant picture of the perennial trials and tribulations of young, thinking, knowledgeable people in modern society.

Buy as an e-book on Kindle (via the 'Search Amazon' function) for just £3. Information on this and Tom's other published books is available on-line by googling 'Tom Rubens, author'

ESSAY - THE MOORS MURDERS FIFTY YEARS ON

Barbara Smoker

October 7 this year is the fiftieth anniversary of the arrest of Ian Brady (then aged 27) and his collaborative lover, the late Myra Hindley (22), for the vile serial abduction, torture, rape and murder of children. Because most of the victims' bodies were furtively buried by Brady and Hindley on the Saddleworth Moor in the Pennines, the case became generally known as the Moors Murders.

The pair were living in Hindley's grandmother's house, 16 Wardle Brook Avenue, on the Manchester overspill council estate Hattersley, near Hyde, where they lured two of the five abducted children to be sexually abused and killed – for the gratification of Brady's vitiated sexual appetite.

Their perverse love bond, glorifying sadistic domination, was almost religious, with echoes of ancient human sacrifice. It was heightened aesthetically by the landscapes of the wild hilly moors, which apparently held a pantheistic significance for Brady. He devoured a book about the Marquis de Sade and was obsessed with Nietzsche's 'will to power'. Above all, to attain power over life and death, he fantasised his carrying out 'the perfect murder' –



Ian Brady



Myra Hindley

one that cleverly left no discoverable tell-tale corpse and no apparent motive. Having shared this fantasy with Myra, who served as the devoted slave, concubine and acolyte of the macho superman – a god among men – Ian decreed that they would actualise it together: she to pick up the random victims; he to do the killing; and both to dispose of the bodies on the hallowed moors.

Their first victim was Pauline Reade, age 16 (12 July 1963), then John Kilbride, 12 (23 November 1963), Keith Bennett, 12 (16 June 1964) and Lesley Ann Downey, 10 (28 December 1964) – all of whom disappeared in a seemingly mysterious manner. The earth had in fact swallowed them up – literally.

Their Fatal Mistake

Planning his fifth murder, Brady thought of bringing on board Myra's sister's 17-year-old husband, David Smith, who lived nearby. Already his partner-in-crime, Smith had a juvenile delinquency record of convictions from the age of 11 for theft and assault, and was now planning a bank hold-up with Brady.

So on the evening of 6 October, 1965, Myra went and fetched Dave to the house, ostensibly to collect some miniature wine-bottles. While looking at them in the kitchen, they heard screams and other sounds coming from the sitting-room, whereupon Myra urged Dave to "Go and help Ian!" Entering the room, he saw Brady holding an axe and standing menacingly over a boy seated on the sofa. Suddenly Brady brought the axe down on the boy's head, splitting it open. As the victim lay on the floor groaning, Brady hit him again, then handed David the

axe, saying “Just feel the weight of that!” Next he proceeded to strangle the boy with an electric-light flex.

That boy was Edward Evans. Aged, like Dave, 17 years, he was the oldest of the Brady-Hindley victims. Hindley then came into the room, and Brady calmly commented “The messiest one yet!” There was blood on the floor, the walls and the door, and he ordered Myra to fetch a mop and a bucket of soapy water. She did so, showing no concern about the murder, nor that her old grandmother, Ellen Maybury, was sleeping upstairs. Brady then opened a bottle of celebratory wine.

They both apparently assumed that David would share their insouciant attitude to the crime. But they misjudged him. He was horrified by this performance and nonplussed by the relaxed attitude of the two perpetrators. ‘Necessary’ violence – say, during a robbery – was one thing; this gratuitous brutality, which was nothing but a sort of human blood-sport, was utterly other. It turned his stomach – and his life. Fearful that he himself could perhaps be the next victim, he contrived to hide his feelings. He would do anything to leave the house alive. He therefore agreed to help Ian and Myra clean up the ‘messy’ sitting-room and help truss up Evans’s body and carry it upstairs to the second bedroom, for transfer in a few hours’ time to Saddleworth.

It took them until three in the morning to clean and tidy the room. Then Myra went into the kitchen to make nice cups of recuperative tea. It was enjoyed with some light-hearted conversation that included an anecdote by Myra of an intrusive policeman quizzing her while she waited in the minivan on the edge of the moor for Ian, who, hidden by a hill, was digging.

Dave finally left the house and ran home – but not to sleep. Before dawn, he and his 19-year-old wife Maureen made their way apprehensively to a public phone-box, to call Stalybridge police-station and report the harrowing crime that he had witnessed. A police van then came to collect them from the kiosk and take them to the station for questioning.

Though David Smith was well known to the local constabulary as a bad character, the truth of the horror story he had to tell was all too evident. After describing the killing of Edward Evans, he told the police that Ian Brady had intimated committing other earlier murders, maybe associated with unsolved disappearances of children. Also, that there were two revolvers in the house. In spite of his past criminal record, Smith’s emotional statement rang true, and the Cheshire CID was immediately contacted.

Their patrol cars soon surrounded the Hattersley estate to prevent the suspects from escaping, and a four-man team comprising a police superintendent, police chief inspector, detective sergeant and detective constable, advanced on 16 Wardle Brook Avenue. Nowadays, going to arrest murder suspects who had guns, they would surely be armed – but not fifty years ago. The police superintendent, Bob Talbot, realising that the house was accessible only from a walkway in full view of the front windows so that approaching it would be vulnerable to gunfire, asked a baker’s delivery man on his morning round to lend

him his white coat and bread-basket as disguise.

When Myra opened the front door to his knock, she was more dumbfounded by the unordered bread delivery than by the ensuing true identity of the four police detectives. She denied the presence of Brady in the house, but the officers pushed past her into the sitting-room, where they found Brady in his underwear, lounging with a sprained ankle on the sofa – the very sofa on which Evans had been sitting when so brutally attacked. They began to make a search of the house, but found the second bedroom locked. At first Hindley said the key was missing, but Ian told her to give it to the officers. Entering the room, they discovered Evans's bound body, as well as the guns that David had mentioned.

Taken to the police-station for questioning, Brady admitted he had played a part in the death of the young man, but said it was the outcome of an argument that had got out-of-hand and it was David Smith who was really to blame and who had actually carried out the killing. The CID officers did not believe Brady, but nor were they convinced that Smith had any sound reason to suspect Brady's responsibility for other murders which he had neither witnessed nor suspected until witnessing this one. They wanted to bring the case to a conclusion and get Brady and Hindley charged and sent for trial, but Smith insisted there were probably murder victims buried on the moors, as he had heard Brady and Hindley mention it and seen photographs of moorland landscapes kept in the Wardle Brook Avenue house, together with a collection of pornographic sadistic literature and Nazi memorabilia.

A thorough police search of the house failed to substantiate this part of Smith's evidence, and most of the police officers thought Brady's accusations against him should also be investigated, with the intention of putting him on trial with Brady and Hindley. However, David's suspicions were partly corroborated by the police finding in Myra's van a plan of a moorland site for disposing of a body.

Incriminating Hoard

One of the four arresting detectives, Alex Carr, was, much to the annoyance of his superiors, ready to believe Smith on the subject of Brady's pornographic hoard, and secretly pursued his personal instincts. Learning from Smith that he had heard Brady tell Hindley to take some stuff in two suit-cases to a railway station to be hidden in a left-luggage locker, Carr telephoned Manchester Transport Police, asking them to check unclaimed baggage in left-luggage offices. Two suit-cases found in a locker at Manchester Central contained finger-printed material comprising the sadistic pornography and Nazi items which Smith had predicted in his police statement; also, photographs of moorland landscapes and a horrifying audio tape-recording.

This immortalised the terrified cries of a little girl, the 10-year-old Lesley Ann Downey: "Please, Mam, no! – please don't hurt me Mam – please God help me!" with Hindley's threatening voice in the background hissing "Shut up!"

The murderers apparently regarded this tape as entertainment, for they had actually opened and closed it with a recorded popular song. Sadly, the child's

mother was forced to listen to the tape so as to identify her daughter's voice, and she never recovered from that ordeal.

Extensive police searches on Saddleworth Moor were then successful in uncovering the bodies of Lesley Ann Downey and John Kilbride.

At the Brady-Hindley committal proceedings, held in Hyde before three Justices of the Peace on 9 December 1965, the court was filled to capacity, while the two accused maintained a chilling air of indifference. The heart-rending audio-tape of the pleading 10-year-old was presented as justification for committal of the case to the Chester Assizes, there to be played again to the jury as part of the 15-day trial. It made Myra Hindley the most hated woman in Britain.

That tape has remained the strongest evidence for her close involvement in Brady's appalling crimes; while the fact that the incriminating left-luggage ticket for his two suit-cases had been hidden in the spine of Myra's confirmation-gift Sunday missal seems to highlight the quasi-religious nature of the murders.

She and Brady, remanded in custody, both petitioned to be allowed to marry, but this was refused. However, even after they were convicted in May 1966, they were allowed to write to each other every day from their respective prisons, often quoting lines from Shakespeare that had some personal significance – for they both used their prison time to study literature. The authorities photocopied and stored all the letters. Social visits from one prison to the other, however, were out of the question once the murderers were sentenced, though they both bombarded the Home Office with petitions for them. In an attempt to force the prison governors to sanction and arrange such a visit, Brady embarked on a hunger-strike that almost killed him, but he was then forcibly fed.

Lord Longford's Visits

From 1968 the late Lord Longford, who was a Catholic convert, visited both of them as part of his charitable prison-visiting. He was inclined to accept Hindley's plea that she had covered up for Brady out of love tinged with reasonable fear, and he totally swallowed her repentance and renewed religious faith. Publicly endorsing her change of heart, he campaigned for her freedom – but succeeded only in provoking popular demands that she should never be released from prison. Nor, indeed, could she be released, since no possible disguise – even her natural unbleached hair! – would have been enough, at least in this country, to protect her from assault and murder.

Until 1970 she and Brady sustained their perverse mutual love, standing by the pledges they had made to each other; but then Hindley turned her back on him and put all her energy into a hopeless bid for parole. At the same time, she transferred her passionate love for Brady to a lesbian Holloway prison officer, Patricia Cairns ('Trish'), a former Carmelite nun, who had a very similar background to her own – Mancunian, Catholic, lower working-class, with an alcoholic father and domestic violence in childhood.

As Brady became aware of Myra's betrayal and the publicity she was attracting,

his feelings for her changed to one of consuming hatred, and henceforth he took every opportunity to vilify her and embellish her part in the killings.

Her new religious fervour, which so impressed Longford, may have been genuine or just a bid for parole – or maybe both. Anyway, she proceeded to make some detailed admissions regarding the circumstances of the Brady murders, though always maintaining, until 1987, that she had never been present at the actual moment of killing.

On several occasions, my late sister Paula, who was a nun and a qualified psychologist, accompanied the Catholic chaplain of Holloway Prison when he was visiting Myra Hindley there. Asked whether, like Lord Longford, she accepted Myra's professed religious revival as genuine, Paula pulled a face and said she thought it was only a 'try-on' for parole. Interestingly, Trish, always a staunch Catholic, judged Myra's faith to be more pantheistic than Christian.

Hindley wrote to Brady in 1972 that she was now breaking off her relationship with him. After that, she had his letters returned to him unopened, and, with Trish's help, burned her large collection of his earlier letters. Impressed by this, the governor of Holloway took her out for a pleasant two-hour walk. News of this reached the press, and the incident was seen as preparation for Hindley's release in response to Longford's campaign – making that even more unlikely.

Her hopes of parole now thwarted, Myra made detailed plans in 1974 to escape with Trish to Brazil, but their plans were rumbled; and Cairns was sentenced to six years' imprisonment, of which she served four years. Although henceforth they were kept apart, the bond between them remained strong for the next three decades, until Hindley's death.

On the tenth anniversary of her imprisonment, when a reminder of it appeared in the press, she was attacked by a fellow inmate, Josie O'Dwyer, incurring serious injuries that necessitated a number of operations. She was then removed from London to Durham, then to Cookham Wood (Rochester), and eventually from there to Highpoint in Suffolk.

She had made good use of her first few years in prison to obtain excellent O-level and A-level passes, and was now allowed to study for an Open University degree in humanities. This made prison life more tolerable for her, and she achieved her degree in 1989. It made the national news, to general incensed derision.

In 1984, a journalist, Frederick Harrison, obtained, with Lord Longford's help, a series of interviews with Brady, who told him about the undiscovered victims Pauline Reade and Keith Bennett – though trying to blame their deaths entirely on Hindley. When published, this information sparked a public demand for renewed searches on Saddleworth, whereupon Hindley offered to pinpoint the sites of the two remaining secret graves on the moor.

She was flown to Saddleworth, and Pauline's body was indeed unearthed near the spot that she indicated – but not Keith's. Brady then offered to take the police

to Keith Bennett's grave. He joked that he wanted in return a weekend out of prison with alcohol and television, or else, more seriously, the means to kill himself. Neither requirement would conceivably be granted, but, even without any such reward, he was willing to help the police for the sake of revenge on Myra. When taken to Saddleworth, however, Brady was in an obvious state of disorientation, both geographically and mentally.

One theory for the failure ever to locate Keith Bennett's body is that it must have been too decomposed by 1984 for there to be anything left to find, but an alternative theory, based on landscape photographs found among Hindley's possessions after her death, is that the grave is not on Saddleworth Moor but on another moor, Ramshaw Rocks in Staffordshire.

In 1985, Brady was reassessed as criminally insane, and was consequently removed from the maximum-security wing of a prison, virtually isolated from other inmates, to Ashworth Special Hospital, Merseyside – where he remains to this day, on psychotic medication. Recent advances in neurology would no doubt indicate strong genetic tendencies for Brady's narcissistic aggression and Hindley's compliance.

Capital Punishment

The death penalty had been finally abolished in Britain shortly before they were arrested, and many members of the public have always regretted that it was not still available for them. Nowadays there are renewed demands for its restoration – particularly for jihadist terrorists.

A practical argument against execution is its elimination of the possibility of later obtaining any information from the executed criminals – whether forensic information or insight into their psychological motivation. In fact, both Brady and Hindley, nearly twenty years into their imprisonment, did provide important information about the two unsolved disappearances for which they had been responsible. Needless to say, society must be adequately protected against criminal psychopaths and terrorists, but capital punishment is not the only protective possibility. As for deterrence, it is a statistical fact that the accessibility of capital punishment never succeeded as a deterrent against any kind of crime. So it seems it would simply serve vindictive retribution.

At the time of its abolition, I remember a reader's letter in a popular newspaper, pointing out how terrible it would be for us all if the death penalty had been abolished two thousand years ago: no crucifixion; hence, no salvation.

A more main-stream theologian has recently stated that atheists who oppose capital punishment must have accepted the Christian doctrine that 'all human lives are *ipso facto* sacred'. What nonsense! My opposition is based, rather, on rejection of the Christian doctrine of 'freewill'. It follows that I cannot countenance vengeful punishment, *per se*. Deterrence and rehabilitation, yes; in extreme cases (such as terrorism and serial murder), lifelong custody for the protection of society, yes; but condemnation and retributive punishment, never.

One of the more tenable arguments often made on behalf of capital punishment

is that if, for instance, Brady and Hindley had been executed at the outset for the moors murders, it would have saved taxpayers the huge amount of money spent on keeping them in custody. But Brady has often tried to commit suicide by starvation, only to be forcibly fed, and is thus kept alive against his will. Why? Presumably, either vindictively to prolong the punishment of prison or because his life is deemed ‘sacred’.

In June 2013 Brady reportedly declared, intellectually, that his criminality was “petty, compared to politicians’ and soldiers’ ”. Unlike Hindley, however, he has never wanted, nor expected, to be released, and he often puts in appeals now to be moved back from the high-security psychopathic hospital to a prison, where, he thinks, he would be more likely allowed to starve himself to death. And since death by the persistent refusal of food is obviously voluntary, why should it be ruled out, whether in hospital or prison? Only, presumably, on account of the Christian doctrines of freewill and sanctity of life.

As for Hindley, in early 2002 – that is, several years after the date of her likely parole as calculated in 1996 by the trial judge, Mr Justice Fenton Atkinson – a high-level plan was prompted by the European Convention on Human Rights to release her into a convent in New York that had agreed to take her. But the press raised a public outcry against her ever being released from prison, and this was echoed officially by the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett – not because she would be a danger to the public, but because the public would be a danger to her. At that point, the parole dispute was dramatically resolved by Hindley’s death, from natural causes (though assisted by a suicidal smoking habit), on 15 November 2002. Her age was 59.

Brady, however, is now 77 – and he could well survive for another two decades. Keeping him alive is not only expensive, it is also merciless — for incarceration which is expected to be literally lifelong, without hope of parole, may, like the traditional horror of everlasting Hell, be a worse punishment than annihilation.

Even our hero of humanist ethics John Stuart Mill maintained that premature death for perpetrators of the most heinous crimes was less cruel than incarceration for life, and so did Bernard Shaw. But I myself would leave the choice of lifelong imprisonment or suicide to the individual prisoner, as long as the decision was genuinely voluntary and was sustained over a reasonable period – that is, subject to the same safeguards as those we advocate for the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia in cases of incurable severe disease or disability.

Acknowledgments for some facts in this article are due to the following sources:

McVicar by John McVicar (Arrow-Books, 1979 edition)

To Kill & Kill Again by Martin Fido (Carlton Books, 2001)

The Lost Boy by Duncan Staff (Bantam Books, 2013 edition)

Women Killers by Claire Welch (Haynes Publishing, 2014)

A Slice of Bread and Jam by Tommy Rattigan (self, 2015)

Television documentary, *Myra Hindley: The Untold Story*, on channel 5*, 21/6/15, 8-11 pm.

Television drama, *See No Evil*, ITV3, 22/6/15, 10-11.35 pm, continued 23/6/15, 10-11.35 pm.

The views expressed in this Journal are not necessarily those of the Society.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Conway Hall Ethical Society, 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn, WC1R 4RL.

Tel: 020 7405 1818 Website: www.conwayhall.org.uk

Admission to Thinking on Sunday events is free for members of CHES and £3 (£2 conc) for non-members. For other events, no charge unless stated.

THINKING ON SUNDAY

JULY 2015

- Sunday 5 **MANUFACTURING CONSENT IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY**
1100 **Graham Bell**, CHES member
- Sunday 12 **MIGRANTS OR PEOPLE?**
1100 **Jim Walsh**, CEO of the Conway Hall Ethical Society
- Sunday 19 **DEBATE: THAT BANKS ARE A FORCE FOR GOOD**
1100 Proposed by: **Jon Parker**. Opposed by: **Paul Carroll**
- Sunday 26 **UNCONDITIONAL HOSPITALITY – OPEN BORDERS**
1100 **Manu Bazzano**

LONDON THINKS

July

- Thursday 9 **FACTS AND FANTASY ABOUT YOUR DIET AND HEALTH**
1930 **Tim Spector** and **Barbara Prainsack**, both professors at
Kings' College London and **Sue Nelson**, Science Journalist
Ticket £10 (£5 for CHES members)
- Thursday 16 **WAITING FOR GLADOS**
1930 What could sentient machines mean for humanity?
Alan Winfield and **Kathleen Richardson** with **Adam Rutherford**
Ticket £10 (£5 for CHES members)
- Wednesday 29 **THE SCIENCE AND ETHICS OF DR. WHO**
1930 **Simon Guerrier** and **Marek Kukula**
Ticket £10 (£5 for CHES members)

PHILOSOPHY FOR EDUCATION RENEWAL

**Can we teach environmentally responsible behaviour
without advocating environmentalism?**

Mary Tiles, (Philosophy Dept, University of Hawaii)

10.45 – 13.00 Saturday 18 July 2015, B.Russell Rm, Conway Hall

All welcome

If you have any suggestions for speakers (their contact details are required) or event ideas, or would like to convene a Sunday afternoon informal, get in touch with Evan Parker at evan.parker@warwick.ac.uk Tel nos 07403 607 046 (mob) or 0202 565 5016.