

Court of Appeal overturns finding of truth regarding biologist Jeremy Griffith's treatise on the human condition

Commentary by Tim Macartney-Snape AM OAM on the recent NSW Court of Appeal Judgment that unanimously overturned an earlier Supreme Court finding of truth concerning a defamatory 1995 ABC *Four Corners* program about the World Transformation Movement (WTM), formerly the Foundation for Humanity's Adulthood (FHA). Tim is a patron and member of the WTM.

In April 1995, a highly defamatory *Four Corners* program was broadcast nationwide by the ABC concerning the World Transformation Movement (WTM), its founder Australian biologist Jeremy Griffith, myself and our members.

On 7 October 2010, the NSW Court of Appeal unanimously overturned a 2008 Supreme Court finding that lack of scientific support for Griffith's biological treatise, *Beyond The Human Condition* (1991), was because it was of a poor standard. This allegation, which underpinned a horrific fear campaign that caused immense damage to our project, has now, 15 years later, been found to be untrue. As I will explain, the real significance of this finding is that it represents a crucial victory for science and the human race.

This momentous finding by Justices Hodgson, Basten and McClellan follows a series of adverse rulings against the ABC and the program's architect Reverend David Millikan (see box below for a summary of official rulings condemning the 1995 campaign against us).

Recognising the unorthodox nature of Griffith's explanation of the origins and amelioration of the human condition, Justice Hodgson, who wrote the leading judgment, found the lower Court did 'not adequately consider' 'the nature and scale of its subject matter', in particular 'that the work was a grand narrative explanation from a holistic approach, involving teleological elements' (paras 89-91).

Justice Hodgson (who himself has written books about consciousness) also found other important submissions 'were not adequately considered by the primary judge' (para 90) that could account for Griffith's work 'not attracting support' from 'the scientific community'. Those submissions were that *Beyond* 'makes very strong claims', 'crosses disciplines and even entire fields of endeavour' and can make 'those who take the trouble to grapple with it uncomfortable' because it 'involves reflections on subject-matter including the purpose of human existence which may, of its nature, cause an adverse reaction as it touches upon issues which some would regard as threatening to their ideals, values or even world views' (paras 20, 88-90).

While the Court of Appeal found that what the program said about Griffith's work was not justified, the ABC's defence of 'comment' was upheld in respect of the nationwide broadcast. The Court of Appeal also failed to recognise and condemn the malicious intent of the program. We maintain that because of other findings by the Court—including findings that Millikan misled us; that damaging allegations in the program were not made in good faith; and that Millikan said he'd 'relish' the opportunity to 'harass' Griffith—the so-called 'comment' defence should not be allowed because it was untrue, it was unfair and it was made maliciously. An appeal has now been filed in the High Court of Australia to have these remaining issues addressed. It is for the health of our society that we continue to pursue these wrongs because in terms of what the program said about us, full vindication has now been achieved, although reparations and an apology remain outstanding.

The scientific heresy of teleology

With regard to work such as Griffith's that is 'holistic' and 'teleological'—an approach that Justice Hodgson's ruling said could explain why Griffith's work had not received support from the scientific establishment—a 1991 feature article by the Australian journalist Deidre Macken titled 'Science Friction' described the resistance to the emergence of 'holistic', 'teleological' thinking in science that was occurring in the early 1990s. Macken wrote of a 'scientific revolution' and a coming 'monumental paradigm shift', reporting that the few scientists who have 'dared to take a holistic approach' are regarded by the scientific orthodoxy as committing 'scientific heresy'. She wrote that scientists taking the 'holistic approach' are trying 'to cross the great divide between science and religion', and are 'not afraid of terms such as "purpose" and "meaning"', adding that 'Quite a number of biologists got upset [about this new development] because they don't want to open the gates to teleology—the idea that there is goal-directed change is an anathema to biologists who believe that change is random...The emerging clash of scientific thought has forced many of the new scientists on to the fringe. Some of the pioneers no longer have university positions, many publish their theories in popular books rather than journals, others have their work sponsored by independent organisations...Universities are not catering for the new paradigm and...scientists who try to tackle radical ideas that weave across different disciplines cannot get funds for research, much less intellectual support from colleagues' (*Good Weekend* mag, SMH, 16/11/91). (This article can be viewed in full at <www.worldtransformation.com/sciencefriction>.)

The latter points Macken has made are particularly relevant in appreciating Justice Hodgson's ruling that 'In my opinion, the circumstances that the appellant had no affiliation or association with a university or scientific establishment, had no recognition from a university or scientific establishment other than an undergraduate degree, had apparently not published in peer review publications, and

had self-published the work under consideration, are not elements of the standard of the work itself, but are nevertheless factors counting heavily against the work receiving consideration and support from the scientific community' (para 91).

So while it is disappointing that aspects of the decision in the lower Court relating to the defences of comment and statutory qualified privilege were upheld (and are now the subject of appeal to the High Court), the Court of Appeal's recognition of Griffith's work as a variety of science that is heretical rather than the equivalent of meaningless non-science—that it is a scientific 'grand narrative explanation' of human behaviour 'from a holistic approach, involving teleological elements'—is of the utmost significance because it leaves the door open to the possibility that Griffith's treatise, while being unpalatable to conventional scientists, is groundbreaking science of crucial importance to the future of the human race, which we've always maintained it is. As Macken recognised, such heretical science has had to be self-sufficient, which is why Griffith founded the FHA/WTM as an independent organisation nearly three decades ago.

The human condition is the underlying issue in all human affairs and the issue that had to be solved for there to be a future for the human race

It needs to be explained why the 'teleological' 'holistic' acceptance of the 'purpose and meaning' of 'goal-directed change' has been, as Macken pointed out, an 'upset[ting]' 'anathema' to the scientific establishment—in fact why Griffith's work, as Justice Hodgson's ruling recognised, can make 'those who take the trouble to grapple with it uncomfortable' because it 'involves reflections on subject-matter including the purpose of human existence which may, of its nature, cause an adverse reaction as it touches upon issues which some would regard as threatening to their ideals, values or even world views'. 'Holism' in the dictionary means 'the tendency in nature to form wholes', and 'teleology' means 'the belief that purpose and design are a part of nature'. All Griffith's books present the psychological reason why belief in the 'goal-directed', 'purpose', 'design' and 'meaning' in nature of developing ever larger and more stable 'wholes' has been resisted. He explains that the problem with accepting that the 'purpose' of existence is to integrate or order matter into 'wholes' (atoms integrate to form molecules → compounds → virus-like organisms → single-celled organisms → multicellular organisms → societies of multicellular organisms → full integration), is that it implies we humans should be cooperative, loving and selfless because for a larger whole to form and hold together the parts of that whole need to consider the welfare of the whole above their own welfare. Put simply, selfishness is disintegrative while selflessness is integrative. The problem with accepting that we should be selfless, cooperative and loving is that it confronts us squarely with the problem of the human condition, namely the issue of why are humans so selfish, competitive and aggressive, seemingly the opposite of integratively behaved. Conventional science has been mechanistic not holistic, it has denied the truth of the 'goal-directed' integrative 'purpose', 'design' and 'meaning' of existence because without explanation of the human condition, explanation for the good reason why we humans are so divisively behaved, admitting that truth was unbearably confronting and depressing—as the ruling mentioned, it can leave 'those who take the trouble to grapple with it uncomfortable'. Humanity's unsaid plan was to first explain the human condition because only then would it be psychologically safe for the human race to admit the truth of the negative-entropy-driven, integrative 'purpose', 'design' and 'meaning' of existence. Griffith's books are precisely about explaining the human condition and by so doing making it possible for all scientists to be holistic (and humanity to become a peaceful integrated whole at last); however, while his 'grand narrative', which is necessarily truthfully 'holistic' and 'teleological' in its approach, is yet to be accepted by the mechanistic scientific establishment, Griffith is committing 'scientific heresy'—but that doesn't at all mean his work is poor science. The visionary Jesuit palaeontologist Teilhard de Chardin saw the future of acceptance of 'teleological' thought when he said, 'I can see a direction and a line of progress for life, a line and a direction which are in fact so well marked that I am convinced their reality will be universally admitted by the science of tomorrow.' Indeed, in recent years some very eminent holistic scientists 'of tomorrow', such as Stephen Hawking, have been impressed by Griffith's synthesis (see <www.worldtransformation.com/DocoResponses>),

but until this ruling the stigma from the *Four Corners* presentation remained all-pervasive.

Since Griffith's work does go where angels fear to tread as it were, right into the heart of the unbearably depressing subject of our less-than-ideal human condition which, as Macken mentioned, is also the realm of enquiry where religion and science, faith and reason, finally overlap—some people do find his treatise extremely unpalatable but that does not justify the relentless attack that he and the WTM have been subjected to. In fact, the motivation for our attackers' accusation that Griffith is a deluded megalomaniac leader of a dangerous anti-social organisation was precisely because he was daring to look into the human condition—which they clearly admitted when, in Reverend Millikan's case, he said, 'You realise you [Griffith] are attempting the impossible, you will be fighting to have this material accepted right down to the last person on the planet' (16/2/95), and in the case of the other architect of the attack on Griffith's work, one of a very few intolerant parents of WTM members, he said to Griffith, 'You know you are encroaching on the personal unspeakable inside people and you won't succeed' (12/2/95). He similarly told his son, 'You are trying to rattle the black box inside people and you just can't do that' (18/3/95).

The core injustice of our detractors' attacks has been the extreme dishonesty of trying to brand Griffith as a deluded megalomaniac leader of a dangerous anti-social organisation, but how could he be sound enough to look into the human condition—which his detractors' statements, such as 'You know you are encroaching on the personal unspeakable inside people', recognise he is doing—and at the same time be so unsound as to be a deluded megalomaniac? Quite simply, 'a bad tree cannot bear good fruit' (Matt 7:18).

For Justice Hodgson to have recognised Griffith's work as serious science, albeit heretical, is most significant because it was vitally important to our detractors to be able to say that Griffith's work really wasn't science at all because the public could then be led to believe that our support for his work must be due to the kind of meaningless, mind-controlling dogma that so characterises dangerously deluded sects.

There has been such a deep sense of animosity towards Griffith and the WTM in the Australian community for two decades now as a result of the relentless fear campaign waged against Griffith for daring to address the forbidden subject of the human condition, that this recognition of his work as serious science is incredibly important because it allows our human-condition-ameliorating, world-saving project to survive. In fact, this ruling represents a great breakthrough for our work and, because that work is so important, a great breakthrough for science and the world. I hope I'm clear, this ruling is world-saving. Finally, the two decade campaign focused on preventing Griffith's all-important work from being taken seriously has been defeated and brought to an end.

Plato saw all this coming!

In his books Griffith describes how that awesome philosopher of the Golden Age of Greece, Plato, warned of the great danger of intolerance threatening to prevent the emergence of the humanity-liberating understanding of the human condition in his famous cave allegory—undoubtedly the most penetrating account ever given of the human condition prior to it being able to be explained. As evidence of the stature of Plato, the renowned philosopher Alfred North Whitehead described the history of philosophy as merely 'a series of footnotes to Plato'. Of all his writings, Plato's most celebrated work is *The Republic*, the centrepiece of which is the allegory of the cave. Thus if Plato is one of the most profound thinkers of all time then his cave allegory must be all significant, and it is.

Plato began his allegory with what must be one of the earliest recorded mentions of the term human condition: 'I want you to go on to picture the enlightenment or ignorance of our human conditions somewhat as follows. Imagine an underground chamber, like a cave with an entrance open to the daylight and running a long way underground. In this chamber are men who have been prisoners there' (tr. H.D.P. Lee, 1955). He described that between the all-visible, sunlit world and humans' 'cave' existence stands a 'brightly burning fire' that prevents humans from leaving the cave. The allegory makes clear that while 'the light of the fire in the cave prison corresponds to the power of the sun', with 'the sun...making things we see visible' such that without it humans can only 'see dimly and appear to be almost blind', having to hide in the 'cave' of 'illusion' and endure 'almost blind' alienation was infinitely preferable to facing the 'painful' light of the 'fire'/sun that would make 'visible' the unbearably depressing issue of 'the imperfections of human life', which is the issue of the human condition.

Having described humans as being imprisoned in a blind, alienated, cave-like state of denial of the issue of the human condition and of any truths that bring that unbearable subject

into focus—in particular the 'holistic', 'teleological' truth of integrative meaning—Plato went on to describe what would happen when understanding of the human condition was found. To quote from a summary of the cave allegory from the *Encarta Encyclopedia*: 'Breaking free, one of the individuals escapes from the cave into the light of day. With the aid of the sun [living free of denial of the foundation truth of integrative meaning and of the issue it raises of the human condition], that person sees for the first time the real world and returns to the cave with the message that the only things they have seen heretofore are shadows and appearances and that the real world awaits them if they are willing to struggle free of their bonds. The shadowy environment of the cave symbolizes for Plato the physical world of appearances. Escape into the sun-filled setting outside the cave symbolizes the transition to the real world, the world of full and perfect being, the world of Forms, which is the proper object of knowledge.' To return to Plato's own words, 'if he [the cave prisoner] were forcibly dragged up the steep and rocky ascent [out of the cave of denial by the person who has broken free of the cave] and not let go till he had been dragged out into the sunlight [shown the truthful all-liberating—but at the same time all-exposing and confronting— explanation of the human condition], the process would be a painful one, to which he would much object, and when he emerged into the light his eyes would be so overwhelmed by the brightness of it that he wouldn't be able to see a single one of the things he was now told were real [this inability to absorb discussion of the human condition is what we in the WTM refer to as the 'deaf effect']'. Plato didn't stop there, going on to say, 'they would say that his [the person who tries to deliver understanding of the human condition] visit to the upper world had ruined his sight [they would treat him as if he was mad, which is how Griffith has been treated], and [they would say] that the ascent [out of the cave] was not worth even attempting [recall Griffith's detractors saying such things as 'You know you are encroaching on the personal unspeakable inside people and you won't succeed']. And if anyone tried to release them and lead them up, they would kill him if they could lay hands on him.'

Plato's description of the whole saga surrounding the finding of understanding of the human condition and resulting liberation of the human race from that condition makes it clear how truly enlightened this ruling is. People are sometimes tempted to think that good ideas will survive persecution, but that is not true. In John Stuart Mill's essay, *On Liberty*—a document considered a philosophical pillar of western civilisation—Mill emphasised this point when he said, 'the dictum that truth always triumphs over persecution is one of those pleasant falsehoods which men repeat after one another till they pass into commonplaces, but which all experience refutes. History teems with instances of truth put down by persecution. If not suppressed for ever, it may be thrown back for centuries.' Indeed, prejudice has tried to stop all the great breakthroughs in science—instance Bishop Wilberforce trying to stop the emergence of Darwin's idea and how crucial Huxley's defence of Darwin's work at that time was.

The ABC has behaved with appalling irresponsibility and we await its apology

As we have said so often, the greatest care needs to be taken where the subject of the human condition is at issue because while, as the ruling mentioned, it is the most discomforting of subjects and thus the area where the most prejudice can occur, it is also the realm of scientific enquiry from which the liberating understanding of the human condition must come. As Plato's cave allegory emphasised, the 'enlightenment...of our human condition' that leads to humanity's 'transition to the real world' 'is the proper object of knowledge'—an objective reiterated by renowned biologist E.O. Wilson when he said, 'The human condition is the most important frontier of the natural sciences.' If blatant intolerance and prejudice is allowed in the realm of inquiry where the issue of the human condition resides then humanity can never hope to free itself from that devastating condition; it will perish. The fundamental purpose of democracy is to allow freedom of expression, and thus the development of new ideas, ultimately the development of the dream of and hoped for totally transforming and now desperately needed breakthrough understanding of ourselves, of our human condition.

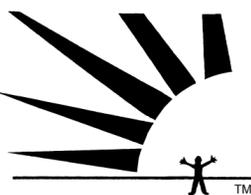
The ABC has behaved with appalling irresponsibility, publishing and then defiantly standing behind such an obvious hatchet job and now, as is summarised below, an utterly discredited program, on work of the utmost importance to the future of the human race. We await its apology.

The above abridged commentary by Tim Macartney-Snape can be read in full at <www.worldtransformation.com/vindication>.

THE ANSWER THAT SAVES THE WORLD

"I have no doubt Jeremy Griffith's biological explanation of the human condition is the holy grail of insight we have sought for the psychological rehabilitation of the human race."

Professor Harry Prosen, former president of the Canadian Psychiatric Association



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The major events in our struggle to 'clear our name' since this campaign of persecution went public in 1995:

- In 1995 an ABC *Four Corners* program and feature article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*—both produced by Reverend Millikan—were published about the FHA/WTM and its then directors Jeremy Griffith and Tim Macartney-Snape.
- In 1998 the Australian Broadcasting Authority, Australia's then official media watchdog, found the *Four Corners* program to be 'inaccurate, unbalanced and partial' and took the unprecedented step of recommending to the ABC that it would be 'appropriate to apologise' to the FHA/WTM.
- When the ABC refused to apologise defamation actions were taken against the ABC and the *Herald*, and in 2003 and 2005 respectively each report was found to be defamatory by NSW Supreme Court juries.
- In 2008 two of the three defamatory imputations found to arise from the *Four Corners* program resulted in a payout of \$700,000 to Tim Macartney-Snape for the loss and damage caused by the broadcast.
- The key finding in relation to the truth of the third imputation about the scientific support for Griffith's work has now, 2010, been successfully overturned with the three Appeal Court judges unanimously concluding that the first judgment failed to 'adequately consider' 'that [Griffith's] work was a grand narrative explanation from a holistic approach, involving teleological elements'.
- In the case of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, in 2009 it published this apology to the FHA/WTM: 'On 22 April 1995, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published an article by Reverend Doctor David Millikan which implied that the Foundation for Humanity's Adulthood placed demands on its members which tore families apart. The *Herald* withdraws such inference and apologises to the Foundation for the harm caused by the publication.'