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THE BOOK

Human Condition

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OF

Why do we Fall in Love?

How can we Save the World?

Conscience

REAL

Is there a God?

Human Nature

ANSWERS

Soul

Our Ego, and Egocentric Lives

TO

Why do People Lie?

EVERYTHING!

by **Jeremy Griffith**

‘Such is the explosion of insight that occurs when biological understanding of the human condition is finally found—as it now is—that all the books in all the libraries in all the world couldn’t deliver the definitive explanations contained here in *The Book of Real Answers to Everything!*, and in *Freedom*, the complete presentation of Jeremy Griffith’s treatise.’

Tim Macartney-Snape, AM OAM, Patron of the World Transformation Movement

The Book of Real Answers to Everything!, by Jeremy Griffith:
Published by WTM Publishing and Communications Pty Ltd (ACN 103 136 778)
First published in Australia 2011

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The WTM is a non-profit organisation which holds an Authority to Fundraise for Charitable Purposes in NSW, Australia.

ISBN 978-1-74129-007-3

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Typeset by Lee Jones and Polly Watson.

Note to the Reader

The objective of this book is to provide a stand-alone, first-principle-based, scientific explanation of each of the following subjects that have so troubled the human mind since time immemorial. Since the explanations are designed to be self-contained, and since (as will become clear) the human condition is the underlying issue in *all* human affairs, each of the explanations does contain certain similar material, however, important subtle differences appear within those similar sections.

Contents

| | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Foreword | 5 |
| The Human Condition | 7 |
| What is Science? | 14 |
| What is Love? | 33 |
| Soul | 40 |
| Conscience | 54 |
| Good vs Evil | 64 |
| What is the Meaning of Life? | 70 |
| Is there a God? | 77 |
| Ego, and Our Egocentric Lives | 85 |
| Save the World | 90 |
| Consciousness | 96 |
| Human Nature | 102 |
| Why do People Lie? | 108 |
| Why do we Fall in Love? | 114 |



Foreword

While I am a psychiatrist, not a biologist, the subject of our human condition *is* the area of inquiry where psychiatry and biology finally converge. Evidence for this is the term ‘Evolutionary Psychology’, which is one of the theories currently used to explain human behaviour—specifically the human condition. Given the plight of the world—which we humans are responsible for—the human condition is certainly the subject upon which all areas of science *should* be focused. As the Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson has said, ‘**The human condition is the most important frontier of the natural sciences**’ (*Consilience*, 1998, p.298).

However, in terms of understanding our peculiar ‘human condition’, I don’t believe the theories that have been put forward by mainstream biologists have succeeded in presenting a satisfactory, truly accountable explanation of it. In fact, I have become aware of two statements made by the great Australian biologist Charles Birch that I think accurately capture the stalled situation that has existed in biology, which are that ‘**Biology has not made any real advance since Darwin**’ (in recorded conversation with this author, 20 Mar. 1987), and ‘**Biology right now awaits its Einstein in the realm of consciousness studies**’ (ABC Radio National, *Ockham’s Razor*, 16 Apr. 1997). I say ‘has existed’ because I believe, as I’ve said on occasions elsewhere, that Jeremy Griffith’s biological treatise on the human condition does finally provide humanity with a truly accountable explanation of this most perplexing and important of subjects. The clarity with which he explains the grand concepts featured in this book alone is testament to this.

I must say I am so thrilled with Griffith’s explanation of the human condition that I am dedicated to promoting it wherever possible. As a psychiatrist I recognise that the impasse to finding this great breakthrough understanding of the human condition has been that the subjective issue of the human condition has been all but impossible for humans to think effectively about, but now that this great psychological denial blocking access to the truth about ourselves has finally been penetrated and understanding of ourselves found, the now long overdue psychological rehabilitation of the human race *can* finally occur. Again, as I have also said on numerous occasions, this is all *so* exciting—I am quite overwhelmed to be here on Earth when these *REAL* answers are finally established!

I cannot recommend strongly enough the understandings contained in this book, or in the more complete presentation that is provided in Griffith’s book *FREEDOM*.

Harry Prosen, M.D., M.Sc.
December 2011 (revised 2015)

Harry Prosen is a professor of psychiatry who has worked in the field for over 50 years, including chairing two departments of psychiatry and serving as president of the Canadian Psychiatric Association. Professor Prosen was recently appointed one of 500 Specially Selected Fellows of the American College of Psychiatrists, and a Distinguished Life Member of the American Psychiatric Association. He is also psychiatric consultant to the Bonobo Species Preservation Society.

Ego, and Our Egocentric Lives

Written by Australian biologist Jeremy Griffith, 2011

The great questions about ego and our egocentric lives are:

- ‘What is ego?’
- ‘Why are we humans so egocentric that our competitive selfishness and aggression has all but destroyed the world?’
- ‘Can our ego ever be satisfied at some fundamental level so that we humans no longer have to be egocentric and preoccupied trying to prove ourselves all the time?’

The truth is, all these questions relate to an even deeper question:

- ‘Will we humans ever find the reconciling, redeeming and thus psychologically rehabilitating understanding of our seemingly-imperfect, competitive, selfish and aggressive egocentric HUMAN CONDITION?’

The astonishing answer to that question of questions is:

- ‘Yes, biology is now at last able to provide the dreamed-of, reconciling, exonerating and thus egocentricity-subsiding, HUMAN-RACE-TRANSFORMING biological explanation of the human condition!’ (And it should be mentioned that this explanation of our species’ deeply psychologically troubled condition is *not* the psychosis-avoiding, trivialising, dishonest account of it that the biologist E.O. Wilson has put forward in his theory of Eusociality, but the psychosis-addressing-and-solving, *real* explanation of it.)



The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines ‘ego’ as ‘**the conscious thinking self**’, so the question of ‘what is the ego?’ is really the question of ‘what is the conscious thinking self?’—in fact, ‘what is consciousness?’

To very briefly answer this question, nerves were originally developed for the coordination of movement in animals, but, once developed, their ability to store impressions—which is what we refer to as ‘memory’—gave rise to the potential to develop understanding of cause and effect. If you can remember past events, you can compare them with current events and identify regularly occurring experiences. This knowledge of, or insight into, what has commonly occurred in the past enables you to predict what is likely to happen in the future and to adjust your behaviour accordingly.

Once insights into the nature of change are put into effect, the self-modified behaviour starts to provide feedback, refining the insights further. Predictions are compared with outcomes and so on. Much developed, and such refinement occurred in the human brain, nerves can sufficiently *associate* information to *reason* how experiences are related, learn to *understand* and become CONSCIOUS of, or aware of, or *intelligent* about, the relationship between events that occur through time. Thus consciousness, which again is our conscious thinking self or ego, means being sufficiently aware of how experiences are related to attempt to manage change from a basis of understanding.

What is so significant about this process is that once our nerve-based learning system became sufficiently developed for us to become conscious and able to effectively manage events, our conscious thinking self or ego was then in a position to wrest control from our gene-based learning system's instincts, which, up until then, had been controlling our lives. Basically, once our self-adjusting, conscious thinking self or ego emerged it was capable of taking over the management of our lives from the instinctive orientations we had acquired through the natural selection of genetic traits that adapted us to our environment.

HOWEVER, it was at this juncture, when our conscious intellect challenged our instincts for control, that a terrible battle broke out between our instincts and intellect, the effect of which we have historically referred to as the HUMAN CONDITION—our less-than-ideal, seemingly-imperfect, 'good-and-evil'-afflicted, even corrupted or 'fallen' competitive, selfish and aggressive egocentric behaviour.

How this angry, egocentric and alienated human condition emerged has been *the* great outstanding question in biology, and *the* question that *had to be* solved if the human race was to survive. Indeed, even E.O. Wilson once conceded that '**The human condition is the most important frontier of the natural sciences**' (*Consilience*, 1998, p.298)—despite later trivialising this '**most important frontier**' with his own psychosis-avoiding, dishonest 'explanation' of it.

Unable—until now—to truthfully explain our competitive, selfish and aggressive egocentric HUMAN CONDITION we justified it with all manner of false excuses, but, most wonderfully, biology *is* finally able to provide the clarifying, psychosis-addressing-and-solving, truthful, *real* explanation of the human condition—a redeeming, relieving and thus healing explanation that brings about the complete TRANSFORMATION of the human race, ending our angry, ego-embattled, egocentric and alienated condition forever!

The famous psychoanalyst Carl Jung was forever saying that '**wholeness for humans depends on the ability to own their own shadow**' because he recognised that *only* finding understanding of our dark, competitive, selfish and aggressive egocentric side could end our underlying insecurity about our fundamental goodness and worth as humans and, in so doing, make us '**whole**'. In the interim, however, while this understanding was still to be found, we understandably invented excuses to justify our species' seemingly-imperfect, egocentric competitive, selfish and aggressive behaviour—the main one being that we have savage animal instincts that make us fight and compete for food, shelter, territory and a mate. Of course, this 'explanation', which has been put forward in the biological theories of Social Darwinism, Sociobiology, Evolutionary Psychology, Multilevel Selection and E.O. Wilson's Eusociality and basically argues that 'genes are competitive and selfish and that's why we are', can't be the *real* explanation for our divisive competitive, selfish and aggressive egocentric behaviour. Firstly, it overlooks the fact that our human

behaviour involves our unique fully conscious thinking mind or ego. Descriptions like egocentric, arrogant, deluded, artificial, hateful, mean, immoral, alienated, etc, all imply a consciousness-derived, *psychological* dimension to *our* behaviour. The *real* issue—the psychological problem in our thinking minds that we have suffered from—is the dilemma of our *human condition*, the issue of our species’ ‘good-and-evil’-afflicted, less-than-ideal, ego-embattled/ egocentric state. We humans suffer from a consciousness-derived, *psychological* HUMAN CONDITION, *not* an instinct-controlled animal condition—our condition is unique to us fully conscious humans. (A brief description of the theories of Social Darwinism, Sociobiology, Evolutionary Psychology, Multilevel Selection and Eusociality that blame our divisive behaviour on savage instincts rather than on a consciousness-derived psychosis is presented in the [What is Science? article](#) in this, *The Book of Real Answers to Everything!*, with the complete account provided in the freely-available, online book *Freedom: Expanded Book 1* at <www.humancondition.com/freedom-expanded-the-denials-in-biology>.)

The second reason the savage-instincts-in-us excuse can’t possibly be the real explanation for our divisive, selfish and aggressive behaviour is that it overlooks the fact that we humans have altruistic, cooperative, loving *moral instincts*—what we recognise as our ‘*conscience*’—and these moral instincts in us are *not* derived from reciprocity, from situations where you only do something for others in return for a benefit from them, as Evolutionary Psychologists would have us believe. And nor are they derived from warring with other groups of humans as advocates of the theory of Eusociality would have us believe. No, we have an *unconditionally* selfless, *fully* altruistic, *truly* loving, *universally*-considerate-of-others-not-competitive-with-other-groups, *genuinely* moral conscience. Our original instinctive state was the *opposite* of being competitive, selfish and aggressive: it was fully cooperative, selfless and loving. (How we humans acquired *unconditionally* selfless moral instincts when it would seem that an *unconditionally* selfless, *fully* altruistic trait is going to self-eliminate and thus not ever be able to become established in a species is briefly explained in the above-mentioned [What is Science? article](#), and more fully explained in chapter 5 of *FREEDOM* at <www.humancondition.com/freedom-origin-of-morality>—however, the point being made here is that the savage-instincts-in-us excuse is completely inconsistent with the fact that we have genuine and entirely *moral* instincts, *NOT* *savage* instincts. Charles Darwin recognised the difference in our moral nature when he said that ‘**the moral sense affords the best and highest distinction between man and the lower animals**’ (*The Descent of Man*, 1871, p.495).)

So, what is this *truthful*, *human-condition-addressing* rather than *human-condition-avoiding*, *biological* explanation of our species’ present seemingly-imperfect, competitive, selfish and aggressive egocentric behaviour? To answer this question, we need to look more closely at what happened when the self-adjusting conscious thinking self or ego emerged in the presence of already established instinctive behavioural orientations.

When our conscious mind or ego emerged it was neither suitable nor sustainable for it to be *orientated* by instincts—it *had to* find *understanding* to operate effectively and fulfil its great potential to manage life. However, when the conscious mind or ego began to exert itself and experiment in the management of life from a basis of understanding, in effect challenging the role of the already established instinctual self, a battle unavoidably broke out between the instinctive self and the newer conscious, intelligent self.

Our intellect began to experiment in understanding as the only means of discovering the correct and incorrect understandings for managing existence, but the instincts—being

in effect ‘unaware’ or ‘ignorant’ of the intellect’s need to carry out these experiments—‘opposed’ any understanding-produced deviations from the established instinctive orientations: they ‘criticised’ and ‘tried to stop’ the conscious mind’s necessary search for knowledge. To illustrate the situation, imagine what would happen if we put a fully conscious mind on the head of a migrating bird. The bird is following an instinctive flight path acquired over thousands of generations of natural selection, but it now has a conscious mind that needs to *understand* how to behave, and the only way it can acquire that understanding is by experimenting in understanding—for example, thinking, ‘I’ll fly down to that island and have a rest.’ But such a deviation from the migratory flight path would naturally result in the instincts resisting the deviation, leaving the conscious intellect in a serious dilemma: if it obeys its instincts it will not feel ‘criticised’ by its instincts but neither will it find knowledge. Obviously, the intellect could not afford to give in to the instincts, and unable to understand and thus explain why its experiments in self-adjustment were necessary, the intellect/ego had no way of refuting the implicit criticism from the instincts even though it knew it was unjust. Until the conscious mind found the redeeming understanding of why it had to defy the instincts (namely the scientific understanding of the difference in the way genes and nerves process information, that one is an orientating learning system while the other is an insightful learning system), the intellect/ego was left having to endure a psychologically distressed, upset condition, with no choice but to defy that opposition from the instincts. The only forms of defiance available to the intellect/ego were to **attack** the instincts’ unjust criticism, try to **deny** or block from its mind the instincts’ unjust criticism, and attempt to **prove** the instincts’ unjust criticism wrong. In short—and to return to our human situation because we were the species that acquired the fully conscious mind—the psychologically upset **angry**, **alienated** and **egocentric** human-condition-afflicted state appeared. Our ego became ego-centric—it became ‘centred’ or preoccupied or focused on the need to justify itself. We became self-centred or selfish, preoccupied with aggressively competing for opportunities to prove we are good and not bad—we unavoidably became **selfish**, **aggressive** and **competitive**.

What is *so* exonerating, rehabilitating and healing about this explanation of the human condition is that we can finally appreciate that there was a *very good* reason for our angry, alienated and egocentric behaviour—in fact, we can now see why we have not just been ego-centric, but ego-*infuriated*, even ego-gone-mad-with-murderous-anger for having to live with so much unjust criticism. We can *now* see that the conscious thinking self or ego was *NOT* the evil villain it has so long been portrayed as—such as in the Bible where Adam and Eve are demonised and ‘**banished...from the Garden of Eden**’ (Gen. 3:23) of our original innocent, all-loving, moral state for taking the ‘**fruit...from the tree of knowledge**’ (ibid. 3:3, 2:17). No, science has finally enabled us to lift the so-called ‘burden of guilt’ from the human race; in fact, to understand that we thinking, ‘**knowledge**’-finding, conscious humans are actually nothing less than the heroes of the story of life on Earth! This is because our fully conscious mind is surely nature’s greatest invention and to have had to endure the torture of being unjustly condemned as evil for *so* long (the anthropological evidence indicates we humans have been fully conscious for some two million years) *must make us* the absolute heroes of the story of life on Earth.

And BEST OF ALL, because this explanation of the human condition is redeeming and thus rehabilitating, all our upset angry, egocentric and alienated behaviour now subsides, bringing about the complete TRANSFORMATION OF THE HUMAN RACE—and importantly,

understanding of the human condition doesn't condone 'bad' behaviour, it *heals* and by so doing *ends* it. From being competitive, selfish and aggressive, humans return to being cooperative, selfless and loving. Our round of departure *has* ended. The poet T.S. Eliot wonderfully articulated our species' journey from an original innocent, yet ignorant, state, to a psychologically upset 'fallen', corrupted state, and back to an uncorrupted, but this time enlightened, state when he wrote, '**We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time**' (*Little Gidding*, 1942).

Finding the exonerating, redeeming understanding of our dark, troubled, psychologically upset, human-condition-afflicted existence finally enables the human race to be healed and thus TRANSFORMED—it makes us '**whole**' again, as Jung said it would. Yes, from being ego-centric the human race now becomes ego-redeemed, ego-satisfied and ego-at-peace. To quote Professor Harry Prosen, a former president of the Canadian Psychiatric Association, on this dreamed-of, greatest of all breakthroughs in science: '**I have no doubt this biological explanation of the human condition is the holy grail of insight we have sought for the psychological rehabilitation of the human race**' (*FREEDOM*, 2016, Introduction).

As just demonstrated, with understanding of the human condition found ALL the great issues finally become explainable.

See also: Human condition—What is science?—What is love?—Soul—Conscience—Good vs Evil—What is the meaning of life?—Is there a God?—How can we save the world?—Consciousness—Human nature—Why do people lie?—Why do we fall in love?

For a book of these explanations to keep or give to others, print *The Book of Real Answers to Everything!* by Jeremy Griffith, featuring a Foreword by Professor Harry Prosen, at www.humancondition.com/real-answers

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