

# The Search for Truth

## Glen Willson

### General Views:

Classical liberalism, science, atheism

### Would disagree with:

Marxism, regressive leftism, moral relativism

**T**he pursuit of truth is amongst the main purpose of our lives. We seek answers because we care about our loved ones, we are mortal, and we wish to reduce suffering for ourselves and others. In addition, we are curious about the deepest answers to life.

The core focus of this essay is on religion, science, and language. I gained interest in these topics after desiring to retain a sense of childlike imagination and also after being influenced by the philosopher Terence McKenna.

I'll offer my insight on many contentious matters starting with the most contentious of all, Buddhism, then to other topics like Critical Thinking, New Atheism, Mythology and Religion, Psychedelics, Science, and Language.

### Structure:

- i. Skeptics on Eastern Religion
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## Skeptics on Eastern Religion

To begin is religion and the wisdom traditions. People seek the wisdom traditions for things like reducing suffering, dealing with mortality, and connecting with life.

I had skepticism about Eastern mysticism because I never believed people who say things much else than love for describing ultimate reality.

There's a big spectrum what people may think about mysticism and religion. Here I'll start with Buddhism and weave my way into the larger topic of religion. Buddhism is widely popular because of its non-theistic and empirical basis, and globally has five hundred million practitioners.<sup>1</sup>

I'll start by looking at various claims of skepticism.

In *God is Not Great* Christopher Hitchens, polemicist and militant atheist wrote, "Although many Buddhist now regret that deplorable attempt to prove their own superiority, no Buddhist since then has been able to demonstrate that Buddhism was wrong in its own terms. A faith that despises the mind and the free individual, that preaches submission and resignation, and that regards life as a poor and transient thing, is ill-equipped for self-criticisms. Those who become bored by conventional "bible" religions, and seek "enlightenment" by way of the dissolution of their own critical faculties into nirvana in any form, had better take a warning. They may think they are leaving the realm of despised materialism, but they are

still being asked to put their reason to sleep, and to discard their minds along with their sandals.”<sup>2</sup> In *Letters to a Young Contrarian* Hitchens said, “Beware the irrational, however seductive. Shun the ‘transcendent’ and all those who invite you to subordinate or annihilate yourself.”<sup>3</sup>

Atheist Vexen Crabtree is a philosopher of religion. In his article criticizing Buddhism he contends it is a world-rejectionist endeavor and a guilt methodology. In his summary he states, “Overly mystical and too idealistic about human nature, only the world-wide social elements of Buddhism have genuine merit, the rest is yet-another self-fulfilling religion of superstition, assumptions, and pseudopsychology.”<sup>4</sup>

Science historian John Horgan expresses mild skepticism over Buddhism in his books and other articles. He wrote in one paragraph, “Like its parent religion Hinduism, Buddhism espouses reincarnation, which holds that after death our souls are re-instantiated in new bodies, and karma, the law of moral cause and effect. Together, these tenets imply the existence of some cosmic judge who, like Santa Claus, tallies up our naughtiness and niceness before rewarding us with rebirth as a cockroach or as a saintly lama.”<sup>5</sup>

Sam Vaknin is an author and expert on the psychology of narcissism. He commented on moral posturing in general which is useful. He wrote, “Far less known and acknowledged is the Monk-sadist. He tortures people by confronting them with a personal example of unparalleled and unsurpassed morality, rectitude, asceticism, virtue, and righteousness...”<sup>6</sup>

Lastly Terence McKenna had doubt over behaviorally regimented ascetic practices. I include him here because like me he preferred love to anything else. Lots of people share similar views.<sup>7</sup>

## **An Appraisal of Critical Thinking**

So far, all of this raises the concern of critical thinking and what is called the argument from authority.

The Foundation for Critical Thinking investigated study results about the state of critical thinking in higher education. The link to the paper is in the notes.<sup>8</sup>

There is some stigma in society against those who do not attend university. Regarding critical thinking in general, the university is a magnificent setting of human achievement, but I think it is fairly non-objectionable to say that it is only one route amongst several to becoming an astute critical thinker. Also, important qualities that imbue critical thinking like personal passion and being loving are things that people do and carry for themselves.

## **The Validity of New Atheism**

Before looking at some of the positive aspects of religion I’ll investigate some criticisms of militant atheism (Hitchens, Dawkins, Harris, etcetera). Critics of New Atheists are opposed to the style of violently attacking religion.

Critics of New Atheism contest the notion (the only major one discussed in this paper) that religion is a completely evil thing, and once we eradicate religion from the face of the Earth we will move into a rational utopia.

Critics of New Atheism are bountiful and come from all kinds of different backgrounds. There are atheist critics and theist critics. Most popular critics are academics. Some write books on the subject while others write articles. There are left leaning and right leaning critics (I would disagree with the general beliefs of the leftists). For example Chris Hedges and CJ Werleman are left leaning critics. Vox Day and Jordan Peterson are more right leaning critics with classically liberal views.

Critics on the previously mentioned argument most distinctly say that New Atheism is anti-intellectual. Professor Massimo Pigliucci said that the core tenet of New Atheism, which is scientism, is anti-intellectual.<sup>9</sup> Professor Dein Simon looked at factors of fundamentalism including reactivity, dualism, absolutism, apocalypticism, and evidentialism, and concluded New Atheists are fundamentalist.<sup>10</sup>

Psychologist Jordan Peterson expressed that he thinks the problem with New Atheism comes from abdicating responsibility.<sup>11</sup>

Jordan Peterson said on a Dave Rubin interview that “people like Sam Harris and Richard Dawkins, they assume that the natural person is the civilized creature that you see before you, in a discussion like this. But I don’t believe that. I think that people are far crazier, and for more destructive, and far greater as well than the typical rationalist approach. Rationality is a surface facade, that’s all. And the idea that people will eventually be rational...it’s much more likely that they will be irrational than rational...”<sup>12</sup>

Objective reality and reason are important but is it possible to exaggerate the Enlightenment vision? How rational are we truly?

Well established neuroscientists like Joseph LeDoux and Antonio Damasio, as well as author David Brooks, provide evidence that we are predominantly irrational creatures. We are animals in which reasoning is anchored in our biology. These researchers place emotion before reason.

As religious historian Mircea Eliade wrote, “A purely rational man is an abstraction; he is never found in real life.”<sup>13</sup>

Some other criticisms of New Atheism are that there are legitimate benefits to religion (such as the community building elements of religion or the great generosity towards charity), that secular-atheistic regimes are not a bed of roses either (the unprecedented magnitude of death in the twentieth century), or that Christianity is responsible for Western civilization.

My main thoughts on New Atheism is that it’s narcissistic and inflated.

### **The Value of Mythology and Religion**

Next is the value of mythology and religion. It is said that mythology is a separate subject area than just the word myth, associated with something false. Scholars of mythology highlight that what is valuable about mythology

and religion is psychological and symbolic rather than literal or historical.<sup>14</sup> What is valuable is that mythology contains humanity’s eternal and central guiding narrative that helps us get through life.

Carl Jung is a well-known figure and one of the founders of modern psychology. On the value of mythology he said that “the religious myth is one of man’s greatest and most significant achievements, giving him the security and inner strength not to be crushed by the monstrosity of the universe.”<sup>15</sup> Amongst his popular ideas is his idea of the collective unconscious that we are all born with, composed of archetypes. In *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* he said, “It is only possible to live the fullest life when we are in harmony with these symbols; wisdom is a return to them. It is neither a question of belief nor knowledge, but of the agreement of our thinking with the primordial images of the unconscious.”<sup>16</sup>

Joseph Campbell is another well-known expert on mythology. He had similar comments on the value of myth when he said that it is for modern psychologists to work with and that mythology contains “a rich and eloquent document of the profoundest depths of human character.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Transcending History**

A central topic of mythology and religion is our need for transcendence. We’ve always had a need for transcendence and to garner a sense of eternal significance.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore renowned religious historian Mircea Eliade had his important idea of the eternal return. He stated that history is a fall in which we, whether religious or non-religious, wish to abolish profane time. The goal is the eternal return, which is that human beings have a nostalgia and desire to return to ahistorical primordial time, an eternal, pure, strong state in which we can “rediscover the intensity with which one experienced or knew something for the first time.”<sup>19</sup> In other words we have a desire to transcend history and garner a sense of the pristine substance of the universe. Mythology

and religion are basic means of inspiring the fulfilment of the eternal return.<sup>20</sup>

## Summary

To come full circle then religion isn't a hunky-dory enterprise and atheists certainly without a doubt have valid claims. Though New Atheism is multifaceted, it can be taken too far on the previously mentioned argument of whether religion ought to be eradicated and that if we gave it up we'll all move into a rational utopia.

In addition religions and mythology have the central narrative of humanity for psychologists to dissect and as well are activities that foster Eliade's eternal return, our desire to transcend history.

Besides those things, the moral posturing aspect of Eastern religion is interesting to observe but ultimately it's just playful peacocking. And as always love is the important detail.

## Stress Management

Reduction of stress and anxiety are part of the reason why people find interest in the wisdom traditions. A few of my tips:

- ◆ Diet/lifestyle stuff
- ◆ Buteyko breathing is popular (Patrick McKeown)
- ◆ Vagus nerve stimulation and proprioceptive input may both be useful
- ◆ Common causes of stress/anxiety: Malignant narcissism is an important topic for psychological hygiene (Sam Vaknin's *Malignant Self Love: Narcissism Revisited* is a place to start), Painfully sensitive people may have a challenging temperament. Child/adult (Susan Daniels, Mary-Elaine Jacobsen)
- ◆ General sleep tips: Make your room as dark as possible, earplugs, re-tuck your sheets every night, for a pre-bed snack I like a banana and almonds half an hour before bed and a sliver of magnesium citrate Natural Calm right before bed,

stimulating supplements should be taken in the morning, have sleep pressure and establish a good circadian rhythm, it's helpful to try and avoid large quantities of food around two hours before bed.

- ◆ The world can be an overwhelming place. Curious about social and political education? Explore YouTube and subscribe to a handful of random popular channels and see what you may think. Who are some I like? Stephen Molyneux, Steven Crowder, Dave Rubin, Jordan Peterson, Lauren Southern, Gad Saad, Andrew Klavan, Michael Knowles, Dave Cullen, Dinesh D'Souza, Gavin McInnes, Milo Yiannopolous.
- ◆ For health, lift a good amount of weights and everyday your body needs meats, fats, and carbohydrates.

## Psychedelics

Disclaimer: I do not support the illegal use of psychedelics outside of certified research projects or contexts where it is legally sanctioned. For information regarding psychedelic research, here are a few resources.

*Psychedelic Healing* by Neal Goldsmith PhD

*The Psychedelic Explorers Guide* by James Fadiman PhD

Heffter.org

Maps.org (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies)

Psychedelics in the West and other places around the world are re-emerging into psychiatry, science, and culture. Here I'll explore a range of the philosophical aspects of psychedelics. Claims are supported more in depth in the notes section.

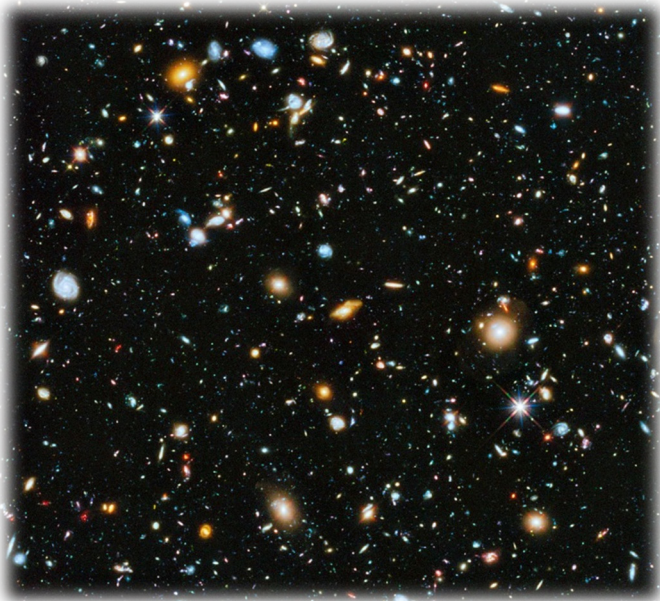
Of the spokespeople in psychedelics they generally say the same thing – that psychedelics are tools, transient states of mind to learn something to improve one's daily life,

perceptions, and habits, heal or begin healing, and are totally subjectively useful to the user.

Describing what they do metaphysically is a big question. My general take is that metaphysically psychedelics change our values and help take us to ineffable realms of consciousness that are part and parcel with our being. They are tools to help us grow, expand consciousness, and become our best selves.

It is possible to achieve psychedelic states with meditation? I don't think it's possible to achieve psychedelic states with meditation.<sup>21</sup>

One of the greatest, most touching realizations of psychedelics common amongst spokespeople and authors is that the universe is living.<sup>22</sup>



Another major thing psychedelics do is enable a deep sense of humility and awe. As ethnopharmacologist Professor Dennis McKenna has said reflecting on his experiences: “what ayahuasca teaches you or at least what it taught me over many, many years of using it is I don't know shit. That's the lesson.”<sup>23</sup>

While on the topic of Dennis, in Graham Hancock's *The Divine Spark* Dennis also said that we yearn for Eliade's eternal return.<sup>24</sup>

There are a couple misconceptions with psychedelics. One of them is that psychedelics make you smarter or more moral.<sup>25</sup> Another

misconception is the importance of how many times one has done psychedelics for sake of count. Doing psychedelics once a decade is ample to consider if you want. The goal is to become a better person and psychedelics are tools.

Two well-known figures in psychedelic leadership that people may have come across are Tim Leary and Terence McKenna. Tim Leary was a psychologist and Terence McKenna was an ethnobotanist, author, philosopher, social critic, and many other things.

Tim Leary is a controversial figure. He's been rambled about a lot and reflected upon in length. Regarding his books I thought he had creative poetic ability.

Terence McKenna was popular for his talks on psychedelics, culture, philosophy, linguistics, science, anthropology, and other things. What interested me were his talks on science, language, and culture. Terence thought that we were here to appreciate, rather than to understand. He believed the universe to be a mystery beyond the rational mind, and questioned the assumption that we are the ultimate measure of judgement.<sup>26</sup>

In a talk Terence said regarding the belief that science can answer all questions that “I don't think that the purpose of science is to understand reality...I think that the purpose of science is to advance technology, which is a heresy. I don't think that reality can be understood and that it's absolute hubris for science to cloak itself in the mantle of philosophy. All it's for is to make better toys, or if your nuts, better weapons. Ultimately there's not going to be any closure in the effort to understand and I think that the thing that you take away from psychedelics finally is that all models are provisional. That there is no truth.”<sup>27</sup>

What is the scientific enterprise?

## The Scientific Enterprise



Modern science transformed the world into the high-tech societies we now relish in. It's hard to encapsulate the sheer magnitude of how science has revolutionized the planet.

In the large picture, science represents the things we can do when we put our minds together.<sup>28</sup>

Defining science is straight forward however defining the scientific method is debated in detail.

Professor Stephen Carey wrote, "Science is that activity which aims to further our understanding of why things happen as they do in the natural world. It accomplishes this goal by applications of scientific method – the process of observing nature, isolating a facet that is not well understood and then proposing and testing possible explanations."<sup>29</sup>

How science is demarcated from different fields is a bit of a swamp.

One area that is just useful to clarify is literature. What kind of knowledge does literature focus on? According to one perspective, literature is a tool to study humanity's ills, our hypocrisy, and our moral corruption.<sup>30</sup>

To supplement the previous definition with more of the positive side of literature – literature is a safe reality simulator, it makes us kinder, it makes us more comfortable with ourselves and our condition, and it prepares us for failure. According to this perspective from author Alain de Botton, literature "is a tool to help us live and die with a little bit more

wisdom, goodness, and sanity."<sup>31</sup>

On science it is said that science is a value free, neutral discipline. For example Professor Nicholas Rescher wrote that "The limits of science inhere in the limits of its cognitive mission and mandate: the "disinterested" depiction and rationalization of objective fact..."<sup>32</sup> He wrote, "The "knowledge" with which science equips us is descriptive rather than normative, with the issue of evaluatively responsive appreciation – of what sorts of thing are worthwhile – simply left aside. However value laden the pursuit of scientific knowledge may be, on the side of content science remains value-neutral. Substantively considered, science is value free; its approach to the characterization of phenomena is simply devoid of the element of personalized evaluation."<sup>33</sup>

So science is said to be a value free, neutral discipline. With that in mind the next section is a handful of voices exploring the difference between science and philosophy.

Professor Stephen Carey wrote that scientific explanation is focused on the natural world and focuses on things like causes, laws, and mechanisms. He wrote the deep metaphysical questions that have vexed philosophers for millennia will likely not be settled by scientific inquiry. Examples of such questions are why is there something rather than nothing at all? What is the meaning of life?<sup>34</sup> Stephen wrote that this is not a downside of science; it's merely outside of the purview of scientific inquiry.<sup>35</sup> He went on to write that even if science did create a complete theory of the world, there will still be untouched metaphysical questions.<sup>36</sup>

Professor Samir Okasha from the University of Bristol wrote that questions in philosophy like the nature of knowledge, mortality, or happiness appear non-soluble by scientific means. There is no branch of science that tells us what knowledge is or what happiness means to humans. According to Samir, these are philosophical questions.<sup>37</sup>

Scientist Peter Medawar wrote that for

questions of first and last things we must turn to metaphysics.<sup>38</sup> Peter wrote that there is surely no limit to the type of empirical questions that science *can* answer.<sup>39</sup>

Physicist Marcelo Gleiser from Dartmouth College wrote that science alone won't answer all questions. He said, "To hope that science will answer all questions is to want to shrink the human spirit, clip its wings, rob its multifaceted existence."<sup>40</sup> Marcelo said that it's a misguided hope to think science alone can chart all questions.<sup>41</sup> He went on to write that to accept the provisional nature of our knowledge is not a defeat, but places science within the fallible, human realm.<sup>42</sup>

Karl Popper, a major philosopher of science said that "It is important to realize that science does not make assertions about ultimate questions – about the riddles of existence, or about man's task in this world. This has often been well understood. But some great scientists, and many lesser ones, have misunderstood the situation..."<sup>43</sup>

How does society view science?  
Thomas Kuhn was an influential philosopher of science who amongst several things, highlighted that science is a social, human endeavor.

For scientists to critique the state of science is a challenge. Rupert Sheldrake who is an author and biologist wrote that in the science community it is difficult to debate and ask philosophical questions about science because preserving reputation is of immediate importance.<sup>44</sup>

Marcelo Gleiser wrote that in accepting science as a human creation rather than as divine knowledge, we make science stronger as fallible beings.<sup>45</sup>

Professor Susan Haack wrote that science is a human enterprise with natural foibles, and that it focuses on basic things like extending reasoning power, expanding our imagination, and valuing evidence.<sup>46</sup>

Rupert Sheldrake wrote that science is a human activity involving regular people, and that it is important to recognize it as such so that it doesn't distort the public's perception of

scientists and the perception scientists have of themselves.<sup>47</sup>

What about the importance of mystery – not just in science but in a sense that it is central to humankind and is what captivates the imagination?

It is true when it is said that the mystery is what keeps us going.

Marcelo Gleiser wrote that he thinks the universe will always remain a mystery from a scientific perspective.<sup>48</sup> On the role of mystery he wrote that mystery is what defines us and makes us unique, as the "ever reaching forward symbol of what being human is all about." According to Marcelo, the quest for answers must always go on. Our appetite for awe and wonder is what fuels us and has been that way since the beginning.<sup>49</sup>

At this point I have contemplated defining science, how its differentiated from other fields, the human side of science, and the role of mystery. The main theme has been the difference between science and philosophy. Last is a definition of scientism.

Scientism is viewing science as the only valid intellectual endeavor. People who criticize scientism are not anti-science, but they are opposed to the assumption that science can answer all questions and that it is the only way.<sup>50</sup>

## Language

Language is the most mind-boggling thing we can imagine as the structure of reality itself. Language is at the heart of everything.

We may typically take for granted our language ability. When we travel we gain a heightened sense of how language shapes reality.

We have a big history with language and anthropologists suspect it is around one hundred thousand years old. It is the hallmark of our species, and is our most defining feature.<sup>51</sup>

Historically the transition of communication technology started with orality, then went to writing, then to print culture with the advent of the printing press, then to the electronic age.

Terence McKenna, literary figure Aldous Huxley, and Linguist Dianna Slattery amongst others have all explored the relationship between psychedelics, speech, language, literacy, the act of description, the syntactical nature of reality, its relationship to culture, and other things.

Terence McKenna's overall message was intricate. On the philosophy of language in his books and his talks he focused on speech, the pre-literate world, the act of signification, the perceptual effects of literacy, information technology, the impact of transitions in communication technology, the evolution of language, culture, and the imagination.

I'll start with a main premise. In a talk he said, "I've spent a lot of time thinking about language and how what a limited tool it is, and yet how our whole world is held together by nothing more than small mouth noises. And it's incredible, the entirety of global civilization is held together by small mouth noises and symbolic notations of same, which have an even more rarefied level of abstraction."<sup>52</sup>

Literary figure Aldous Huxley articulated well when he said that it is easy to mistake our words for actual things, that we live in the reality of our labels.

Aldous said, "To formulate and express the contents of this reduced awareness, man has invented and endlessly elaborated those symbol-systems and implicit philosophies which we call languages. Every individual is at once the beneficiary and the victim of the linguistic tradition into which he has been born—the beneficiary inasmuch as language gives access to the accumulated records of other people's experience, the victim in so far as it confirms him in the belief that reduced awareness is the only awareness and as it bedevils his sense of reality, so that he is all too apt to take his concepts for data, his words for actual things..."<sup>53</sup>

He said, "We can never dispense with language and the other symbol systems; for it is by means of them, and only by their means, that we have raised ourselves above the brutes, to the

level of human beings. But we can easily become the victims as well as the beneficiaries of these systems. We must learn how to handle words effectively; but at the same time we must preserve and, if necessary, intensify our ability to look at the world directly and not through that half opaque medium of concepts, which distorts every given fact into the all too familiar likeness of some generic label or explanatory abstraction."<sup>54</sup>

We live within our own cultural reality. As Terence made the point, science isn't independent from the act of description.

Terence said, "I don't believe that the world is made of quarks or electromagnetic waves, or stars or planets, or any of these things. I believe the world is made of language and that is the primary fact that has been overlooked."<sup>55</sup>

Reality is much stranger than we typically imagine and we are disempowered within our own linguistic reality. Human beings need language, but Terence thought that culture is a fiction that replaces authentic feeling with words.<sup>56</sup>

He would frequently reminisce J.B.S Haldane's quote that "the universe is not only stranger than we imagine, it is stranger than we can imagine."<sup>57</sup>

## Wrapping Up

Observing the world, we see many languages. Language is a tool to organize human consciousness, but I don't think that reality can be understood. I don't think that's our place in the universe. Description is a limited enterprise, and has a type of purpose for human beings.

Aldous and Terence both laid it out tremendously. Terence had brave awareness that it's more accurate to say we are here to appreciate rather than to understand.

That marks the end of my discourse! I hope it was fun and I would very much appreciate your support.

Taking a look at this whole essay, the primary ideas are love and Eliade's eternal return.



## Notes

1 Statistics compiled by academics:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism\\_by\\_country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_by_country)

2 *God is not Great*, p. 204. This book is also online for free here:  
[http://www.evolbiol.ru/docs/docs/large\\_files/hitchens.pdf](http://www.evolbiol.ru/docs/docs/large_files/hitchens.pdf)

3 *Letters to a Young Contrarian*, p. 140.

4  
[http://www.humanreligions.info/buddhism\\_criticism.html](http://www.humanreligions.info/buddhism_criticism.html)

5  
[http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2003/02/buddhist\\_retreat.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2003/02/buddhist_retreat.html)

6 From *Malignant Self Love: Narcissism Revisited*, Kindle p. 196.

7 In Terence's talks he often talked about how he has traversed the Eastern landscape and has been disappointed. For example, enter key word search "Roshis" at this weblink, a transcript of a talk he gave.  
<https://terencemckenna.wikispaces.com/Touched+by+The+Tremendum>

In Terence McKenna's last or one of his last interviews of his life, he remarks that love is the most important thing at 20:55.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBARDZ6MgAo> For an extended talk on love from Terence is the following clip at 2:00.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWj0xgG6heo>

I mentioned that lots of people have similar views (that is, valuing love the most). A few examples: Neal Goldsmith in *Psychedelic Healing* says love is the point of life, p. 82. Joseph Campbell in *The Power of Myth* says love is the meaning of life, p. 192. Viktor Frankl in *Mans Search for Meaning* says love is the highest point of life, p. 57.

8 *The State of Critical Thinking Today* from The Foundation of Critical Thinking, created by academics.

<http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/the-state-of-critical-thinking-today/523>

9 In part five of the article *New Atheism and the Scientific Turn in the Atheism Movement* by Professor Massimo Pigliucci.  
<https://philpapers.org/rec/PIGNAA>

10 At this webpage you can get a free PDF copy of the paper Professor Dein Simon wrote:  
<http://researcherslinks.com/email-this-article-to-colleague/The-New-Atheism-and-Religious-Fundamentalism-Are-They-a-Mirror-Image-of-Each-Other/9/5/334>

11 In this clip psychologist Jordan Peterson talks about New Atheism and abdicating responsibility at 3:00.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyYdGiJpyXk>

12 Jordan Peterson discusses Sam Harris's views on religion.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjYQ48t4C8U>

13 *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 209. This book is also online for free at  
<http://www.europeanrenewal.org/files/pdf/the%20sacred%20and%20the%20profane.pdf>

14 *Joseph Campbell An Introduction Revisited Edition*, p. 163.

15 *Symbols of Transformation*, p. 231.

16 *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, p. 113.

17 *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 219-220.

18 This is somewhat of a controversial notion. Here's four voices.

In *A Short History of Myth* Karen Armstrong says the need for transcendence has always been part of the human experience, p. 8.

In *Why Religions Matter* by religious studies scholar Huston Smith, he said that we innately desire a form of transcendence, Kindle page 3.

In *More Than Allegory: On Religious Myth, Truth, and Belief* Bernardo Kastrup says that the impetus of life is to transcend and that we desire a form of eternal significance (I used the last two words). Kindle page 20, 21.

Psychologist Jordan Peterson who studies mythology and religion said that human beings have a need for the transcendent at 45:00 of the following video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Y6bCqT85Pc&t=0s>

19 *Myth and Reality*, Kindle p. 193.

20 Extracted from the following webpage:  
<http://norse-mythology.org/introduction-mircea-eliade/>

21 An example of someone else with the same particular opinion is from Dale Pendell in *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* at 2:00  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuyI\\_5r2oog](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuyI_5r2oog)

Another is Terence McKenna. McKenna says he wouldn't confuse psychedelics with meditation at 0:35. Also, 3:00.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCkPuASC0i4>

22 A few examples:

Terence McKenna said that the universe is alive and living in the following clip. Refer to 2:00 and 3:45.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oB8Aon8GuPQ>

In a clip of the film *DMT: The Spirit Molecule*, Kathleen Harrison makes reference that she thinks nature and everything is alive at 3:10  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jzg0kEXJL3E&list=PLD10E6A965E079AD9&index=6>

In *The Divine Spark*, edited by bestselling author Graham Hancock, author Gregory Sams says that there is spirit in the trees, Earth, stars, essentially everything. Kindle p. 301.

23 Quote from Dennis McKenna talking about psychedelics, what he has learned, and humility.  
<http://entheonation.com/dennis-mckenna-coevolution-interview/>

24 Dennis McKenna in *The Divine Spark* (Graham Hancock) said that we seek Eliade's eternal return, Kindle p. 50.

25 A few examples: In this interview Dennis McKenna says ayahuasca is a tool and its usage depends on the individual's personality.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/anderson-to-the-amazon/2016/jul/30/ayahuasca-changing-global-environmental-consciousness>

Kathleen Harrison in *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* talks about how psychedelics are tools and she doesn't think they make you smart or more moral necessarily.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTbEU9KJRhw&list=PLD10E6A965E079AD9&index=7>

In the following YouTube video Psychologist Jordan Peterson at 1:10:20 says he doubts that psychedelics increase intelligence  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GSUG\\_B-new](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GSUG_B-new)

26 This is a clip from Terence McKenna talking about how he thought we were here to appreciate rather than to understand  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RI5K65Hc3nM>

27 A talk by Terence and the quote on science I used.  
<http://dominatorculture.com/post/102369944488/time-travel-psychedelics-physics>

28 This is a common thing for philosophers of science/scientists to say. Examples: Bryan Appleyard in *Understanding the Present: Science and the Soul of Modern Man* said such a thing on p. 7. Susan Haack in *Defending Science*, p. 300. Marcelo Gleiser in *Island of Knowledge*, p. 280.

29 *A Beginners Guide to Scientific Method* by Stephen Carey (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), p. 5.

30 From Chris Hedges, *The Empire of Illusion*. Kindle locations 1729-1730.

31 *The School of Life* founded by Alain De Botton offers a framework for how to view literature  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RCFLobfqcw>

32 *The Limits of Science* by Nicholas Rescher, p. 245. This book is online for free:  
<http://digital.library.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/t/text/text-idx?c=pittpress;cc=pittpress;view=toc;idno=31735043494966>

33 *The Limits of Science* by Nicholas Rescher, p. 245.

34 *A Beginners Guide to Scientific Method* 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition by Stephen Carey, p. 124.

35 *A Beginners Guide to Scientific Method* 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition by Stephen Carey, p. 124.

36 *A Beginners Guide to Scientific Method* 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition by Stephen Carey, p. 125.

37 *Philosophy of Science: A Very Short Introduction* by Samir Okasha, Kindle p. 122.

38 *The Limits of Science*, Peter Medawar, p. 60.

39 *The Limits of Science*, Peter Medawar, p. 60.

40 *Island of Knowledge*, Kindle Location 281.

41 *Island of Knowledge*, Kindle Location 281.

42 *Island of Knowledge*, Kindle Location 281.

43 Quote from Karl Popper.  
[http://www.informationphilosopher.com/solutions/philosophers/popper/natural\\_selection\\_and\\_the\\_emergence\\_of\\_mind.5.en.html](http://www.informationphilosopher.com/solutions/philosophers/popper/natural_selection_and_the_emergence_of_mind.5.en.html)

44 Sheldrake on the authority of science in *Science Set Free: 10 Paths to New Discovery*, Kindle p. 326.

45 *A Tear at the Edge of Creation*, Kindle page 225.

46 *Defending Science*, p. 9-10.

47 *Science Set Free: 10 Paths to New Discovery* Kindle p. 292.

48 *Island of Knowledge*, Kindle Location 198.

49 *Island of Knowledge*, Kindle location 4448.

50 The idea that people who criticize scientism are not anti-science from *Philosophy of Science: A Very Short Introduction* by Samir Okasha, Kindle p. 122.

51

This is said often in anthropology departments and textbooks. For example the Boston University Anthropology Department says language is the hallmark of our species. Under linguistic anthropology.  
<http://www.bu.edu/anthrop/about/what-is-anthropology/>

Terence McKenna called language “the most unique of human activities” in *Food of the Gods* under the heading “Catalyzing Consciousness.”

52

1:38 of the following video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNrur6zXmEY>

53 *The Doors of Perception*, p. 16.

54 *The Doors of Perception*, p. 59.

55 *Archaic Revival*, p. 161.

56 Culture and fiction. Source: Starts at 2:00  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rz6CEKsvNs8>

On authentic feeling: "Culture replaces authentic feeling with words. As an example of this, imagine an infant lying in its cradle, and the window is open, and into the room comes something, marvelous, mysterious, glittering, shedding light of many colors, movement, sound, a transformative hierophany of integrated perception and the child is enthralled and then the mother comes into the room and she says to the child, "that's a bird, baby, that's a bird," instantly the complex wave of the angel peacock iridescent transformative mystery is collapsed, into the word. All mystery is gone, the child learns this is a bird, this is a bird, and by the time we're five or six years old all the mystery of reality has been carefully tiled over with words. This is a bird, this is a house, this is the sky, and we seal ourselves in within a linguistic shell of disempowered perception..." Source:  
<https://thoughtofvg.wordpress.com/2015/02/01/on-words-and-lost-meaning/>

57 Xenolinguistics: Psychedelics, Language, and the Evolution of Consciousness, Kindle Locations 1222-1223.

## *Images*

Hagan, Elizabeth. Digital Image. Sermons.  
February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014.

<http://elizabethhagan.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/world.jpeg>

Hubble Ultra Deep Field. Digital Image. June 3<sup>rd</sup>  
2014.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubble\\_Ultra-Deep\\_Field](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubble_Ultra-Deep_Field)

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## About the Writer

B. 1993 (24)

Lives in Vancouver, Canada



2015

## Social Media

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/glencwillson>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/glencwillson>

Email: [glencwillson@gmail.com](mailto:glencwillson@gmail.com)

Website: [www.glenwillson.com](http://www.glenwillson.com)