



KYN.FOURHARES.COM
KYN@FOURHARES.COM

JEAN-MICHEL DAVID
0490770061

KYN-TALKS 18TH OCTOBER 2023

363 RENDEZVOUS ROAD, VASSE, WA

Doors open 6:00pm for a 6:30 start, closes at 8:00pm

KYN members free. Friends and Guests \$5
BYO drinks and nibbles

HOW DO WE MAKE LIVING IN A SANE WORLD POSSIBLE?

We'll begin with a short extract from Iain McGilchrist's 2021 two-volume *The Matter with Things* (a 'follow-up' from his brilliant 2009 *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*). As a matter of interest, Wikipedia's entry for the book is the following:

Following on from McGilchrist's 2009 work, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*, *The Matter with Things* explores the **radically different worldviews presented by the two hemispheres of the brain**, and the many **cognitive and worldly implications** of this.

The book "is an attempt to convey a way of looking at the world quite different from the one that has largely dominated the West for at least three hundred and fifty years – some would say as long as two thousand years"

In Volume 1 of the book, Iain McGilchrist writes (p308):

Is it conceivable that elements of the way of **being in the world embedded in a culture might start to resemble one hitherto largely confined to the mentally ill**? This is, in fact, the argument of one of the most fascinating, and compelling, books I have ever read, *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature and Thought* by Louis Sass, Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Rutgers. Published in 1992, and by now a classic, the book has a riveting thesis. Sass had noticed that **every phenomenon described by people with schizophrenia bore a close resemblance to phenomena not just found in, but at the core of, modernism**; and in the book he illustrates his thesis in detail, across numerous domains, drawing with subtlety on a deep familiarity with the literatures of psychology, philosophy and the arts. Moreover, as he demonstrates, **a surprisingly large number of people who rose to prominence in the worlds of literature, art, music and philosophy during this period** (but not nearly so commonly in other periods) **were on the schizo-autistic spectrum**. The closeness of the parallels he draws, across so many instances, makes the similarity difficult, if not impossible, to deny.

The question is, **why should this be?** Clearly a whole culture cannot develop schizophrenia.

The answer might lie in an observation Sass alludes to, based on findings then just starting to emerge from the neuroscientific literature, that the phenomena of schizophrenia resemble those described by subjects with right hemisphere damage (coupled with those that would result from a perhaps compensatory overdrive of the left hemisphere). Might it be, then, that **as a culture we were exemplifying not, of course, a sudden epidemic of schizophrenia, but too heavy a reliance on the world as delivered to us by the left hemisphere, meanwhile dismissing what it is that the right hemisphere knows and could help us understand?**

Our main points of discussion will arise from considering interesting observations by Andrew Powell, reflecting on his long career in the field of psychology. In 'Psychiatry and Spirituality in the UK: Primum non nocere (First, do no harm)' (*Paradigm Explorer* #142, pp3-7 published Oct. 2023 by the [Scientific and Medical Network](#)), extracted and thus out of the fuller context of his brilliant article), he writes:

Drug companies are still claiming that in the case of depression, SSRIs work by restoring a deficiency of serotonin in the brain. In fact, there is **no evidence that depression is caused by low levels of serotonin**. As for side effects, SSRIs can cause loss of libido, with **emotional and physical sexual numbing** in up to a third of patients, sometimes permanently. The first few weeks on medication show a statistical upswing in both suicidal and homicidal behaviour.

A **child by the age of 16 years** will have witnessed on average around 16,000 murders on television.

Prescriptions for methylphenidate (**Ritalin**) in the UK have increased from 325,000 in 2011 to nearly **650,000 for just the last three months of 2022**.

The internet has radically changed how people communicate. 'Influencers' on the social media persuade millions of young minds what to think. Elsewhere, online chat rooms are implicated in cases of child suicide. Users of Facebook worry if they have fewer than 100 'friends'. How genuine are these friendships based only on what people choose to post about themselves?

Online pornography is now a major concern in our schools. Studies demonstrate a link between early exposure to violence on screen and subsequent behaviour change, with **loss of the capacity for empathy**.

The latest elephant in the room is artificial intelligence or **AI, now expanding exponentially since AI is able to write its own codes!** AI has already acquired the entire body of information that is globally available on-line and **now knows how to outwit safeguarding checks and balances**. Sam Altman, CEO of the Open AI platform ChatGTP, admits that very soon it will be impossible to tell if the person you are talking to is actually human.

Young people today, surrounded by the Internet of Things, are paying a high price. Growing up in a world of ubiquitous technology can leave a **person unskilled at relating, unconfident of love and vulnerable to mental distress** that can be overwhelming.

What can be done? There is **some room for cautious optimism**

Forgiveness is another important issue whether of self or other. **Compassion** recognises that we are all flawed and that everyone is here to learn from their mistakes. It's never a matter of trying to impress on someone that they should love, forgive or be reconciled, for the wounded ego may not be able or willing to forgive. Nevertheless, **I have yet to find someone who does not wish that forgiveness might be possible** one day. This desire arises from the soul and consequently a seed of forgiveness is planted. The soul knows very well that in forgiveness lies **healing**, and with healing comes **peace**. The key to this is that no matter how deeply the ego may be wounded, the soul is unharmed. It may have been silenced, but the therapist who is moved by compassion will invariably find it and help it speak

[...] perhaps most importantly, simply **reaching out soul-to-soul requires no training or special skill, for it is in the gift of everyone to offer** this to each other.

Once we are shown **what the best in us can be, we can set about becoming that person. In this lies the future of humanity**, if there is to be one - not one of competition but compassion for each other, for all humankind

Nor does one need to be a doctor to find that there is one medicine always to hand – and that is the **healing power of love**.