

The Social Artist

A photograph of a lush garden with a person in the background, used as a background for the magazine cover. The garden is filled with various plants, including tall corn stalks and leafy green vegetables. In the background, a person is visible, and there are houses and a greenhouse. The overall scene is vibrant and detailed.

wonder

screens

sacred

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Editor: Dr. Frances Hutchinson
Mail and Editorial: The Social Artist
Willow Bank, Riddlesden
Keighley, BD20 5AN
Tel: +44 (0)1535 600356 (editor)
+44 (0)1535 654230 (secretary)
Email editor@douglassocialcredit.com
Website: www.douglassocialcredit.com

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Editorial

The task ahead is to replace the capitalist market society with a sustainable social order in which markets have their place, but do not dominate policy formation. Currently we have a market-driven social order dominated by finance. The right to an income is dependent upon the sale of one's labour-time to a market-driven employer. The right to study and develop one's skills depends upon providing proof that the talents so developed will be saleable on the market. The right of access to the land and the material resources necessary for life depends upon a money system based upon a legally enforced debt-based financial system. We're all locked in to the system The question is – where can we go from here?

For over a century social credit literature has explored the role of finance within the economic, political and cultural spheres of society. According to the social credit analysis, money represents society's *credit*: that is, money is something positive, representing all those things actually and potentially produced for sale on the market. But under corporate market capitalism, money is created as *debt* which has to be repaid to the issuing banks/financial houses after production and sale have taken place. In this scenario, money is society's debt, a debt which is legally enforceable and has to be paid to the issuing corporations. Under the protection of the legal

framework of limited liability, these issuing corporations operate in law as if they were individuals, when they are in fact a collection of powerful individuals.

Industrialisation was made possible by the debt-based financial system. This historical fact cannot be changed. When all is said and done, industrial 'progress' resulted in great improvements in knowledge systems, skills and technologies. Enclosure of the land, of the fields, pastures and commons from which traditional peasant societies met their economic needs – turned land and labour into commodities which could be bought and sold on the market. Mass production for mass markets was driven by the profit motive. What's in it for me became the rule of thumb, it seemed natural to expect a money reward in the form of a wage, salary or dividend in return for services offered to the market.

Yet all the while the land supplied all the material necessities of life, farmers (men and women) worked the land, tending the soils, plants and animals, and the next generation of workers, both paid and unpaid, were reared by the mothers. As has been argued in social credit literature across the decades of the past century, without the handing on of knowledge and skills from generation to generation, to generation, there would be no production of goods and services

for sale on the market. Access to this 'common cultural heritage' is dependent upon education. From the moment of birth we embark upon a journey of physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth which lasts throughout our lifetime. Presently, the educational process is focused almost exclusively upon fitting the individual into the work-a-day world of the mass market economy, where the individual is little more than a cog in a gigantic wheel. The time has come for each of us, individually and within our own Households, to examine our relationship with the natural world – to develop our sense of wonder – and to take firm account of the tribute we pay in terms of time and mental energy to the service of the market economy. We must, in short, educate ourselves in new ways of thinking, feeling and acting, ways which do not put ME first. As Rudolf Steiner explains:

'The well-being of a community of people working together will be the greater, the less the individual claims for himself the proceeds of his work, *i.e.* the more of these proceeds he makes over to his fellow-workers, the more his own needs are satisfied, not out of his own work but out of the work done by others' (Quoted in McKanan 2017 p123) .

I suspect that men reading this quote from Steiner might struggle with it more than women. 100% of our mothers are women, and women form roughly half the population. Without seeking financial reward, our mothers have given us the basic necessities for our life on earth throughout past ages. The task ahead is to educate ourselves, as parents and teachers, as children, students and mature adults, in the life skills we need to create

a sustainable social commonwealth. This is something we can all, without exception, participate in, so long as we have the basics of food, clothing, shelter and access to the written word. .

A Child is Born

Janusz Korczak

As a mother, you say: "My child." When, if not during your pregnancy do you have more right to say this? The beating of the tiny heart, no bigger than a peach stone, echoes your own pulse. Your breath provides the child with oxygen. The blood courses through you both and no drop of blood quite knows yet whether it will remain the mother's or become the child's. Every bite of bread becomes material for building the child's legs on which she will run about, for the skin which will cover her, for the eyes with which she will see, for the brain in which thoughts will burst, for the arms which she will stretch out and the smile with which she will call you Mommy.

As a parent you say: "My child." No, the child belongs jointly to the mother, the father, the grandparents, and the great-grandparents. Somebody's distant "I" which remained dormant in several ancestors, a voice emerging from a decayed, long-forgotten tomb, suddenly speaks again in this child.

A child is a piece of parchment which has been thoroughly covered with minute hieroglyphics, only a very small part of which will you ever be able to decipher.

Extract from *Loving Every Child: Wisdom for Parents*, Janusz Korczak (1878-1942)

The Privatization of Consciousness

Jerry Mander

Merging with TV values is quickly replacing other ways of life. People everywhere carry identical images and crave the same commodities, from cars to hairsprays to Barbie dolls to iPhones. TV is turning everyone into everyone else. It is effectively cloning cultures to be alike. In *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley envisioned a global cloning process taking place via drugs and genetic engineering. We have those too, but TV does just as well, because of the medium's reach and power, and because of the intentions of its owners.

The Powers of Received Images

It's not only the volume of television viewing that matters, but also the nature of the experience and the powers of the imagery that we ingest daily. It was a half century ago, in 1963, that I first entered the world of commercial advertising. Only then did I personally grasp the nature and power of moving-image media. I realized it's possible to create and project purposeful images into millions of brains at the same time, and to get people to view and believe things in the way you wanted them to. I *loved* that—at least, at first. It was lively and fun and brought a sense of omnipotence. Advertising people don't talk about it much, but as a group they generally accept that if they had sufficient funds, they would have the ability to enter and

redesign human consciousness according to commercial intention, and that the whole process of injecting imagery has transformative capabilities. And since it can also change worldviews, the process should ultimately be understood as potentially deeply political, with great powers of persuasion and influence, concerning not only products but also political philosophies and choices. Neil Postman was right in *Amusing Ourselves to Death*: "Advertising is the most important subject we don't discuss and that we do nothing about." This is especially so now that advertising has taken on such a huge role in political campaigning and the information movement.

Are You Immune?

Most people, especially if they are well educated, still believe that advertising (or television, for that matter) has no effect on them or on their beliefs. Their intelligence protects them against invasive imposed imagery, even when an image is repeated a hundred times in their heads. People believe in their immunity even though the imagery does not actually communicate through the language of logic or contemplation. Images ride a freeway into your brain and remain there permanently. No thought is involved. Every advertiser knows this. As a viewer, you may sometimes say, "I

don't believe this," but the image remains anyway.

Jerry Mander is founder and distinguished fellow of the International Forum on Globalization, and was called "patriarch of the anti-globalization movement" by the *New York Times*. His early career was as president of a commercial ad agency, and then later, non-profit political advertising with Public Media Center, which concentrated on environmental and anti-war work. His

previous books include *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (1978), *In the Absence of the Sacred* (1991), *The Case Against the Global Economy* (1996), and *Alternatives to Economic Globalization* (2002). This article is reprinted from Chapter 10 of his 2012 book, *The Capitalism Papers: Fatal Flaws of an Obsolete System*. See the full text of the chapter on <http://monthlyreview.org/2012/10/01/privatization-of-consciousness>

Children, Screen Time and Nature

George K Russell

The fact that children are spending less and less time in nature – and some not at all – is not only a tragedy for individual children, but for the future of our species. For this contact is so important for psychological and spiritual development. When I think of my childhood I remember spring bulbs pushing up pale shoots through the dead leaves, spiders in the garden carrying tiny babies on their backs, the scent of violets and honeysuckle, and the sound of the wind rustling the leaves as I perched for hours in the branches of my beech tree. It was that magic of childhood that shaped the passion that drives me to spend my life fighting to save and protect the last wild places on the planet.

Jane Goodall, Ph.D, DBE,
UN Messenger of Peace

Two important works lie at the center of my concern: Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder* (2005)

and the Kaiser Foundation Study (2010) on media use in young people. Louv concluded that children no longer play out of doors – those who do are a kind of endangered species. The Kaiser survey found that the average American school child (ages 8 to 18) spends almost eight hours on a screen (hand-held, TV, video, etc.) each and every day. Today's statistics are surely higher. And more recent studies, although anecdotal, suggest that many young people cannot identify or characterize even a few common wild flowers, song birds, or local mammals. Given these findings, it is no surprise that young people have little time for quiet immersion in a natural setting, no time to play in nature, no time to experience the tides or the vicissitudes of the weather or the comings and goings of wild animals. One study goes so far as to state that many youngsters spend as little as seven minutes each day attending to even the simplest of natural phenomena. I have known students

who spend virtually no time at all in such activity and appear to be largely estranged from nature. At the heart of the matter is the notion that direct personal encounter with nature, and the associated feelings of wonder and delight, form the basic ethos for protection of the natural environment. We will honor and protect what we have come to love and admire, and such feelings have their source in personal experience. But what of those for whom there is little or no connection with nature? Can we expect them to participate with enthusiasm in the search for solutions to the vast array of environmental challenges facing us? And are we losing sight of the notion that each person has the possibility of finding in the many wonders of nature an opportunity for self-renewal and inspiration?

In an essay from *Children and Nature*, ‘Look, Don’t Touch’, David Sobel reminds us that childhood experience in nature is all-important in establishing lasting bonds between individuals and the natural world. He writes that the American naturalists and environmentalists John Muir, EO Wilson, Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson all had ‘down-and-dirty experiences in childhood’ that formed lifelong bonds with the earth and its creatures. Sobel tells us that “nature programs should invite children to make mud pies, climb trees, catch frogs, paint their faces with charcoal, get their hands dirty and their feet wet.” Too much emphasis on concepts and the mechanical principles of nature, especially in the early years, does little to establish the sort of deep communion with nature to which he alludes. “Between the ages of six and twelve, learning about nature is less important than simply getting children

out into nature.” A recent book by Sobel and several collaborators, *Nature Preschool and Forest Kindergartens: The Handbook for Outdoor Learning*, highlights an effort, originating in Europe, to bring children into nature at very early ages, and several schools in this country, especially the Forest Kindergarten at the Saratoga Waldorf School, have achieved remarkable success.

The most powerful voice of all is surely that of Rachel Carson. She is best known for her seminal work, *Silent Spring*, a book that helped to launch the environmental movement in the early 1970s, but she is also the author of *The Sense of Wonder*, a lyrical essay she wrote a few years before her death in 1964. *The Sense of Wonder* has been widely acclaimed as one of the great American nature essays and it deserves full attention from everyone concerned for the future of the natural environment and the future of our children.

Carson spent her summer vacations at a cabin retreat along the coast of south eastern Maine where she found repose and the inner strength to confront powerful voices not wanting to hear her message about toxic chemicals and poisoning of the natural environment. In *The Sense of Wonder* she helps the reader recapture something of lost childhood and to reflect on the sense of wonder that each child brings into life as a kind of birthright. Readers of this essay will be profoundly affected, I think, and I trust that each will come to value even more the power of nature to awaken our hearts to what we are doing to the natural environment; she has also shown us how in nature we can find sustenance for the

human spirit.

“A child’s world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength.”

Surely we must pay far more attention to the role of parenting and the need for caring adults to foster compassion and love in children, especially during the formative years of early childhood. The American teacher and poet, Pattiann Rogers, writes in her essay ‘Cradle’ that:

“I cannot think of anything more important for the future of the earth than that we have loving, diligent mothers and fathers caring for our children... . If children learn to act with compassion by being treated compassionately themselves, if they learn love by being loved, to respect others by having received respect, to cooperate by being involved in cooperation, to keep their word by experiencing honesty, to protect others by having been protected themselves, how can we possibly overestimate the importance of children being nurtured by dependable parents who are capable of demonstrating such qualities? It is these qualities that will form the basis for all future decisions our children must make regarding their interactions with other people and

with the natural world.” (G.K. Russell (Ed) *Children and Nature: Making Connections*, 2014)

One of the most troubling aspects of our theme is that children seem to have forgotten how to play. Stephanie Hanes, a regular contributor to the *Christian Science Monitor*, writes in ‘Toddlers to Tweens’ (see Russell 2014) that for many if not most American children “free play” no longer exists. Youngsters are programmed and scheduled, tested and retested, given little or no recess time at school, and pressured to get ready for higher levels of education. They have little or no experience of the joys of wandering, the vagaries of fantasizing or the simple pleasures of made-up games, unscheduled days and the carefree delights of summer.

Extracted from full article published in *New View*, Summer 2018, where it is fully referenced.

George K. Russell holds a doctorate in Biology from Harvard University and has recently retired from the Biology Department of Adelphi University, Garden City, NY, USA. He has worked for several decades to urge Biology instructors to avoid invasive studies on animals in the teaching of the life sciences. As one of the founders of *Orion* magazine he served as Editor-in-Chief from 1982 – 2002. A chief interest at present is the natural history of his back garden in Long Island, New York.

That night the very heavens seemed to reach
Down to my stance. My spirit and my flesh
Were one existence then.
How often since has such joy been my wish
As then was granted to a child of ten
Elizabeth Jennings: ‘Among the Stars’

Extracts from Silent Spring

Rachel Carson

Silent Spring begins with a “fable for tomorrow” – a true story using a composite of examples drawn from many real communities where the use of DDT had caused damage to wildlife, birds, bees, agricultural animals, domestic pets, and even humans. Carson used it as an introduction to a very scientifically complicated and already controversial subject. This “fable” made an indelible impression on readers and was used by critics to charge that Carson was a fiction writer and not a scientist.

Serialized in three parts in *The New Yorker*, where President John F. Kennedy read it in the summer of 1962, *Silent Spring* was published in August and became an instant best-seller and the most talked about book in decades. Utilizing her many sources in federal science and in private research, Carson spent over six years documenting her analysis that humans were misusing powerful, persistent, chemical pesticides before knowing the full extent of their potential harm to the whole biota.

Introduction

IN THIS BRILLIANT and controversial book, Miss Rachel Carson brings her training as a biologist and her skill as a writer to bear with great force on a

significant and even sinister aspect of man’s technological progress. This is the story of the use of toxic chemicals in the countryside and of the widespread destruction of wild life in America (caused by pesticides, fungicides and herbicides). But *Silent Spring* is not merely about poisons; it is about ecology or the relation of plants and animals to their environment and to one another. Ecologists are more and more coming to recognize that for this purpose man is an animal and indeed the most important of all animals and that however artificial his dwelling, he cannot with impunity allow the natural environment of living things from which he has so recently emerged to be destroyed. Fundamentally, therefore, Miss Carson makes a well reasoned and persuasive case for human beings to learn to appreciate the fact that they are part of the entire living world inhabiting this planet, and that they must understand its conditions of existence and so behave that these conditions are not violated.

Lord Shackleton (1962)

Chapter 1: A Fable for Tomorrow

THERE WAS once a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings. The town

lay in the midst of a checkerboard of prosperous farms, with fields of grain and hillsides of orchards where, in spring, white clouds of bloom drifted above the green fields. In autumn, oak and maple and birch set up a blaze of colour that flamed and flickered across a backdrop of pines. Then foxes barked in the hills and deer silently crossed the fields, half hidden in the mists of the autumn mornings.

Along the roads, laurel, viburnum and alder, great ferns and wildflowers delighted the traveller's eye through much of the year. Even in winter the roadsides were places of beauty, where countless birds came to feed on the berries and on the seedheads of the dried weeds rising above the snow. The countryside was, in fact, famous for the abundance and variety of its bird life, and when the flood of migrants was pouring through in spring and autumn people travelled from great distances to observe them. Others came to fish the streams, which flowed clear and cold out of the hills and contained shady pools where trout lay. So it had been from the days many years ago when the first settlers raised their houses, sank their wells, and built their barns.

Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change. Some evil spell had settled on the community: mysterious maladies swept the flocks of chickens; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death. The farmers spoke of much illness among their families. In the town the doctors had become more and more puzzled by new kinds of sickness appearing among their patients. There had been several sudden and unexplained

deaths, not only among adults but even among children, who would be stricken suddenly while at play and die within a few hours.

There was a strange stillness. The birds, for example—where had they gone? Many people spoke of them, puzzled and disturbed. The feeding stations in the backyards were deserted. The few birds seen anywhere were moribund; they trembled violently and could not fly. It was a spring without voices. On the mornings that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens, and scores of other bird voices there was now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh.

On the farms the hens brooded, but no chicks hatched. The farmers complained that they were unable to raise any pigs—the litters were small and the young survived only a few days. The apple trees were coming into bloom but no bees droned among the blossoms, so there was no pollination and there would be no fruit.

The roadsides, once so attractive, were now lined with browned and withered vegetation as though swept by fire. These, too, were silent, deserted by all living things. Even the streams were now lifeless. Anglers no longer visited them, for all the fish had died.

In the gutters under the eaves and between the shingles of the roofs, a white granular powder still showed a few patches; some weeks before it had fallen like snow upon the roofs and the lawns, the fields and streams.

No witchcraft, no enemy action had silenced the rebirth of new life in this stricken world. The people had done it themselves.

This town does not actually exist, but it might easily have a thousand counterparts in America or elsewhere in the world. I know of no community that has experienced all the misfortunes I describe. Yet every one of these disasters has actually happened somewhere, and many real communities have already suffered a substantial number of them. A grim spectre has crept upon us almost unnoticed, and this imagined tragedy may easily become a stark reality we all shall know.

What has already silenced the voices of spring in countless towns in America? This book is an attempt to explain.

Chapter 3: Elixirs of Death

FOR THE first time in the history of the world, every human being is now subjected to contact with dangerous chemicals, from the moment of conception until death. In the less than two decades of their use, the synthetic pesticides have been so thoroughly distributed throughout the animate and inanimate world that they occur virtually everywhere. They have been recovered from most of the major river systems and even from streams of ground-water flowing unseen through the earth. Residues of these chemicals linger in soil to which they may have been applied a dozen years before. They have entered and lodged in the bodies of fish, birds, reptiles, and domestic and wild animals so universally that scientists carrying

on animal experiments find it almost impossible to locate subjects free from such contamination. They have been found in fish in remote mountain lakes, in earthworms burrowing in soil, in the eggs of birds—and in man himself. For these chemicals are now stored in the bodies of the vast majority of human beings, regardless of age. They occur in the mother's milk, and probably in the tissues of the unborn child.

All this has come about because of the sudden rise and prodigious growth of an industry for the production of man-made or synthetic chemicals with insecticidal properties. This industry is a child of the Second World War. In the course of developing agents of chemical warfare, some of the chemicals created in the laboratory were found to be lethal to insects. The discovery did not come by chance: insects were widely used to test chemicals as agents of death for man.

The result has been a seemingly endless stream of synthetic insecticides. In being man-made—by ingenious laboratory manipulation of the molecules, substituting atoms, altering their arrangement—they differ sharply from the simpler inorganic ... (read on in the book itself)

The Forest

The forest controls the trees, which control the leaves, which control the whole ecological system. We must be part of building a culture-changing vision, an ecological civilisation – one in which everyone of us begins to feel responsibility for our shared home, planet Earth

James Thornton, environmental lawyer

Extracts from

The Inhuman in Our Midst

Jeremy Naydler

The advent of computers was deeply intertwined with the reductionist assault on our thinking as a spiritual activity, for both were the result of a four hundred year drive to mechanise the mind. In the case of the computer, logic was finally wrested free of the human being, to function in an electromechanical domain entirely independent of those human qualities of feeling, imagination, understanding, empathy, conscience and so forth, which had always hitherto provided its context. In the average modern computer, there are not just hundreds, nor even thousands, of switches arranged in ways ... to simulate logical thought processes. There are hundreds of millions of switches, turning rapidly on and off billions of times per second. And not once is there a flicker of human doubt, the possibility of an emotion, nor even the tiniest opening to a meaningful insight. In the computer, logic functions in total independence of the human being.

Through the establishment of logic in a realm separate from the human, something extraordinary has been achieved, for machines have been endowed with a certain ability to reason that previously belonged only to humans. However, it is a reasoning that falls below the level of true thinking, for it

corresponds to that kind of instrumental and calculative thinking which in the Middle Ages was identified as belonging to the level of the *ratio*. True thinking, that is truly human thinking, goes beyond mere calculation, information processing, and the application of problem-solving logic, for it incorporates the contemplative intelligence of the *intellectus*, with its demand for understanding and insight, and its requirement that the mind open itself to the interior reality of spirit. Machine thinking, by contrast, cannot break out of its confinement within a realm of extreme logical precision that is empty of spiritual content, empty of meaning and empty of value. This is not to condemn it, for it can be extremely useful, but we need nevertheless to see clearly what it is.

We need to see this in order to conduct ourselves in the right way towards our machines, because the fundamental requirement that logic be constrained to serve spiritual ends, and that it be tempered by human sensibilities and values, still holds. But when we are considering our relationship to computers, we have also to contend with the fact that their processing ability, which far outstrips our own, inevitably has an effect on us. The collective *ratio* has grown far more powerful through

its having been, in a certain one-sided way, embodied in machines. And so the influence of the *ratio* on the whole psychic and spiritual make up of the human being is far greater today than it has ever been. The danger that faces us is that we all become so mesmerized by the brilliance of our computers that we begin to think like them, and forget what it means to think humanly.

Many of the modern pioneers of computer technology have held the view that the calculative thinking that computers function with *is the only kind of thinking there is*. This fact alone betrays the extent to which those who have driven the digital revolution have been possessed by the same impulse that took hold of the mechanistic philosophers: namely, the impulse to confine the human being within a mentality that cuts us off from awareness of spirit. As we saw, when first advocated by Bacon, this had the character of a Mephistophelean bargain. And so we find ourselves in the position of Faust today, having collectively made our wager with Mephistopheles. And now he accompanies us every moment of the day in the detached, concentrated logic that runs our mobile phones, iPhones, Blackberries, iPads, laptops and so on. These devices that have become the new companions of the soul are undeniably brilliant, useful and seemingly indispensable; and yet despite all their brilliance, they do not in themselves nourish our inner life, for they are essentially cold and utterly soulless.

In his great dramatic poem *Faust*, Goethe describes how, meeting in a garden with Faust, the pure-hearted Gretchen tells him “It has long time troubled me to find

you keep the company you do.” Gretchen is referring to Faust’s companion Mephistopheles. What troubles her may perhaps help us to see what it is that troubles many of us about computer technology. It is, she explains, that she feels something in her heart, in her blood, which she describes as a “secret horror” of Mephistopheles. What gives rise to this secret horror? It is that Mephistopheles has no sympathy for anything: he is cold, and “he can never love a living soul”. But her trouble goes deeper. His presence makes her feel inwardly constricted, whereas Faust makes her feel free and warm. But, most tellingly, Gretchen says that when Mephistopheles is nearby she cannot pray. In this last statement we begin to see the depth of the challenge that faces us today.

Extract from: Jeremy Naydler, “The Inhuman in Our Midst: Reflections on the Origins and Development of the Computer” *New View* Autumn 2010 where it is fully referenced.

ratio (latin) = reckoning

intellectus (latin) = comprehension

Jeremy Naydler is the author of *Gardening as a Sacred Art*, Floris Books

Mephistopheles is a demon featured in German folklore. In one version of the legend Faust is tempted to sacrifice his soul to Mephistopheles in exchange for such favours as knowledge, power and wealth.

cf. The temptations of Jesus in the Wilderness, Matthew 4, 1-11

Extracts from Radiation, Robot Bees and 5G: The Nightmare Unfolds

Jeremy Naydler

Earlier this year, the UK Government published its strategy for the introduction of the next generation of wireless interconnectivity, referred to as 5G or “fifth generation”. The Government document explains that unlike previous generations of mobile networks, 5G is not just about enhancing existing technologies through faster connections and bigger data transfer capacity; it is about establishing “a system of systems”, involving hundreds of thousands of new generation mini-mobile phone masts or antennas (referred to as “small cell transmitters”), that will be deployed in urban centres up and down the land. It is anticipated that in an area the size of the City of London (famously a “square mile”), forty-two thousand new antennas will be required. This is roughly as many antennas as currently exist throughout the whole of the UK, and gives an indication of the massive scale of investment that will be needed in order to implement 5G across the nation.

The introduction of 5G in the UK is part of a coordinated global effort that is now gathering pace, with trials already underway in many different countries, some further ahead than others. The aim is to create an electronic infrastructure, planetary in extent, and so comprehensive

that what is planned is now widely referred to as the creation of a global “5G ecosystem”. We tend to think of ecosystems as composed of communities of living organisms interacting with soil, rocks, rivers and so on, but what is envisaged is the creation of a second, entirely electronic, network of interacting technologies that will encompass, embrace and interpenetrate the primary reality of the natural environment that human beings have for millennia lived within. This alternative electronic ecosystem will be like an invisible net thrown over the world, capturing an increasing number of objects — not only man-made appliances, but also living creatures and natural processes — and incorporating them into an ever-expanding global information network.

As the whole planet accelerates towards the dubious status of becoming “smart”, the Internet itself will increasingly shift its location to the external environment, becoming a so-called “Internet of Things”, to be accessed all around us, wherever we are. This of course is already happening, but 5G will enable it to happen far more effectively. One of the defining features of 5G is that it will give 100% coverage: there won’t be anywhere not covered by the new

electronic ecosystem. Wherever one is, one will be “connected”. And this connection will be “seamless”. “Seamless connectivity” (a much used phrase in describing the benefits of 5G) means that any number of different computer programmes or systems will be accessible through a single user interface, be it a smartphone, tablet or laptop. It also means that wherever the user is, he or she will be immersed in the greater electronic ecosystem. There will, in other words, be a growing, seamlessness between the physical world and the electronic world: the two will increasingly merge. We will live “seamlessly” between them.

Today you can walk in fields for miles on end in the UK and you are likely never to set eyes on a farmer or farm labourer actually standing on the soil. Within the farming community, with the exception of small organic and biodynamic farms, it seems that relationship to the land, to the soil as “mothering power”, has finally been lost. The 5G ecosystem will carry this tendency to an even greater extreme of alienation, because it is not an ecosystem for living organisms: it is an ecosystem for intelligent machines and robots. At the smart farming conference in the Netherlands, there was discussion on how to respond to the worrying decline of bees. No one mentioned that bees are highly electro-sensitive, a fact

which has been known for more than forty years, with many recent studies confirming their hyper-sensitivity. The connection between colony collapse disorder and exposure to radio frequency and microwave radiation has been repeatedly argued by researchers, but at the smart farming conference a new, “smart” way forward was presented as the perfect solution to the problem: a new pollinator drone called “APIS”. The acronym stands for Autonomous Pollination and Imaging System. It is a fully autonomous “micro air vehicle” designed for greenhouses — one of several currently being developed in different research establishments across the world. The technical advances that have been made in indoor navigation, miniaturization and precise vision-based control underpin the viability of the design. If our bees are being killed off by the new electronic ecosystem, never mind. The new ecosystem enables them to be replaced with robot bees [pictured in *New View*].

In this one example the deeper purpose of the 5G ecosystem is laid bare. It is to enable intelligent machines, or machine-organism hybrids, to usurp natural organisms. The technological revolution that we are currently living through goes beyond the extension of our control over nature: it is aiming at the replacement

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of nature with a fully technologised planet. If people today were not so enamoured with the flood of increasingly sophisticated gadgets and robotic devices that promise to entertain or empower us, it would be tempting to resort to conspiracy theory to explain what is happening: a shadowy elite, a hidden agenda. But no, it seems that both nature and essential human values are being

undermined by popular consent, and by an unbridled enthusiasm for ever-greater technologisation of the conditions of life. It is as if something diabolical has got into our souls and cast a spell over us.

Extract taken from “Radiation, Robot Bees and 5G: The Nightmare Unfolds”, *New View*, Autumn 2017, where it is fully referenced.

Extracts from In the Absence of the Spiritual

Jerry Mander (1992)

In *The Dream of the Earth*, Thomas Berry describes the entire industrial age as a “period of technological entrancement, an altered state of consciousness, a mental fixation that alone can explain how we came to ruin our air and water and soil and to severely damage all our basic life systems.” Berry goes on: “During this period the human mind has been placed within the narrowest confines it has experienced since consciousness emerged from its Paleolithic phase. Even the most primitive tribes have a larger vision of the universe, of our place and functioning within it, a vision that extends to celestial regions of space and to interior depths of the human in a manner far exceeding the parameters of our world of technological confinement.”

Because our vision became so confined, says Berry, we got caught in what he calls “species isolation” that led to “a

savage assault upon the Earth such as was inconceivable in prior times. The experience of a sacred communion with the Earth disappeared. . . . Such intimacy [with the planet] was considered a poetic conceit by a people who prided themselves on their realism, their aversion to all forms of myth, magic, mysticism, and superstition. Little did these people know that their very realism was as pure a superstition as was ever professed by humans, their devotion to science a new mysticism, their technology a magical way to Paradise.”

Berry believes that our society does not grasp the nature of our fixation. “That is what needs to be explained,” he says, “our entrancement with an industrially driven society. Until we have explained this situation to ourselves, we will never break the spell that has seized us. We will continue to be subject to this fatal

attraction.”

In Chapter 3 I discussed some ingredients of the pro-technology paradigm, in order to try to explain what Berry calls our “entrancement” with technology. Included among those ingredients were the domination of information by corporations, which present only *best-case scenarios* for their schemes; our envelopment in *artificial environments*, particularly the media, that shield us from an alternative reality; and our tendency to view technology strictly in *personal rather than holistic* terms, which misleads us as to its ultimate effects. I also discussed technology’s inherent appeal, how it always presents itself in a seemingly beneficent light. If it did not seem to benefit us, of course, we would not have gone for it at all. The bad news

came later.

But while working on the last stages of this book, I became aware of “We can’t go back.” I usually hear it in social situations. Typically, someone would ask me about the book I was completing. Then after I describe the book’s main ideas, the person might say, “Sounds interesting, Jerry, but you know, we can’t really go back to the way the Indians lived. You’re being romantic to think we can.”

COMMENT: *In In the Absence of the Spiritual*, as in his other books, Jerry Mander draws upon the work of a host of writers, encouraging us to dare to think outside the box about the new information technologies, the future of the planet, and our personal responsibilities in shaping the social order.

Extracts from The Sense of Wonder

Rachel Carson

I sincerely believe that for the child, and for the parent seeking to guide him, it is not half so important to know as to feel. If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow. The years of early childhood are the time to prepare the soil. Once the emotions have been aroused—a sense of the beautiful, the excitement of the new and the unknown, a feeling of

sympathy, pity, admiration or love—then we wish for knowledge about the object of our emotional response. Once found, it has lasting meaning. It is more important to pave the way for the child to want to know than to put him on a diet of facts he is not ready to assimilate. ...

If you are a parent who feels he has little nature lore at his disposal there is still much you can do for your child. With him, wherever you are and whatever

your resources, you can still look up at the sky—its dawn and twilight beauties, its moving clouds, its stars by night. You can listen to the wind, whether it blows with majestic voice through a forest or sings a many-voiced chorus around the eaves of your house or the corners of your apartment building, and in the listening, you can gain magical release for your thoughts. You can still feel the rain on your face and think of its long journey, its many transmutations, from sea to air to earth. Even if you are a city

dweller, you can find some place, perhaps a park or a golf course, where you can observe the mysterious migrations of the birds and the changing seasons. And with your child you can ponder the mystery of a growing seed, even if it be only one planted in a pot of earth in the kitchen window. ...

Rachel Carson *The Sense of Wonder*, (1997 edition) First published under the title 'Help Your Child to Wonder' in *Women's Home Companion*, 1956.

Book Reviews

The Annunciation: A Pilgrim's Quest

Mark Byford

Winchester University Press (March 2018)

978-1906113254

676pp £50

This book is a personal, spiritual, and religious quest, which successfully blends several different genres. It has elements of a detective story, a theological study, art history, social history, travelogue, and more besides. It is an extraordinary book in many ways, not least its sheer physical volume. For the first time I felt compelled to put a book on my kitchen scales, and despite being a paperback, its 647 pages weighed in at a thumping 1.7 kilos.

As a general reader, I would have expected to find a book of this length on this subject daunting, and quite frankly unappealing. But the first few chapters drew me in: this is no dry academic tome, it is written in the first person, in a conversational style, and in a format which makes for a surprisingly easy and enjoyable read. The author is honest, open and inclusive,

with seemingly boundless curiosity and an eye for telling detail, which makes his interviews with a very wide variety of people interesting and highly readable. The book begins when the author finds himself with some time to kill in Central London. In the National Gallery, Mark Byford becomes inexplicably fascinated by a painting of the Annunciation by eighteenth century French artist Francois Lemoyne. For reasons he can't quite understand it inspires him to embark on an epic pilgrimage. First, he investigates the history of the painting and the artist. He then begins to explore the meaning of the Biblical event it portrays, (Luke 1:26-38), when the angel Gabriel announced to the virgin Mary that she would become the mother of Jesus. His desire to further explore the meaning of this story eventually leads to him having conversations about it with scores of people around the world.

After three years, his pilgrimage resulted in the publication of this book, but it is quite clear that for Byford the pilgrimage will not have ended there. For the

questions posed and the journey taken in this book, there will never be a conclusive answer or a final destination, just further questions and new paths to explore.

Mark Byford was Head of Journalism at the BBC from 2004 to 2011, so he clearly has all the requisite skills to undertake a thorough investigation of almost any subject and write a cogent account. But this is not a detached, journalistic project - it is highly personal. The author's intellectual engagement is matched by an emotional and spiritual engagement, which in turn serves to engage the reader and carry them along with him.

The first part of the book is a fascinating combination of art history and detective work. Byford discovers that the painting which has so captivated him is on loan to the National Gallery from Winchester College - and rather fortuitously he happens to live in Winchester. He investigates how the painting found its way to the College, and then learns about the life, and shockingly bizarre death, of Francois Lemoyne, which would make a gripping book or film in its own right. Throughout the course of his research he seeks out further artistic representations of the event which one of his interviewees describes as 'arguably, the most important event in history'. Eventually, he views around 150 interpretations of the Annunciation, from the earliest known painting in the catacombs of Rome to contemporary renditions. I found this to be one of the great strengths of the book, as plentiful illustrations give it a visual beauty and another dimension which enriches and complements the intellectual content.

As the author travels across Europe, the Middle East and beyond, speaking to scores of people from various cultures and different faiths, it is amazing to find how one short story, just a few hundred words in the New Testament, can mean so

many different things to so many different people. As Byford says, "The Virgin Mary's role and status in the story creates a wide range of reactions, from adoration to condemnation, often highly charged and emotional."

For Christians who take the Bible literally such a plethora of views and interpretations could be a disturbing experience. But as one interviewee says of the Annunciation story, "It can't be proven to be historical fact, but it is profoundly true." And the Catholic priest who first taught Mark Byford about the Annunciation in his childhood, and who can perhaps be thought of as partly responsible for this book, would agree. The eulogy of Canon Terry Walsh, who sadly died before Byford could interview him for the book, says "One of Terry's abiding passions in Scripture was that you shouldn't take something in one mode (image, myth, parable) and transfer it to another (literal truth)...in all his encounters with people as far as they were capable of understanding, he wanted to lead them in to see a deeper truth." As a search for deeper truth, this book may end, but it does not come to a conclusion. As Baptist Minister Steve Chalke tells the author, "The Annunciation is like a goldmine that I can never finish mining. Even if I got to 150 years of age, I'd still be finding truths about it I'd never found before. For me, the centrality of the story is about God's intention with ordinary people to bring about extraordinary things." Perhaps this book could be said to be one of those extraordinary things.

Bernadette Meaden has written about religious, political and social issues for some years, and is strongly influenced by Christian Socialism, liberation theology and the Catholic Worker movement. She is a regular contributor to *Ekklesia*.

Why don't children sit still? A Parent's Guide to Healthy Movement and Play in Child Development

Evelien van Dort, translated by

Barbara Mees

Floris Books (2018)

ISBN: 978 1782505143

pb 120pp £7.99

Most parents at some point in their child's life have given in to sheer frustration and cried out 'Why can't you just sit still!' This is the question van Dort addresses in her short guide to movement and play in child development. Her answer, in the simplest of terms, is that moving is the child's natural way of being and without it there can be no learning and no development. Too often in modern life efforts are made to restrict children's playful movement, when what they need is the encouragement and guidance to be active in appropriate ways.

What is appropriate movement? This is where things get complicated. According to van Dort, selecting suitable games and activities depends on paying close attention to the age, the stage of development and the individual abilities of each child. Drawing on her 30 years' experience as a child physiotherapist, van Dort offers a combination of theory, illustrative case studies, problem solving advice and general tips for parents wishing to support their children's healthy development in what she acknowledges can be a challenging social and educational environment.

Divided into three parts, the book introduces some basic concepts in sensorimotor development, covering the developmental milestones in infancy, learning to write, the senses, and the significance of the connection between

movement and learning at all stages from babyhood to adolescence and beyond. The longest section is devoted to presenting the anthroposophical understanding of the 12 senses. In particular, van Dort discusses the four bodily senses of touch, life, movement and balance and how they relate to practical life decisions we make for and with our children, for instance what toys they are given, what sports they take up or what musical instruments they play. In this context she also touches on the themes of sensory overstimulation and hyperactivity, two major concerns for both families and professionals in a world of pervasive digital technology and ever-increasing screen addiction.

Van Dort's book is informative and pragmatic and the overall tone is warm and calmly reassuring. Above all she emphasizes that unconditional love must be the foundation of all parent-child interaction and that each child develops at their own pace and time. While movement is essential, so is rest and the task is to nurture harmony and rhythm in everyday life. Van Dort is careful in her criticism of conventional wisdom and norms, gently pointing out some common parenting mistakes and providing insights into the child's experience as a key to both understanding their behavior and modifying our own. One senses that she has a great deal more to say on this subject and it is a shame that the volume is so slim. As an accessible parenting guide 'bite-size' tips and anecdotes woven together with some primary concepts is perfectly fitting, yet the book introduces rather too many complex and diverse theories and terminologies for its style and length. I look forward to a follow-on publication in which the author's clearly extensive knowledge and valuable experience is presented in a more in-depth and comprehensive way.

Maria Lyons is founder of the Camphill Research Network, which collates, disseminates and promotes research related to Camphill and other intentional communities.

For more details or to join the network please visit www.camphillresearch.com or contact maria.lyons@camphillresearch.com

Eco-Alchemy: Anthroposophy and the History and Future of Environmentalism.

Dan McKanan

Oakland: University of California Press (2018)
pp289
£22.83
ISBN 978-0-520-29000-8

After more than twenty years of interaction with the anthroposophical movement, Dan McKanan concludes that today's environmental movement is a vast ecosystem which is united by an awareness that individual destinies are caught up with the health of natural systems at the local, global and cosmic levels. This consciousness is changing what we eat, how we treat plants and animals, where we live and how we travel. It is also changing our culture, the stories we tell, the ways we teach and learn, our outer rituals and innermost beliefs.

One context in which ecological evolution is taking place is within the spiritual communities and practical initiatives inspired by Rudolf Steiner. The author comments that students of Steiner's spiritual science, known as *anthroposophy*, are active in every corner of the environmental movement, from organic farming, to environmental education, to holistic scientific research. The most visible contribution to environmentalism has been biodynamic agriculture – a spiritual and alchemical form of farming that prepared the way for the organic movement of the 20th century. It is not McKanan's intention to suggest that anthroposophy's contribution to environmentalism is limited to agriculture, for even those manifestations

of anthroposophy that seem unrelated to the environment possess ecological significance. Perhaps the best known of Steiner's initiatives are the international network of Waldorf Schools, in which seasonal celebrations are integral to the curriculum. Less well known is the Camphill network of intentional communities and 'ecovillages'. Whilst highlighting anthroposophy's unique place in the history of environmentalism, the author makes links with other spiritual traditions, including the Catholic Worker movement inspired by the teachings of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin.

According to McKanan, three distinct groups of people spread the biodynamic impulse. Firstly, committed students of anthroposophy whom McKanan describes as *evangelists*; then other people, well-informed, but less committed to anthroposophy, whom he calls *translators*, and who expressed the core ideas of biodynamics in non-anthroposophical language making those ideas accessible to people who might have been hostile to anthroposophy. Finally, there were many *allies* whose path to the organic movement had nothing to do with anthroposophy but who embraced the *evangelists* and *translators* as partners in a common cause.

For McKanan, the most important way in which anthroposophy reaches beyond organic agriculture to touch the environmental movement as a whole is through banking and finance. Steiner's ideas about economics and what he called 'social threefolding' inspired the world's first ethical and ecological banks. His theory of social threefolding holds that economics, politics and culture represent three distinct social spheres, each with its own inner processes. These three social

spheres correspond to Steiner's tripartite anthropology of *body* (economics), *soul* (politics of the 'rights sphere') and *spirit* (the spiritual and cultural sphere, which includes arts and education). For Steiner, the economic sphere is governed by 'fraternal' cooperation, the rights sphere by perfect 'equality' and the cultural sphere by absolute individual 'liberty'. These spheres can be seen as interdependent: the cultural sphere relying on free gifts drawn from surpluses generated by the economic sphere, while the rights sphere is responsible for giving each individual access to land and capital. Steiner expressed the view that society is healthiest when each sphere is structurally autonomous.

Anthroposophy's environmental commitments are most evident in biodynamic agriculture. And to understand the ecology of anthroposophy McKanan explores another major anthroposophical initiative: the international network of Camphill communities where people with developmental disabilities share daily life, work in the fields and craft workshops together and celebrate nature-based seasonal rituals. The Camphill movement which was born in 1939 forms the second generation of anthroposophical initiatives. It embodies in practice the principles of the threefold social order containing, multiple dimensions of anthroposophy within a single organisational context.

In his final chapter McKanan reflects on the gifts that he – as a sympathetic outsider – hopes anthroposophy will continue to bring to environmentalism. These gifts are a *cosmic holism* that challenges us to attend to ever-widening circles of interconnection; a *homeopathic model of social change* that invites us to use subtle influences to heal the world; an *appropriate anthropocentrism* that allows us to experience ourselves as fully at home in the world; and a vision of *planetary*

transmutation that can resist climate change while embracing biological and spiritual evolution.

This book has particular relevance at this time as we witness the breakdown of traditional forms of community, wasteful consumerist lifestyles, the destruction of natural habitats, urbanisation and an over-reliance on fossil fuels. However, a better world cannot be created without new cultural, ethical and spiritual values: but these values have to be practised. I would single out one particular development with which the Camphill movement has been strongly identified – ecovillages – and for the following reasons. Firstly, they have adopted practical actions that reduce the size of the community's ecological footprint. Secondly, they have proven to be successful low-tech developers for the rest of society with many technological innovations to their credit. Thirdly, through their high levels of internal communication, discussion, idea-sharing and consciousness-raising work, ecovillages have often proved to be in the avant-garde - promoting value-based ecological life styles, demonstrating to the rest of society that a reduced use of resources and energy can be combined with an actual growth in quality of life.

The author is to be highly commended not only for the clarity and cogency with which his arguments are expressed and developed but also for the way in which he emphasises the contemporary relevance of anthroposophy. I am delighted to have found a book at last that explains so clearly the origin, meaning, significance and relevance of anthroposophy to today's world.

Robin Jackson

Robin is editor of *Holistic Special Education* (2006), *Discovering Camphill* (2011) and (with Maria Lyons) *Community Care and Inclusion for People with an Intellectual Disability* (2016); all published by Floris Books of Edinburgh.

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