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"BEYOND HUMILIATION:  
ENCOURAGING HUMAN DIGNITY IN THE LIVES AND WORK OF  
ALL PEOPLE"

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THREE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMATICS IN HUMILIATION,  
DIGNITY AND PEACE STUDIES: "RECOGNITION",  
"SOPHIAPHOBIA" AND "PHILIAPHOBIA" - NAMING THE GHOSTS  
IN THE MISTS OF THE PEACE LANDSCAPE

**INTRODUCTION:**

Given that *all scholarship is autobiography*, to paraphrase Nietzsche, in this case, an essay on humiliation and dignity studies from a scholarly, speculative and comparative perspective, certainly demands a brief autobiographical introduction. The current author is a product of several cultural influences, and many overlapping vectors of identity, which have together worked to produce a long professional fascination with precisely the theme posed in the topic of this paper. Born in Canada, Montreal, in 1956, the author's parents were educators, his father, George Daffern, being a leading expert in management development, and his mother a French and Latin teacher. In 1960 the family moved to Brighton, Sussex, and then ensued a period of education in the conventional school system, during which the author encountered a variety of influences: firstly his parents liberal Marxism, secondly, the British Romantic tradition of philosophical dissent,

associated with Shelley, followed by an internal decision to “leave school and become a poet”; thirdly, the discovery of philosophy, particularly in the form of Camus, Nietzsche and Spinoza., following which there was a subsequent decision to “become a philosopher” and study philosophy at University (in Bristol). A year’s study under Prof Korner, the famous Kantian expert, produced a decision to leave and return to Canada and study independently. This, interestingly enough, was caused by the general attitude then prevailing in British philosophical circles, of logical positivism and disdain for Eastern philosophy. Having already discovered the wisdom of Eastern thought, the author had by then become deeply interested in Buddhist philosophy and metaphysics, as well as the study of Sufism and Yoga. On sharing these interests with a philosophy lecturer at Bristol, an expert on Hume, however, he was informed that “Buddhism isn’t a philosophy” and this occasioned the author to resign from the faculty to pursue private studies. There then followed an intensive period of 4 years private study back in Canada during which the author set out on a self-directed private course of study during which a determined effort was made to become familiar with the key philosophical texts of world intellectual heritage and undertook a detailed study programme to this effect using the excellent resources of the University of Calgary in Alberta. This work was undertaken in a sense of urgency due to the pressing needs of the global community to find peace and transcend the threat of nuclear holocaust which was threatening our planet in the confrontation between the two superpowers at that time, and in a host of connected and related conflicts. Having studied in depth the great classics of world philosophy, both Eastern and Western, it became obvious, after considerable reflection and meditative thought, that the great philosophical traditions of East and West can indeed be harmonised and reconciled, and that the outer divisions, discords and conflicts are unnecessary and based on methodological and philosophical confusions. In 1981, during the USA/Iran hostage crisis, it became obvious to the author that there was an urgent need to advance philosophical reasoning and discourse between rival intellectual, spiritual and philosophical systems, so as to enable effective peacemaking and inter-faith dialogue to take place in the global community. The existence of nuclear weapons, and the ensuing renewed nuclear arms race of the latter stages of the cold war, was also a major factor in the decision to return to Europe, so as to be able to make a more effective

contribution towards healing ideological conflicts, and there followed a period in London, a city chosen deliberately for its excellent communication links worldwide. In 1983, therefore, the author launched an organisation entitled Philosophers and Historians for Peace (which still exists) and began a series of open seminars in Notting Hill, an area of West London, which continued to 1985. From 1985-1988, the author decided to read a modern history degree as a mature student at the University of London, not in philosophy (which had already been exhaustively studied independently) but in history, as a way of engaging with the immediate causes of current global conflicts, especially the cold war. With parents who had been amateur liberal Marxist scholars, and as someone who had studied both Marx and Hegel's philosophical approaches to historical explanation, this three years was an important period in which the author was able to engage with the details of contemporary historical scholarship, specialising in the history of Eastern Europe, including the countries of the Balkans and the Slavonic world, at the School of East European Studies. During this period, the author attended the World Congress of Philosophy in Brighton in 1988, having made contact with another parallel organisation to his own entitled International Philosophers for the prevention of Nuclear Omnicide, and met many of the leading lights in this largely North American organisation of professional philosophers concerned with ending the threat of nuclear war then facing the planet. In 1989, the author was employed as Research Development officer at the University of London to investigate the feasibility of establishing a major new academic centre at the University of London specialising in peace studies and world order studies. After a two year period of investigating the details of the proposal, and following some extensive travels to about 20 countries worldwide to examine what they were doing in the way of peace studies, peace education and peace research, the author published a *Feasibility Study*<sup>1</sup> which argued that such a major centre could and indeed should be established in London, within an interdisciplinary framework, drawing on the unparalleled scholarly resources of the London academic community (the LSE, University College, School of Oriental and African Studies, Imperial College, Kings

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<sup>1</sup> This Feasibility Study is still in print and is available along with others of the author's publications from his website, on [www.educationaid.net](http://www.educationaid.net). Its public dissemination was, however, effectively silenced through complex political-academic maneuvers (see final note infra)

College etc.) and providing an international networking centre for visiting scholars interested in placing the search for peace and international understanding at the centre of their academic interests.

Unfortunately not only did the funding of the establishment of such a centre proved elusive, and the political climate, which had seemed briefly favourable to such an undertaking, in the aftermath of the Treaty of Paris in 1990, bringing a formal end to the cold war, took a chillier turn with the Ist Gulf War in 1991, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing international alliance to oust the Iraqis. In 1990 the author had also attended a major international conference of philosophers interested in dialogue for peace in Moscow, just before the coup which ousted Gorbachev and began the process of the final unraveling of the USSR, during which he met philosophers from all over the world to discuss the best ways to reconcile Eastern and Western thought in the search for peace, and during which he was elected International Coordinator of Philosophers for Peace (IPPNO).

There then followed a period of 10 years work teaching in adult and higher education, during which the author taught comparative philosophy, comparative religious studies, history of ideas and peace studies, at a variety of contexts, including the University of London and the University of Oxford. Simultaneously, the author had launched an international Institute arising out of all this work, The International Institute of Peace Studies and Global Philosophy (IIPSGP), aimed precisely at creating a global dialogue for peace among philosophers from East and West, North and South aimed at replacing the rhetoric of competition, violence and alienation with one of wisdom, rationality and compassion. More recently, since 2000, the author has also been teaching in the secondary school sector, and is currently serving as Head of Religious Education and Philosophy and Humanities at a large Secondary school situated in Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire, England.

From 1990-1997, the author also served as elected Secretary General of the World Conference on Religion and Peace for the UK and Ireland, which responsibility caused

attendance at a number of interfaith peace conferences, including most particularly in the Vatican in 1995. During this time, in 1996, the author also launched a practical and unique mediation service, having trained in practical dispute resolution and mediation, called the Multifaith and Multicultural Mediation Service, which was aimed at preventing and resolving disputes between individuals and organisations in which either religious, spiritual or cultural or ethnic factors were at work. Launched in 1996 with a training in Oxford, the MMMS has continued ever since, as a project of IIPSGP, and has worked away behind the scenes to help solve and mediate in these kinds of conflicts. Simultaneously, the author has written up a large and detailed doctoral thesis concerning the intellectual history of the search for peace from 1945-2001 which is currently (2005) proceeding through the various examination stages of the University. The author was awarded an Honorary D.Sc. however in 1998 in partial recognition for work achieved to that date.

During this long period of work, the author has continued to refine and deepen a theoretical basis for the reconciliation of philosophical disagreements between different members of the global community, and which has been developed as a result of a lifetime's quest for ultimate truth and the harmonisation of different philosophical perspectives. The author has studied, traveled and lectured in approximately 36 countries worldwide, including study and teaching visits to India, as well as to Korea and the Philippines, together with similar visits to Israel/Palestine. The author has also been involved for many years with the International Peace Research Association, and following the recent IPRA conference in Sopron, Hungary in 2004, is now co-convenor of the IPRA Peace Theories Commission worldwide, and a member of the European Peace Research Association governing board, tasked with helping put together the programme of the 2006 IPRA conference in Canada. Finally, it should be mentioned that the tragedy of September 11, 2001 and the ensuing global conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, have only redoubled the dedication with which the author has been pursuing the elusive quest for peace through engaged intellectual research, dialogue and analysis, and there has been an ongoing activity of research and education on behalf of IIPSGP since

that time including meetings in the UK Parliament. Recent bombings in London likewise only serve to sharpen one's commitment.

As part of this work, he has organised over 30 seminars in the UK parliament aimed at bringing the diverse communities of academics, NGO leaders, and politicians into active dialogue for thinking through non-violent solutions to global conflicts. From 1993-1999 he has worked as Convenor of the Gandhi Foundation School of Non-violence, working from a building in the East End of London where Gandhi stayed during his last visit to London in 1931. Finally, the author has also published numerous works, including a variety of essays in various works, including Encyclopaedias and reference works, published both in the UK, India, Russia and the USA, and maintains a continuing presence as a lecturer, author and contributor to debates on peace and philosophy both in the UK and internationally. More recently he has authored an Interfaith Dictionary and Calendar of Saints and Sages, comprising a detailed study of lineages of advanced thinkers and mystics from all traditions, as well as a detailed study of comparative enlightenment in global philosophical traditions, plus a detailed Cultural and Historical Encyclopedia of the Welsh Marches, where he mainly lives. So much then for something of the author's background and qualifications to equip him to author this ambitious paper, and to address the theme before us.

### Three Problematics in Humiliation and Dignity Studies:

What do I mean by "problematics" in this context ? Basically, I am saying that there are several major issues and ideas which are problematics in the identifying of both the causes of humiliation and the advancement of human dignity, and that in this context I am choosing to focus on three of them particularly, as ideas which I think lie somewhere near the core of the field of study with which we are concerned. In identifying, naming and discussing these three concepts, I hope that a great many of my other issues and suggested research topics might also become apparent. I am not saying, I hasten to add, that these three are the only such problematics, nor that they are necessarily the most

important, there are no doubt many other vital areas of concern, which other scholars here in Berlin will be concentrating on, all of which are important in their own right. What I am saying is that these three areas are also important, and have chosen to concentrate on them for several reasons. Firstly, because there has been little discussion of them in the scholarly literature of conflict resolution and peace studies, and also even in the sociological and psychological literature more generally. Secondly, the last two concepts are in fact new coinages by the author, problematics whose definition and identification is the result of considerable thought and research into the field of peace and conflict studies, some of the fruits of which I am hoping to share in this present context. Thirdly, as new coinages, and new ways of looking at old problems from a different angle, this fits in with the author's commitment to the development of language research and comparative philology as a way of advancing discourse about peace, humiliation and dignity. Within the context of the work of our Global Core Team, I have a special responsibility for coordinating the [HumanDHS Cross-Cultural Linguistics for Equal Dignity Project](#).. As Confucius said, the first and foremost way to solve a social or indeed philosophical problem, be it conflict or violence, or humiliation and lack of dignity, is “to rectify the names”. This short paper is therefore intended as a contribution to that effort: asking what names, what terms can we rectify, and what new terms we can coin, so as best to prevent the phenomena of ongoing humiliation, in all sectors and walks of life, with which our planet is so overwhelmed at present ?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This business of the rectification of names is of utmost importance; most of our global conflicts, and micro-domestic conflicts, especially those which escalate to violence, physical and psychological, involve misunderstandings and miscommunications, as Burton and others pointed out long ago. A preliminary work prior to any kind of rectification of global violence, therefore, must involve mutual linguistic understanding *on equal terms*. It is this which has motivated the project of compiling the Multilingual Dictionary of for Multifaith and Multicultural Mediation and Education, which is available online at: <http://www.humiliationstudies.org/documents/DaffernMultilingualDictionary.pdf> The [HumanDHS's Cross-Cultural Linguistics for Equal Dignity](#) is an ongoing effort to expand this work to a wider sphere and to involve others in developing a global conversation about language and mutual respect. Each language, from the most globally dominant (English, Spanish, Chinese) to the smallest (Manx, Cherokee etc.) has something to offer, some philosophical insights, some wisdom, to impart, bound up in its vocabulary and syntax and etymologies. Our project is therefore one of rehabilitating the lost peace wisdom of humanity storied in its ancient linguistic formulations

### 1. "Recognition":

Turning therefore to the first of my problematic terms, I wish to discourse briefly about the problem of recognition. This, it seems to me, is intimately bound up with the whole problem of humiliation and dignity at its very essence. Most violent conflicts, both inter-individual and group conflicts, seem to the author to involve problems around recognition and its lack. Governments won't talk, for instance, to terrorists, because they don't "recognise" their legitimacy. Terrorists won't talk to governments because they don't recognise their authority. Indeed the entire history of diplomacy and international relations could be written from the stand point of the problematic of recognition: how country or faction or party x failed to recognise the legitimacy of claims of faction or country B. Recognition or non-recognition is at the heart of the problems of international relations and international legal behavior. The recognition or non-recognition of nationhood, and the way that boundary disputes which lead to internal or external violence, are usually at heart caused by problems of recognition and non-recognition, leads once again to the suspicion that the problematic of recognition underlies many of the wars of human history.

Children also won't behave well for teachers or parents because they don't recognise their responsibility and authority; parents and adults in general can sometimes abuse children because they don't recognise their rights. Racial groupings can likewise abuse and humiliate one another because they don't recognise the essential humanity or legal rights of the out-group. Religious groups don't recognise the rights of other's outside the fold because they re defined as other, deviant, heretical, illegitimate. Often, paradoxically, religious groups give least recognition to the internal heretic, the deviant on the doorstep, rather than the deviant stranger, or complete other, as for example the Witches of Europe were not recognised as having any rights at all during the witch burnings of the pre-enlightenment period in European history. Likewise, in struggles within religions to affirm their authenticity, different denominations of say Christians will struggle to deny recognition to one another, as the various Catholic and Protestant denominations have always historically fought over the recognition of one another's holy

orders of Priesthood or custodianship of holy places<sup>3</sup>. Families won't recognise the rights of succession or inheritance for illegitimate children, or won't recognise non-sanctioned marriages, because they may be outside the normal boundaries of social custom, or familial arrangements. In personal relationships, the politics of recognition are therefore a crucial factor in most domestic and familial disputes and violence, including the barbaric bride killings going on in some parts of the world. It is also true of quarrels between lovers: lover A does not recognise that lover B really loves them, and so becomes angry and seeks to humiliate lover B in turn; Lover B can no longer recognise that lover A is the same person they have loved truly for so long – and therefore dies of a broken heart. Of how many subtle and complex variations is the basic theme of non-recognition in love relationships at the heart of so many difficulties, and in how many works of great literature ? This is also true in gender conflicts generally; often the rights of women are not recognised by dominant patriarchal social groups; but sometimes, in matriarchal societies, the rights of men have also been not recognised. Similarly in the educational world, different academics and educators spend ages quibbling and squabbling about recognizing one another's degrees, status, and legitimacy – country wide negotiations and agreements are going on all the time about recognizing one another's educational systems, and whether or not to recognise the institutions which different countries provide – and often this is a matter of complex cultural and indeed economic politics. Likewise, intellectually, academic tribes across noetic boundaries don't recognise the legitimacy or coherence of different fields of knowledge. The main split here could be said to be between broadly religious approaches to knowledge, and broadly scientific approaches to knowledge. Academics on one side or another of this fundamental split in human knowing and thinking, tend to not recognise the validity and legitimacy of each other's domains. Thinkers and researchers used to a fundamentally scientific way of thinking and proceeding will dispute most, if not all, claims to be worthy of recognition on the part of those who think theologically, or with reference to non-empirical evidence. Likewise,

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<sup>3</sup> Tragically, Christians even contest custodianship of Holy Places in sensitive places such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, a matter which help launch the Crimean War; paradoxically of course, Jesus himself was not *recognised* as a teacher by the then authorities in Jerusalem, with untold consequences for world history – what would have been his attitude to the problem of *recognition*, one wonders.

thinkers used to dealing with subjective and spiritual phenomenon, or who take the categories of revelation or introspection seriously, will often not recognize the findings of natural science, as not complete, or as partial or insufficient to the whole picture of knowledge about any given issue. The problem is a constant one in the way that education is structured: in schools, knowledge is usually divided into faculty or departmental systems – often different faculties won't recognise one another as having equal status or importance – and this can lead to turf wars over funding and real access to power. Similarly in academia: the recognition or non recognition of different faculties and departments, and intellectual trends within subject fields and disciplines, leads to endless turf wars and inter or intra-departmental conflicts, usually of psychological and sociological rather than overt violence. But often with highly finessed and undermining degrees of humiliation attached. The recognition or non-recognition of peace studies is a good case in point – although most countries in the world pay lip service to the ideal of peace, very few national university systems have legitimated or recognised programs of peace studies per se, and even fewer have advanced doctoral and post doctoral academic programmes in peace research.<sup>4</sup> Paradoxically, at the same time that peace studies is everywhere under-recognised and under-resourced, defence studies, war studies and strategic studies are everywhere accepted and hyper funded. Similarly in politics, militarism is everywhere legitimated and recognised, and countries have huge budgets earmarked for defence spending, and intelligence services likewise work for national security with huge budgets devoted to military intelligence and espionage, while the promulgation of peaceful solutions to international conflict is everywhere disparaged and not recognised: there are very few Departments or Ministries of peace or Conflict Resolution in the governments of the world, but each nation has a Department of Defence. Politically, it is as if our institutions have a kind of collective myopia, and peace is itself not recognised as important, or is somehow invisible, even though each country is technically pledged to its advancement, and the rhetoric of national identity is often based on a “peace” consciousness. Most countries in fact based their own national narratives, on an ideal somewhere of affirming and recognising themselves – nations come into being

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<sup>4</sup> This is something the author is all too familiar with based on his own experience in trying to implement an advanced research centre for peace studies at the University of London, and in serving on an International Commission for Peace Studies in Universities with the United Nations

when a victorious armed force recognises itself as the legitimate authority, and manages to fight off everyone else who might dare to challenge their legitimacy and recognition. One thinks of the words of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) “*The representatives of the French people, formed into a National Assembly, considering ignorance, forgetfulness or contempt of the rights of man to be the only causes of public misfortunes and the corruption of governments, have resolved to set forth, in a solemn Declaration, the natural, unalienable and sacred rights of man, to the end that this Declaration constantly present to all members of the body politic, may remind them unceasingly of their rights and their duties... In consequence whereof, the National assembly recognises and declares in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following Rights of Man and of the Citizen....*”

Likewise the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), starts by saying: *Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world....* In both these documents the phenomenon of recognition is placed high up the causal hierarchy of values which underpins the very notion of human rights as we have seen above in some detail. In other words, the positive dynamic can be represented in the following logical equation:

1. Phenomenon of mutual rights deriving from ontological reality of human condition
2. Recognition of rights arising from epistemological faculties of human condition
3. Implementation of rights deriving from political maturity

The negative dynamic however can be represented conversely into the following logical equation:

- 1 Phenomenon of denial of mutual rights and assertion of biased self-only rights arising from failure to appreciate the ontological realities of the human condition

-2 Phenomenon of non recognition of mutual rights, or distorted recognition of self rights only, based on failure to access the full epistemological range of the human faculties

-3 Phenomenon of denial of human rights to some section of the human community, whether on the micro or macro scale (personal, group, national, racial, religious etc.) arising from non recognition

In this negative dynamic there is a further escalation which can lead to:

- 4 Active efforts at overt psychological humiliation, based on the denial of the recognition of essential humanness and human rights to the other person(s)

In extreme cases this can escalate beyond psychological humiliation to

- 5 Active efforts to inflict physical humiliation through grievous bodily harm, and in some cases extreme torture, punishment, imprisonment, starvation, beatings, and death

Tragically, in human history, there has probably never been a time when the positive dynamic has prevailed universally over the negative dynamic, and rather throughout history there has always probably been somewhere on the planet where elements of -4 and -5 have been operative, sometimes in greater and sometimes in lesser quantities. War seems to bring out the largest times of exposure to levels -4 and -5 above. During World War Two, for example, during the periods of Nazi persecution, their concentration camps were operating on level -4 and -5 with the resulting deaths and torture of millions of innocent civilians, whose rights to humanhood were simply not being recognised. At the same time the victims of mass allied bombings of German cities such as Dresden or Hamburg were likewise not recognised, and became casualties of war, as did the rights to life of the populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the minds of USA military planners.

Philosophically, then, one's opposition to war as a condition of human beings' social interaction arises mainly from the epistemological and moral catastrophe war wreaks on the mortal, social and spiritual intelligence of humanity; and this is fundamentally about the blinkers it places across our recognition of the beauty and dignity and worth of the other.

Enough has been sketched above hopefully to indicate why this business of recognition and non recognition can be argued to underlie at deep levels the business of humiliation. One can argue that the presence of recognition equals dignity, mutual dignity and positive affirmation of both the self and the other; its lack, lack or absence or obstruction of recognition, equals frustration and humiliation and the desire to hurt and avenge oneself against the other. The development of some kind of "recognition studies" project as part of a wider Humiliation and dignity studies programme would therefore seem to be a useful adventure.

Other areas where recognition studies could hopefully develop in the future might also include:

- recognition studies in natural sciences at the level of molecular interactions at cell biology and microbiology – for example in cell membranes interactions where compounds pass across cell walls, including at the neuronal interfaces
- recognition studies in terms of social and class disputes, including labour disputes and the recognition or no recognition so trade union rights
- recognition studies in terms of workers rights in general,
- recognition studies in terms of the recognition of the rights of teachers to teach how and as they see best, contra to the curricula control from central authorities to impose methodologies and course contents against the teachers best professional judgments (where in higher or school education)
- recognition studies in relation to psychology, which itself covers a huge field, but *“is most usually used to denote a field of psychological research involving the act or process of perceiving or identifying information as matching or being the same*

*as information that has been remembered. It is often contrasted with “recall” which involves reproduction of remembered information without cues, and it is generally easier than recall, producing higher memory scores in formal tests*<sup>5</sup>

The psychology exploration of recognition therefore involves close attention to the phenomenology of memory, and a whole cluster of aspects of psychological sciences involving the study of *memory*

- In relation to psychological peace research therefore the question of recognition studies would also involve the question of disputed memories, and the way that in conflicts, whether huge cultural conflicts or small micro conflicts between individuals, there is often a dissonance of memories at work, disputants will remember events in different ways, and with entirely different narratives; they will also hold grievances and grudges and hurts, based on such differences of memory. The late Prof Frank Wright a British-Irish peace academic, developed therefore the notion of the reconciliation of memories, as part of the formal peace making and conflict resolution process – for example, in the conflicts in Ireland underway for centuries, different parties held the memories of their own glorious troubles and trials and tribulations, the heroic IRA defenders versus the heroic Ulster Loyalist Protestants, for example, and Frank argued that until these separate narratives could be coalesced into a common narrative or reconciled memories, the disputes would continue ad infinitum. Similarly, this work would involve therefore studying the way that institutions and social groups promulgate the non-reconciliation of memories – how they keep alive the heroic and partial and distorted memories and conversely how peace groups and mediation work can facilitate the reconciliation of memories and thus achieve peace, dignity and social harmony.
- *Recognition is also vitally important to the processes of mediation and in mediation research* – in cases where disputants are locked into conflict, it is usually about not recognizing one another’s right to be heard – even the act of mutual listening is therefore of deep therapeutic power, and coupled with the

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<sup>5</sup> This definition is taken from the Colman, Andrew M. *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*, (Oxford University Press, 2001)

rigorous and objective analysis of the problems which have caused the dispute in the first place, usually leads to a partial or complete resolution of the problem

No doubt further and complex areas of research could be developed to add to this list. Hopefully, however, enough has been said above to show how and why the problematic of recognition needs adding to the universe of humiliation and dignity studies, in relation specifically to peace and conflict resolution education.

## 2. “Sophiaphobia”

This second proposed problematic I wish to raise in this forum is a new one, or rather, an old one, under a new name: *sophiaphobia*, the fear of wisdom. Phobias are well known to medical science, Blacks medical dictionary states “A well known American medical dictionary lists over 200 examples of phobias ranging, alphabetically, from air to writing. Included in this list are *phobophobia* (fear of phobias) and *triskaidekaphobia* (fear of 13 at table).”<sup>6</sup> The dictionary goes on helpfully to recommend to British sufferers that there is a Phobics Society, which exists to help all such sufferers.<sup>7</sup> The actual list in the American medical dictionaries can be found in Taber’s Cyclopaedic Medical Dictionary, 16<sup>th</sup> edition, ed. P.A. Davis, and which indeed lists in appendix 8, all phobias recognised by medical science including the psychological and therapeutic sciences, including the fear of: “*anything new (neophobia),,the devil (satanophobia)....female genitals (eurotophobia)....God (theophobia).....ideas (ideophobia)....jealousy (zelophobia)....infinity (apeiophobia)....man (androphobia)....myths (mythophobia).....pleasure (hedonophobia)....sacred things (hierophobia).....sex (genophobia)....thinking (phronemophobia).....void (kenophobia).... Hearing certain words (onomatophobia)....*”

<sup>6</sup> Blacks Medical Dictionary, 40<sup>th</sup> edition, ed. Gordon Macpherson, (London 2002) p. 484)

<sup>7</sup> National Phobics Society, Zion Community Resource Centre, 339 Stretford Road, Hulme, Manchester, M15 4ZY, 0870 770 0456, [www.phobics-society.org.uk](http://www.phobics-society.org.uk) email [natphobicsoc@good.co.uk](mailto:natphobicsoc@good.co.uk)

What I proposing is that we add two words to this list, the first being *sophiaphobia*, the fear of wisdom. I am making this suggestion for various reasons, so let me try and explain some of them. For some 20 years I have been actively engaged in the pursuit of philosophical understanding and wisdom, spending literally thousands and thousands of hours poring over the great classics of philosophy, from every spiritual and intellectual tradition, from every nation and culture in the world; I have had the good fortune to meet with practitioners and profound thinkers from all these numerous traditions, and have often been profoundly moved by their sanctity, learning and indeed wisdom. Yet time and again I have witness certain discouraging phenomena: often, the genuine holders of wisdom, the true intellectual seers of our planet, are not actually in positions where they can make a real difference to immediate policy decisions; often they are marginalized or excluded, and sometimes, indeed, perhaps often, humiliated – forced to obey orders from less qualified people, forced to recant their broader views by some narrow fanatics or dogmaticians. From my extensive study of history and philosophy, particularly the history of the interplay of philosophical and intellectual ideas, including their social and political consequences, this tragedy has indeed been a feature of considerable historical timelines, on numerous occasions, and in all cultures. When the Chinese Emperor Shih Huang Ti (ruled 221-210 BC) ordered the burning of the books of the Confucian scholars, he was deliberately humiliating the philosophers, the true lovers of wisdom<sup>8</sup>; when Socrates was executed by order of the Athenian assembly, he was being humiliated; when Jesus was executed he was being deliberately humiliated<sup>9</sup>; and the same is true on countless of other occasions, whenever genuine Saints or Sages, or lovers of wisdom., have been martyred or executed or obstructed (one thinks for example of the great Sufi Al Hallaj and countless other Sufis<sup>10</sup>). The question I have been forced to ask therefore is this: is there some force operative in human beings, perhaps particularly in group

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<sup>8</sup> A famous Chinese feature film has recently been made featuring this Emperor in his battle against various assassins, called *The Hero*, the highest grossing Chinese film of all time; it avoids mentioning his role as burner of boos and equivocates in relation to his centralizing tendencies, but it is well worth seeing.

<sup>9</sup> The same is of course true of countless Christian thinkers and Saints since Jesus' death, who were often killed by persons wedded to brute power and violence (warlords, Kings, Emperors, bandits etc.)

<sup>10</sup> Rather than rehearse other names here an interested reader may consult my recently completed *Dictionary and Perpetual Calendar of Interfaith Saints and Sages* (2005)

processes, which actively suppresses or oppresses wisdom, knowledge, seership, enlightenment (however you wish to name the goal of philosophy)?

Much as Freud postulated a counterforce to the natural eros of life, the libido energy or life principle, by arguing forth existence of a countervailing thanatos energy, or death instinct, so I am, wondering here is there is a force counterposed to that of philosophy, the love of wisdom – which causes us all, some more than others, to shun and flee the burdens of *too much knowledge, to much wisdom*.

Folk wisdom often betrays the deepest secrets of the collective unconscious, and in this case there are numerous indications that a force of sophiaphobia may well be operative in our culture: “it doesn’t pay to know too much”.. is a common saying in English... “keep your head down”.. is another with similar overtones... “don’t stick your head over the parapet”.... “nobody likes a tall thistle”..... “It doesn’t matter what you know it’s who you know”.... “knowledge is dangerous”. All these and many similar sayings betray a deep anxiety in our culture about knowledge, and especially about wisdom, (which we can define here as *ultimate knowledge, or knowledge of ultimate things*.)

Some years ago I used to lecture at the Muslim College in London, the most senior post graduate Islamic training college in Britain, and recall a conversation I had with the Director, Dr Zaki Badawi, one of the leading Islamic scholars in the UK (and in Europe as a whole, and someone who has recently been knighted I believe) and he said to me the following: “*You know the trouble with European culture and Christian culture in general is this: you have a fear of knowledge.. it comes from your founding myth, your core text, which is deep inside the unconscious of all of you... You see you are afraid that it is the serpent which lurks behind knowledge, for it is the serpent which tempts you to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and which has led, according to this story, to all our human sufferings*” I knew exactly what he meant of course, and we discussed at some length the possible strategies which we could devise, as educators, to counter this problem.

Teaching groups of Islamic students was both a privilege and a responsibility, and learning alongside colleagues such as Dr. Badawi led me to consider the following question: *do different cultural myths see knowledge and indeed wisdom, differently ?*

Working as I then did in a senior public role in the international interfaith community<sup>11</sup>, and having an opportunity to meet with intellectual leaders across all different spiritual traditions, led me to ask the following: *”what fundamental architectonic of wisdom are they pursuing, what end-goal does their belief system teach them is possible for the human mind and person, what for them is ultimate enlightenment ?”* Several years of research in this direction have culminated in a number of studies more recently<sup>12</sup> and in my calling for a transpersonal historiography, that is, the development of a mature historical methodology that will adopt an updated and expanded psychological framework, based on the spectrum model available in advanced transpersonal psychology (Grof, Wilber, Maslow, Jung, Houston, et al) as its basic philosophical psychology, rather than the materialistic and reductionist psychologies available to 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century thought (in essence, various schools of behaviourism or Pavlovism), in which man was reduced to little more than a machine with certain reflexes and drives.

The proposal to adopt the idea of Sophiaphobia as an explanatory tool for some forms of behaviour has therefore to be understood within this wider context.

Let me try and be as succinct as possible and set out my proposal in "neo-Thomistic" form, as a series of questions and possible answers:

1. What exactly is meant here by Sophiaphobia ? Can one give a general scientific definition ?

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<sup>11</sup> As Secretary General for the World Conference on Religion and Peace for UK and Ireland

<sup>12</sup> For example my comparative study of *Enlightenments: Towards a Comparative Epistemology of Enlightenment in the World Spiritual and Intellectual Traditions* (Korea, Dongguk University, forthcoming) but also published in an on line version in 2005

2. What manifestations can be ascertained of this phenomenon ?
  3. What causes might be producing this phenomenon ?
  4. Do you think there are different forms of Sophiaphobia ?
  5. What consequences are there as a result of Sophiaphobia ?
  6. What are the specific linkages to peace and conflict studies of these consequences ?
  7. What are the specific linkages to humiliation studies (which we are defining here as a related field to peace and conflict studies) ?
  8. What solutions and therapies and healing might be available for the symptoms and manifestations of Sophiaphobia ?
  9. What prognosis is there for mankind if we continue to pursue the strategy of sophiaphobic dominant cultures ?
  10. What consequences might ensue for mankind if we fail to name this problem in time and to take remedial steps ?
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1. What exactly is meant here by Sophiaphobia ? Can you give a general scientific definition ?
    - 1.1. Sophiaphobia is a newly proposed philosophical and scientific term for the individual and social psycho-social condition of being afraid of knowledge and / or wisdom.

2. What manifestations do you think can be ascertained of this phenomenon ?

2.1. Manifestations could include the following:

- a. resistance to learning;
- b. unwillingness to study;
- c. desecration of places of learning
- d. lack of respect for teachers or places of learning
- e. destruction of books and other paraphernalia of learning
- f. denial of the possibility of wisdom
- g. an attitude of “eat drink and be merry” for tomorrow we die
- h. verbal insults towards learning or learned people
- i. physical assaults on teachers or people of learning
- j. belittlement of learning
- k. trivialization techniques (trivialization of life / discourse/ behaviour)
- l. barbed humour (pointed humour, sarcasm, or obscene humour, against wisdom manifestations)
- m. destruction of the signs of learning and wisdom (physical destruction of buildings, libraries, teachers, schools, monasteries, museums etc.)
- n. foul language
- o. obscene behaviour
- p. extreme intoxication to borderline consciousness
- q. avoidance of proximity to wisdom teachers or wisdom centres
- r. ignorance (ignoring) of wisdom manifestations (teachings / teachers)
- s. an over reliance on distractions to keep one away from thought
- t. entertainment culture / fast food / fast knowledge / fast everything
- u. an emphasis on information rather than wisdom
- v. an emphasis on detailed micro knowledge rather than broad overviews of wisdom
- w. an increasing policing of knowledge generating institutions and structures (schools, universities)

- x. subtle or unsubtle coercive pressures to confirm to received knowledge rather than questions “outside the box”
- y. fear of the other (the immigrant, the communist, the other race)
- z. anti-Semitism
- aa. Islamophobia
- bb. All kinds of racism – including Islamic and Jewish “anti-paganism”
- cc. Classism: hatred of “other” classes perceived as having too much knowledge / wisdom
- dd. Destruction of cultural monuments and artifacts (monasteries, cathedrals, carvings, books, pictures)
- ee. Hatred of women (for Eve’s sin, for being too knowing)
- ff. Hatred and fear of witchcraft (for being too clairvoyant, wise, dangerous)
- gg. Deliberate humiliation of persons showing wisdom-loving propensities

3. What causes might be producing this phenomenon ? (possible explanations or partial explanations)

- a) unwillingness to acquire self-knowledge on one’s own part
- b) unwillingness to merit other’s attempts to acquire self-knowledge
- c) the linkage of knowledge and power without ethics: fear that one’s own power base would be threatened by other’s acquisition of too much knowledge
- d) a static model of knowledge / wisdom
- e) economic factors – that one’s own knowledge is required to ensure economic survival in a competitive world and that other’s acquiring too much knowledge is therefore a threat within a competitive economic system
- f) lack of emotional intelligence

- g) cultural deficiencies – a general cultural reinforcement for narrowing of approaches to knowledge
- h) cultural myths that wisdom is dangerous / fearful / to be avoided
- i) the handing over of responsibility for the wisdom domain to experts (scientists, technocrats, shamans, magicians, thaumaturges, philosophers)
- j) part of a general fear of the sacred and the unknown
- k) perceived threats to one's security / normality
- l) fear of madness / mental instability caused by too much knowledge / wisdom
- m) fear of one's lifestyle becoming unsettled or challenged (e.g. overconsumption, consumerism) by the needs to adopt more socially responsible behaviour
- n) poor education, poor diet, poor upbringing
- o) innate evil in human nature (fall of man type arguments)
- p) fear of showing too much knowledge as it might create jealousy and competitiveness which in turn might generate humiliation (as one form of the "humiliation cycle")
- q) fear of being bullied

4. Do you think there are different forms of Sophiaphobia ?

4.1. Certainly, just as there are different forms of knowledge and understanding and wisdom, there will be a corresponding equivalent variety in the degrees and nature of types of Sophiaphobia. Certain types of people will be afraid of mathematical knowledge (I can't do maths); others will be afraid of metaphysical knowledge (it's all bunk) while others will be afraid of feelings and emotions (I don't do feelings) and others will be afraid of practical knowledge (I can't mend gadgets), while others will abhor reading about pathologies or the works of mass murderers (I hate that stuff) or about the inner workings of the mafia or secret intelligence services (that kind of knowledge can get you killed). Most of us will be afraid of some kinds of knowledge. Darwin hated learning medical the knowledge required to perform autopsies as he was squeamish, for example. But the generalized form of Sophiaphobia as a whole relating to the sum totality of all

knowledge, or knowledge in a higher key, is probably a universal constant, to be found in all cultures at their highest / lowest level.

5. What consequences are there as a result of Sophiaphobia ?

- a) Loss of creative energies both individual and social
- b) Loss of cultural achievements
- c) Destruction of cultural artifacts and monuments
- d) Death and extreme suffering of wisdom persons
- e) Suppression of discourse on ultimate values in our culture leading to general cultural impoverishment
- f) Surrendering of the arena of discourse on ultimate values and meaning to religious “experts” thus disabling the common birthright of thought and reflection on these matters
- g) Impoverishment of institutional life
- h) Loss of freedom of thought in education (at all levels) and a climate of control and fear
- i) Loss of creative research possibilities in higher education
- j) Economic advancement of companies and businesses involved in the mass circulation of trivia
- k) Dulling of the overall intelligence of the society leading to mass immorality and ethical failure (moral burn-out)
- l) Apathy and lack of political engagement
- m) Danger of totalitarianism as apathy leads to disengagement from social and political issues
- n) Feelings of the overwhelming impossibility of changing anything for the better and therefore allowing technocratic experts to run society
- o) Surrendering control of our lives to machines and technology
- p) Reliance of militarism as the solution to human problems (communication problems)

- q) Reliance on militarism as a way of inflicting maximum humiliation on “the enemy” (or the threat) and its “dangerous wisdom”
- r) Reliance on terrorism as a way of inflicting maximum humiliation on the perceived oppressors
- s) Escalation of violence all round (both psychological and physical)

6. What are the specific linkages to peace and conflict studies of these consequences ?

- a) The cycle: sophiaphobia – suppression – humiliation – violence
- b) Countless acts of violence and destruction, documentable in history, including: destruction of libraries (Alexandria, Sarajevo, Baghdad, Celtic Ireland and Wales during the Viking invasions)
- c) Destruction of holy places (countless churches, temples, mosques, synagogues etc.)
- d) Destruction of wisdom teachers (killing of saints in countless faith traditions)
- e) Destruction, humiliation and killing and “heretics” (witches, shamans, pagans, Gnostics, Catholics, protestants, Sufis, Jews, etc.) whoever is defined as “other” by the dominant orthodoxy of the time and place

5. What are the specific linkages to humiliation studies (which we are defining here as a related field to peace and conflict studies)?

- a) The role of humiliation in this cycle of sophiaphobia – suppression – humiliation – violence would seem to be a key link in this causal spiral
- b) Humiliation seeks to neutralize the threatened wisdom-source (a humiliated wisdom-teacher is obviously no threat to anyone)
- c) Humiliation seeks to negate the possibility of wisdom arising and being a threat in the future (something humiliated once has trouble rising again)

- d) Once started, the humiliation cycle tends to self perpetuate in a thanatistic impulse all of its own – since the fear of the person (or thing) humiliated then leads one to wish for its final destruction so it can never be a threat in the future

8. What solutions and therapies and healing might be available for the symptoms and manifestations of Sophiaphobia ?

- a) The recognition (that word again) that wisdom is an ally and a friend not a threat
- b) The realization that true power cannot be bought or maintained unethically
- c) The cultivation of states of compassion and love as an antidote to feelings of fear or the desire to hurt or humiliate either oneself or others
- d) The cultivation of self-knowledge as an antidote to ignorance of self – leading to the desire to undertake actions beneficial to both oneself and others
- e) The cultivation of self love as an antidote to self-hatred or other-hatred
- f) The realisation of the beauty of wisdom, that it is not a threat, but rather something priceless and wonderful which is of inestimable value
- g) The realisation that true wisdom does not create a dualism (this world versus the other world, matter versus spirit) but rather affirms the innate human dialectic of both/and and thus affirms the human condition of being a bridge builder<sup>13</sup>

9. What prognosis is there for mankind if we continue to pursue the strategy of sophiaphobic dominant cultures ?

It is likely we will continue for some time further to revel in the manufacturing of threats, conspiracies, rituals of thanatos, and humiliatory cycles, **unless and until we can name and comprehend the phenomenon of what we are actually doing,** and step back from the brink

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<sup>13</sup> Not for nothing was the Roman term for a (pagan) priest that of Pontifex, bridge-maker; and the supreme Priest was called the Pontifex Maximus a term still used by the Bishops of Rome

If we can begin to leave behind the antiquated epistemology of competitiveness, threat, humiliation, rivalry, and fight and flight – in the struggle for knowledge, intelligence and ultimately wisdom, and begin instead to develop a more mature and sophisticated epistemology of wisdom – one which is about sharing, co-birthing, co-creativity, about joy rather than fear, about love rather than hatred – then we might, just might turn the great ship of this planet around into calmer waters<sup>14</sup>.

In order to create such a new epistemology, one which is immune to the sophiaphobic tendencies of mankind, we will need to have built into it a multidimensionality, and a multifunctionality, - which embraces all the various domains of knowing – which manifests the full range of wisdom's potential – in a cooperatively arrived at endeavor – the era of the lone knower, the heroic thinker, would thus be subsumed by the wisdom-lover, in a social and relational context, in short, in a state of dynamic and creative peace.

10. What consequences might ensue for mankind if we fail to name this problem in time and to take remedial steps ?

If we fail to either name or remedy the problem of sophiaphobia, then the consequences are obviously that we will continue thrashing around on the outer margins of human potential; that many of us will continue to experience wasted and broken and unfulfilled lives; that many of us will continue to experience lesser and more profound degrees of frustration, pain and suffering in our lives; that many of us will continue to experience regular periods of humiliation of varying degrees of intensity, along with other assorted forms of psychological unpleasantness (jealousy, anger, hatred, grief) etc. – to all of which wisdom is traditionally the antidote, and yet if the possibility of wisdom is itself denied, then naturally there can be no antidote to these either – without wisdom, then,

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<sup>14</sup> This was the purpose of a paper written by the author entitled: *Joyism not Terrorism: Towards an Alternative Non-violent Revolutionary Epistemology*, published in the Muses Love Journal, Issue 6 (2000)

one enters the downward spiral of the inferno and remains there as long as this process continues

11. What are the most dangerous and worrying forms of Sophiaphobia in manifestation at the present time ?

In relation to the problem of Sophiaphobia, one might add an ecological observation, concerning: resistance to ecological knowledge. Whilst the evidence for human factor involvement in the advent of global warming and increasing weather destabilization, such as tragically in the most recent devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf of Mexico, resistance to ecological knowledge on the part of bureaucratic elites and the military industrial complexes around the planet, most notably but not only in the USA, has become perhaps the most interesting and potentially dangerous form of sophiaphobia. Such sophiaphobia takes the form of denial, challenging the legitimacy of others' forms and sources of knowing, withdrawing support for research, silencing, political manipulation, threats, and sometimes, actual acts of violence<sup>15</sup> and sabotage. There is another irony at work here: in mankind's denial of nature's rights, and in *advanced urban industrial mankind's* refusal to acknowledge the active spirit within nature, within animals, within the landscape, and within, let's face it, even human beings themselves, – there is perhaps a kind of desire to humiliate nature at work here. Animals are only good for food, on an industrial scale, or for experimentation, to make our human lives more secure and to “conquer disease”. Landscapes are only good for extracting minerals or other natural resources, to fuel the engines of industrialism, and to generate profits for manufacturers. Landscapes don't have rights, or value in and of themselves – so says mercantile consciousness, so says urban industrialism, which has created wastelands, and called it “progress”. But it is progress bought at the dubious price of humiliating the living world, reducing it to a landscape for either pseudo-romantic weekend breaks, or simply for controlling, possessing, owning. For urban mankind, all it knows how to treat nature is to “own it” and to deal in it, parcel it up and make claims to it. In the UK this

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<sup>15</sup> Karen Silkwood, Hilda Murrell, Chico Mendes etc. See *Eco Wars* by David Day (London, 1989)

split between urban and rural conscience and consciousness was brought home horrifically during the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, when civil servants sent teams of white coated “experts” throughout the rural landscape to butcher, on industrial scale, animals which had caught a mild virus. Refusing to take sensible precautions and inoculate, they preferred to slaughter over 3 million live animals, who had caught the equivalent of a cold. Imagine if that was done to humans every time they got a runny nose ! As someone who lived through this, in the midst of the rural landscapes where this happened, and with the stench of burning animal carcasses in my nostrils for days, and who received over 3000 agonised emails from several hundreds of small scale farmers scattered throughout remote British farming environments, protesting against this senseless slaughter, but powerless to stop it, or to stop the literal “closure” of our countryside, for fear of spreading the virus – I was shocked to point of incredulity. Having lived in urban landscapes in London for over 10 years, it was a rapid re-education in how divorced from actual rural reality most urban planners, government officials and ministers actually are. This was the deliberate and wanton humiliation of nature, and indeed of rural populations, on an industrial scale. Indeed, intrinsic to the myth of the industrial revolution was this “taming of nature” which inevitably involved a degree of humiliation. This myth also sits at the core of the myth of industrial America and the USA. It sits at the core of what it is to be a superpower in today’s world, indeed the only one in town. A superpower which can bomb from the air (at a safe distance) any country that dares to say boo or think there might be alternatives to the American capitalist and consumer-driven free market and intensely competitive way of life. Superpowers don’t negotiate with terrorists, or indeed with anyone who disagrees with them – they eradicate them. They humiliate them. Witness Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. And yet the global body politic is uncomfortable with all this. Those of us who are critical of aspects of US American foreign policy, and yet dearly love America and Americans, feel that this whole policy has been unwise from the beginning – and has been pursuing a policy of blind and misplaced revenge and retribution for 9/11 rather than seeking to solve the root causes of that catastrophe, in a compassionate, loving and genuinely intelligent way. So then, enter nature, triumphant, sweeping across the landscape in the form of Hurricane Katrina – and at a blow, the USA herself is humiliated, by nature. As indeed is all human

arrogance and hubris, ultimately. King Canute couldn't stop the waves – and nor can any amount of industrial economic techno power. For a moment the world stands in awe of the powers of nature, as she humiliates us in return – and has been doing so more and more, with the Tsunami, and with extreme weather conditions (droughts, forest fires etc.) How many more natural disasters of this magnitude will it take for us to realize that the sapiential response is for us humans to call a truce in the long war against nature – to cease taking her for granted, to recognise that Nature herself has rights, wisdom, spirit, and meaning. That values inherently do reside in landscape, wildness, animals, plants, biodiversity, clean rivers, clean seas, clear skies, breathable air, upright and replenished trees and forests, healthy soil and agricultural systems. That the eco-system itself may well be a living breathing and sentient Being as a whole, Gaia – and until we are certain, we better act “as if”, just in case. The only antidote to the desire to humiliate is to feel the pain it causes, in return, and to desist. The only antidote to following down the wrong trail is to retrace your steps and get back on the right one. It is for this end therefore, to advance this truce between mankind and nature, that the author launched a new project in international higher education, The Global Green University, disillusioned at the shrinking space within conventional, higher education for research outside the box, when funding constraints control and govern to many of the research agendas according to the interests of big business and corporate profit lines.<sup>16</sup> Resistance to ecological wisdom, then, or just plain old ecological common sense, is a highly toxic and dangerous form of sophiaphobia. But power corrupts, as Lord Acton observed, and we are witnessing the fascinating spectacle of the world's only remaining so called “superpower” in the act of deliberately inflicting humiliation on the United Nations system itself, the mechanism the world devised at the end of the tragedy of two world wars, to prove a failsafe mechanism to prevent such an unthinkable catastrophe happening ever again. Many UN agencies have battled long and hard, through programmes such as UNICEF, or UNEP or UNESCO, to call a peace treaty in the war of humiliation between man and nature; the work of the UN in the Sustainable Development agenda has been highly significant, as likewise in supporting the attempts to understand and counter global warming. Yet all this work the

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<sup>16</sup> More details about the work of the Global Green University can be obtained from our website on [www.educationaid.net](http://www.educationaid.net) or by emailing the author on [iipsgp@educationaid.net](mailto:iipsgp@educationaid.net)

USA current administration is about to call into disrepute, in deliberate acts of sabotage and undermining. Of course the UN is not perfect, and many flaws, and some corrupt individuals, bedevil all major international organisations – but it is a time honoured practice of bullies, that when challenged, they attack someone weaker in the park, to try and divert the attention of their own accusers onto someone else weaker and unable to take it. This tactic might be called “the diverted humiliation strategy” and it has been evidenced again and again in history. The solution to this ? The solution to this form of eco-sophiaphobia ? It has to be only love, non-violence and education – the absolutely wrong tactic is counter-violence or any form of terrorism. The USA is still a largely traumatized nation, after 9/11, and only patient dialogue and enduring conversation can help heal the tragedy. But also evidence, and hard scientific facts, and soft (loving) philosophical formulations !

Another pernicious and dangerous form of sophiaphobia is resistance to peace knowledge, resistance to peace wisdom. It seems a fairly common malady in our intellectual circles, and particular in the administrative circles that run educational systems, worldwide. It gratifies itself on advancing military and strategic knowledge at the expense of peace wisdom; it puts funds into highly technological military industrial developments, such as the nuclear weapons programme, or chemical and biological weapons, or new generation riot control and subversive disabling technologies, or espionage devices – at the expense of funding real communication or knowledge enhancement, or conflict prevention programmes. And tragically, the sophiaphobes who administer and devise such programmes still run the bulk of our educational and governmental systems worldwide.

And the solution to all this of course, has to be love – something miraculous, something transcendental, yet also something so human, something which Goethe has save Faust even at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, something which for Ibsen saves Peer Gynt in like manner....

Yet, what if love itself is subject to the same problem as with sophiaphobia – what if there is another thanatistic force needing to be named and overcome before we can progress or achieve redemption namely, *philiaphobia*

### 3. Philiaphobia

This brings me then to the third problematic which I want to highlight in this paper – the notion, again a new coinage, that secretly many of us, perhaps all of us, are actually afraid of love – and that this blockage, this resistance, is also connected in some way with the related phenomenon of sophiaphobia, and also with the humiliation / violence cycle in general.

In many ways the ideas here is similar to that sketched above for sophiaphobia, and I will limit my remarks to a few general comments and also to asking a few questions about the idea of philiaphobia, which can hopefully stimulate others to think through the answers, or rather to allow us to think through the answers together.

Philiaphobia then, the fear of love – why is there such a thing ? It does surely exist, and its ramifications are profound. There are of course different types: Erophia is the fear of erotic love, which would be a sub-division of philiaphobia, which is the term I am using for the overall phenomenon. Why does Erophia exist ? Because surely it reminds us of mortality, because sex reminds us of mortality and of the powers of the female both for giving life and taking life, for the fact of death. It also reminds us of impermanence. The minute we have love we also have parting, we have death. Therefore erophobia is an understandable terror. It is the reason, perhaps, why Buddha ran away from his partner on the eve of the birth of his son. In its most pathological forms it probably leads to crimes of passion, Jack the Ripper dismemberments and disfigurements., all acts of violence against the partner, or against sexual nature itself, including perhaps sexual self-disfigurement. Nor is it just men who have philiaphobia, women do also although probably less, women understand biologically the innate rightness and inevitability of the

love/death cycle/ They seem to have an inner knowing of that, and the ability to transcend, accept and embrace the pain that comes from life as a necessary part of life. They also understand this through the physiology and meta-physiology of childbirth. Experiencing the pain of childbirth leads them to know the costs of loving, but it doesn't put them off, on the whole, although sometimes it can. Men seem to be programmed with this fear of loving, which goes very deep. It can become sublimated by religion. The religious impulse can become a kind of channel or vehicle to rationalize a way for this philiaphobia and it becomes transferred onto the love of God or the love of the Guru, of another male, or intellectual love or platonic love, which may also be a kind of fear of actual complete loving, because of the vulnerability that it causes. This can be manifest as impotence, for one reason for impotence might well be the fear of loving, the fear of the risks involved – all such causes interlock to produce the end result – fear of love, a sad condition for any of us to be in.

We need therefore to look at this problem and its ramification, to see how complex and deep a problem it is. It is about denying interconnectiveness and denying inter-relationship. It is manifest in the terrorist who refuses and denies his connection to his adopted abode. It is manifest in the terrorist who is prepared to murder innocent victims, denying love and the responsibility that comes with love<sup>17</sup>. It is somewhere deep in the inner workings of the psychology of terrorism, I suspect, and needs analyzing, and that quickly, because it is a phenomenon already too prevalent in our world.

Institutions such as marriage are ways of channeling erophobia into safe structures. We are afraid of loving, afraid of the risks involved, afraid of the extensions of wisdom that

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<sup>17</sup> As this paper was being rewritten a posthumous video message has surfaced from the ringleader of the London July 7 2005 bombings, in which he comes across as highly articulate, intelligent Muslim, not so much denying love, as rather explaining that his actions were motivated by his partial or special love for the Muslim community, and were intended as a warning or defensive/aggressive action against the non-Muslim dominant culture in Britain, which he regards as being engaged in war against Islamic culture and values. A full counter analysis of these ideas from a peace perspective, would have to take into full consideration the history of the arising of Islamic teachings on Jihad, and their standing in current international law and the philosophy of law in general. It is part of this author's contention that legal teachings in whatever faith which stem from fundamentally sophiaphobic or philiaphobic tendencies need to be superceded by countervailing legal and moral teachings which demonstrably stem from sophiaphilious (wisdom-loving), philophilious and irenophilious principles, and that this is one of the most urgent tasks facing legal thinkers today

too much loving could bring. So we invent structures and mechanisms and institutions whereby these energies can be safely channeled and contained and harnessed and tamed. We are a wild as well as a domestic beast and yet in such ways we have tried hard to domesticate the human being.

There is also a counter force, more positively, we have within us each a love of loving, a philophilia, which is the secret wisdom within us all, the secret wildness within us that loves unfettered and free, the resolute love of wisdom at its highest. The fear of wisdom, sophiaphobia, is part of this fear of love, not just the fear of wisdom, but the fear of the love of wisdom. We are afraid to love in general, and we are afraid to love wisdom in particular, because we think that it is transcendent and denying of our living experiences as human beings<sup>18</sup>. If we could recapitulate and reformulate our notion of what wisdom actually is, such that we are no longer afraid of it, then that would also remove the fear of loving it, (and which we are however compelled to go on doing, in spite of the fear.)<sup>19</sup> If we reformulate the architectonic of wisdom such that the wisdom is grounded in life, something tangible and practical, then surely this would advance peace and international understanding, which was surely the tragic point e.g. of Marxism and other similar humanist insight- traditions. We need to develop a vocabulary to articulate this kind of wisdom that is at once transcendent and grounded, that is supernatural, supernal and also

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<sup>18</sup> It is worth pointing out how important this problem is in relation to comparative religion and the study of eschatology – both persona and collective, and the apocalyptic stories of the coming into being of evil. In Islam, Iblis, the Devil, refuses to acknowledge mankind as being worthy of much adulation, and cannot see why God (Allah) should be taking such an interest in him. Satan sees himself as far too otherworldly to be bothered much about the human condition, after all, is he not leader of all the angels ? Right hand assistant to the most high ? For Satan, the creation of mankind, a pitiable creature subject to aches and pains and all manner of foibles, must have been due to a momentary lapse of reason on the part of God. Yet it is precisely this arrogance on Satan's part that is the curse from which he has to be set free; and it is precisely man's role to do this, by showing Satan that it is possible to be truly human, and truly divine (or transcendent) at once. Yet this is precisely this huge responsibility of the path of wisdom that we humans are most afraid of, since it involves integrating our own Divine and Human nature, along with our dark side, or "Satanic" nature. It was in this precise dynamic that Jung laboured so long and hard, and opened the way for future researchers. See *Satan's tragedy and redemption : Iblis in Sufi psychology* by Peter J. Awn (Studies in the history of religions, Supplements to Numen, 44; Leiden : Brill, 1983) for an important account of the Islamic perspective on this process. For a study of the shadow side of religious tracts, see Ludemann, Gerd *The Unholy in Holy Scripture: the dark side of the bible* (London : S.C.M. Press, 1997)

<sup>19</sup> There is of course the paradox that we might well be excited and attracted precisely to what we are afraid of: the modern fascination of the horror movies, the actual pleasure that can be experienced in being afraid – this is a problem for any simplistic attempt to solve the problems of sophiaphobia and philiaphobia – perhaps we like to fear them exactly because their fascination and power are thereby affirmed?

natural. Instead we have split up, broken strands of wisdom, scattered in different domains and dimensions, with different experts who monitor and police different aspects of it. Very few people actually embrace or understand the possibility of a whole or holistic approach to wisdom.<sup>20</sup>

Connected with the exposure and antidote to philiaphobia is the concept of non-absolutism, a concept found in Jain philosophy, and brought to the West within the skeptical and academic tradition. Absolute certainty in one's own dogma or one's own truth is another manifestation of philiaphobia, because if you uphold only your own truth, only your own knowledge or wisdom, it is denying the interconnectedness between what you know and believe and what other people believe, which is interconnected. Interconnectedness is of course another form of love, the premise indeed on which love is founded. Without interconnectedness there can be no love<sup>21</sup> and furthermore there also has to be the interconnectedness of independent beings, interdependent but nevertheless independent beings, individuals who are connected but separate. The absolute dogmatic assertion of one's own truth at the expense of another's views is a form of philiaphobia, because it is saying: *"I dare not acknowledge there is some truth in your views. Why ? Because I am afraid I might then have to love you ? Why ? Because I choose instead to hate you ? Why ? Because I am afraid to love you ? Why ? Because it shows weakness. Why does it show weakness ? Because I acknowledge in loving you that I am not perfect, complete and entire unto myself. I acknowledge in loving you that I am human, that I am mortal, that I have edges, that I bruise, and in doing that, in my imperfections, I dare not acknowledge that. Why not ? Because I want to be Superman, I want to be a God, because part of me is, and I know that, and therefore I cannot acknowledge my mortality, my humanness, or any imperfectness. Therefore I will deny that you have any right to say or believe or exist or anything. I will say that I alone am right, that I alone have rights, that you have none. I can't allow you to have any rights because if I grant you rights then*

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<sup>20</sup> Not of course through one's own fault, or lack of intelligence – there is the whole question here of the political sociology of knowledge and the ways that agencies suppress or distort information either consciously or unconsciously

<sup>21</sup> In a sense this is a way of articulating the reconciliation, in Indian philosophical terms, of the path of jnana yoga (which asserts the identity of phenomena) and Bhakti Yoga (which asserts the differences, the gaps, the space, without which love cannot breathe)

*the next thing that will happen is I will have to love you and if I love you, then I will become weak and I cant allow that*". And that is how the psychological game goes on, how the fear of love rules our world, among many people who have extreme views: that is what runs the outer world, or rather, misruns the world. BUT it is people with broad views and tolerant and holistic views, on the contrary, that actually, secretly sustain the world, and they are found everywhere, scattered in every country, religion, school, and college and institution, and in each family. Basically, these are people who have secretly accessed their deepest minds, who have surrendered to peace itself, who have who woken up their minds to some degree, and who are without prejudice and who are humble and who recognise the wisdom in others, as in themselves, and who love life and who known life and who are not afraid of love, because they know that the very thing that is doing the being afraid is the same as the thing which it is being afraid of<sup>22</sup> i.e. love through and through. And that love is felt emotionally as *love*, intellectually as *mind*, physically as *body*, and there is pleasure, or happiness, in and for, all three. Pleasure could here be defined as the harmonization between needs and wants and capacities that all three require; spirit would be the integration of all three, the synthesis, the source, the spark of all perhaps. Love therefore is what keeps the whole system of life, both in our micro individual lives, and in our macro social lives, in balance and harmony and continuance.<sup>23</sup>

When this love system works in harmony, the human being is complete; but when it is blocked, out of fears, and love is denied, including most importantly self love, then the humiliation / violence cycle can start up – like a negative engine cycle backfiring, once grit gets into the engine somewhere.

For two thousands years it has been a theological statement staring out at us from our gospels, the saying that God is Love – and the point has been emphasised by religious and philosophical reformers ever sine then at intervals. Recently those who tried to

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<sup>22</sup> This was of course Shankara's point, and Buddha's also, albeit expressed in slightly different expository ways – *"the demons are in your own mind, generated by your own mind, therefore there is nothing to be afraid of... the demons may even be real, i.e. they may have an independent subjective phenomenal existence – but they are generated from the same mind stuff as your own consciousness is generated and therefore can have no power over you once you have liberated your own highest innate wisdom"*

<sup>23</sup> Hindu theology has it well conceptualized as the spiritual domain of Brahma counterposed to the material realm, of Siva/Kali, and synthesized by the emotional realm of Vishnua/Lakshmi.

emphasise non-violence over violence, brought us back again and again to this core text: Gandhi always argued that the best way to translate ahimsa was as love, not nonviolence.<sup>24</sup> Tolstoy also argued that without remembering this core text and its full implications, we will neither be able to save Christian civilization, nor to actualize the best of world civilisation. Martin Luther King also took the implications of “God is Love” as the core insight determining his own meteoric trajectory over the American firmament. Yet the positive affirmations of this insight have not proved sufficiently strong. There must therefore, it is my contention, be some blockage, some countervailing force, some counterforce to the natural love of Reality<sup>25</sup> which we ought to have within us by our own nature.

I have argued in this section that perhaps there is a fear of love and a fear of loving which is blocking us from properly experiencing this reality, and have tried to indicate something of the nature and derivation of this phenomenon, which I have termed “philiaphobia”. Whilst medical science recognises several terms which have bearing on philiaphobia, such as “the fear of anything new (neophobia<sup>26</sup>),,,,the fear of the devil (satanophobia<sup>27</sup>).....the fear of female genitals (eurotophobia<sup>28</sup>)....the fear of God (theophobia<sup>29</sup>).....the fear of ideas (ideophobia<sup>30</sup>)....the fear of jealousy (zelophobia<sup>31</sup>)...

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<sup>24</sup> The author worked for several years in Britain as Convenor of a School of Non-Violence inspired by the work of Gandhi – which work still carries on today in various forms, and as a result spent some time in intensive study of Gandhi and the Gandhian tradition

<sup>25</sup> I use the term in its Sufi sense of Al Haq, as a synonym for the God of philosophers, for ultimate reality, the Tao, or Dharmakaya, rather than the popular God of theism

<sup>26</sup> love normally brings a sense of newness which can be quite scary, whether its love for some or some new thing – often people say “I am afraid of falling in love.. it’s so new....”

<sup>27</sup> one fears but secretly admires the devil for his rebellion; as Awn points out, it was precisely out of love that Iblis rebelled, because all along Iblis has been God’s most profound and sacred admirer – it was because of Iblis’s deep love for God that he refused to bow down and worship the merely human, and thus suffered the pangs of being outcast into the nethermost regions; hell could therefore almost be defined as absence from the beloved – a condition that all true lovers sadly have on occasion to experience as part of the package of being-in-love

<sup>28</sup> presumably medical science also has a term for fear of the male genitals; both sets of genitals are powerfully awesome reminders of our mortality and our immortality simultaneously – no wonder that in some ancient and undisturbed cultures, temples are constructed around their icons, and rituals which honour them abound

<sup>29</sup> if God is indeed love, then this could be another term for Philiaphobia – but not everyone of course is comfortable with theistic language

<sup>30</sup> lovers often love nothing more than sharing ideas, is it not part of the wonder of being in love ? Fear of loving would therefore seem to involve degrees of ideophobia; likewise, institutions often reject incomers with new ideas (there is an almost sociologically measurable process at work here it would seem) such that

the fear of infinity (apeirophobia<sup>32</sup>)...the fear of men (androphobia) and women (gynophobia<sup>33</sup>)...myths (mythophobia<sup>34</sup>).... the fear of pleasure (hedonophobia<sup>35</sup>).... The fear of sacred things (hierophobia<sup>36</sup>)....the fear of sex (genophobia<sup>37</sup>).... The fear of thinking (phronemophobia<sup>38</sup>)....the fear of the void (kenophobia<sup>39</sup>).... etc. My argument

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rejection of new ideas often equals rejection of incomers. Groups and institutions usually ossify around old ideas, which they capitalize on, and seek to do their best too prevent the growth of new approaches, new ideas; “yesterday’s heresy becomes today’s theology and tomorrows orthodoxy” which must in turn combat (and humiliate) tomorrows heresy and so on ad infinitum

<sup>31</sup> Love seems to involve at least some degree of jealousy, unless one can adopt a very enlightened approach – and so zelophobia and philiaphobia would seem to be close bedfellows: no doubt therefore the attitude to both will likewise be similar – in Buddhist metaphysics it is called *mudita* (joy in other peoples joy) or “sympathetic happiness” – intellectually it would be “sympathetic enlightenment”, a process which would first have to leap across the *sophiaphobic* divide

<sup>32</sup> love can often seem infinite; one gets lost in it – the fear of infinity would therefore seem to have a great deal in common with a fear of love – whereas a true lover would be a lover of infinity, an *apeirophile*, by definition

<sup>33</sup> inability to allow love into ones being would seem to be close to having a fear of one’s fellow men and women in general

<sup>34</sup> Love is usually something mythical in nature – indeed, most of the great myths of mankind are in some way something to do with love, and its quests and transformations – thus a fear of love would seem to be related to a fear of myths in general

<sup>35</sup> love seeks pleasure of its devotees, and the pleasure of love is multidimensional, not merely genito-sexual; for someone truly open to love, pleasure can be found from all the sense, visual, touch, breath, and also from thought itself. Intellectual pleasure, to Spinoza, Plato, Epicurus and G.E. Moore, the highest of all pleasures, can itself be an almost sensual experience; what true lover of wisdom does not feel a tingle of excitement and anticipation when sitting down to a good conversation with a long lost wisdom-friend, or to opening up some rare book or manuscript, never before seen, in some far distant library, or, nowadays, finding some new, intellectually satisfying website, and sensing a warm and profound presence behind it ?

<sup>36</sup> In so far as love is true, then it is always sacred; hence to fear love, is at the same time to practice *hierophobia*

<sup>37</sup> As discussed above, this would seem to be triggered by the fear of mortality; for example by the *Laius* complex on the part of male psychology (the fear of being supplanted by one’s offspring)

<sup>38</sup> this would seem to be a common problem in our society. With constant reinforcement from the media – we deal in one line rejoinders, position statements, PR sound bites; and agreed policy directives; or party lines. True thinking, true dialectic, which is open-ended, mercurial, adventurous, and can move mountains – is in danger of becoming a dying art, it would sometimes seem. But true love demands thought, delights in thought, lovers delight in thinking together, in sharing ideas and thoughts – as their subjectivities intermesh and interweave – anyone who is afraid of thinking, will find it hard not to be also afraid of real love, surely

<sup>39</sup> For Buddhists it is precisely the void which masks the secret nature of absolute reality; *shunyata* is nirvana; and is the locus of enlightenment and compassion; to be afraid of the void is therefore to block out the possibility of enlightenment or *karuna* (transpersonal compassion). Theists talk of the same idea in terms of negative theology – the dark face of God – and the paradox that where God seems most absent he is simultaneously most present within. The ultimate humiliation God could inflict on man would be not to be there after all; but likewise, the ultimate humiliation man could inflict on God would be, not to show up when called. Perhaps both sides of this metaphysical love-tangle need to grow up, and simply be there for each other, in love, finally, like a long lost absent lover finally and triumphantly coming back into one’s life...

is that the fear of love encompasses and is fuelled by several of these in turn and is the more corrosive for being unnamed and unrecognized.”

To conclude this section on the third problematic, can we maybe agree at least the following proposition: *that the continued presence of active and subtle violence, humiliation, suffering and grief in large parts of humankind, may be connected with their ongoing difficulties in loving, either themselves or each other, or their transcendent Source or Origin and that this inability to love effectively and strongly and powerfully may be in turn connected to the fear of loving (philiaphobia).* What we have done subsequently therefore is to try and illustrate some of the issues that arise if this proposition is taken seriously.

#### CONCLUSION:

Let us revisit our aims in this brief paper and see how far we have achieved them. Firstly, we discussed the nature of recognition, and agreed that it was an under-recognised problem. We saw many ways in which the problem of recognition or non recognition, which could be called the disputed **politics of recognition**, is perpetually at work in the conflict dynamics that underlie the deliberate infliction of humiliation on one another, from both micro and macro perspectives

Secondly, we have seen how, underlying some of the great conflict dynamics of our current clashes of cultures and civilisations, and religiously-fuelled conflict, there is what could be called the *problematic of sophiaphobia* at work: whilst each culture, each institution, has a rhetoric of “philosophy”, there is actually at work in us a counterforce, a deep seated *fear of wisdom* – and we have examined some of the ways in which this force might be operative and how it might be turned around and transformed. We have also seen some of the specific ways in which sophiaphobia is at play in the dynamics of the humiliation / violence cycle. Finally, we have gone on to examine what may be the most

fundamental and all encompassing of all phobias, although hitherto unnamed: philiaphobia<sup>40</sup>.

One final observation is in order: in the above comments, considerable mention has been made of the linkages between our three problematics and the phenomenon of humiliation – we have talked of a humiliation / violence cycle. Not enough attention has been paid however to the parallel challenge, more positively put, of *dignity* – and of the fostering and achievement of human dignity, as the end product of breaking the humiliation / violence cycle. It should however be made explicit that the author's main intent here in this paper is precisely to advance the replacement of the humiliation / violence cycle with a dignity / peace cycle of interrelated consequences. It is believed that by considering in depth the question of recognition and non-recognition, we might begin to be able to move towards an understanding of how the first glimmers of the humiliation cycle begin to take spark, and conversely, how the first seeds of a dignity / peace cycle might be able to take light. The proposition underlying this section would go something like: *mutual recognition = mutual dignity*. Secondly, by examining the problematic of sophiaphobia, we have simultaneously been seeing how the suppression of our true identity, of the core of living wisdom within us by definition as homo sapiens, in being flouted: by institutions, economic systems, militarisms, worn out structures, unethical working and living conditions, and that this is leading to a constant feeling of being humiliated, which in turn generates conditions of violence, both against self and against others.<sup>41</sup> The same

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<sup>40</sup> In 1993 when working on creating a peace studies Institute at London University, and having traveled widely throughout Europe, Scandinavia, North America and Asia seeking out optimal ways of teaching and researching peace and non-violence, the author was determined to seek out any academic studies on the nature of love, specifically love as studies in relation to non-violence, only to find an enormous lacuna; apart from a few psychological monographs, and some denominational religious studies (mostly Christian) there was a near total silence from academia on the nature of love in all its profundity and variety (philia, agape, eros). There was no academic journal anywhere in the world devoted, for example, to the study of the nature of love in all its many dimensions. In 1993, therefore, the author's newly born International Institute of Peace Studies had the temerity to launch such a journal, *The Muses Journal: Love, Peace and Wisdom: An International Journal of Education for Peace and Global Responsibility*, which is still in publication and soon to be published in its 8<sup>th</sup> issue. The comments above on the nature of philiaphobia therefore arise from a detailed examination of the matter over some 12 years active reflection and research

<sup>41</sup> To give an example of this: the destruction of the Soviet Union has led to almost an entire generation of Russian men becoming alcoholics, according to some reports – humiliated in the international arena, they have retreated to the bottle as a solace. This is simply a scientific observation, not a political comment. The ensuing question, would be, what force, apart from violence (it has not worked in Chechnya) would give back true self respect and liberation from suffering to the contemporary male Russian psyche? The same

could be said of the rise of Hitler after World War One; the military defeat, the chaos of the post war situation, the over-draconian terms of the Treaty of Versailles, the almost deliberate desire for the humiliation of Germany on the part of long suffering France, all this contributed to the burning sense of injustice and humiliation that Hitler came to articulate on behalf of the German body politic. But again, in this case, we see the desire to overcome a feeling of humiliation being worked out through inflicting violence and suffering against one's neighbours, and in Hitler's case with terrifying and monstrous consequences. The trick that humanity is desperate to discover, is to find a way of moving beyond the sense of humiliation and the desire for violent revenge, and towards a sense of mutual dignity, and peacefulness, brought about by mutual recognition of one another of each other's wisdom. What I am arguing here is that by acknowledging the wisdom of the other, one simultaneously affirms the wisdom of oneself- and that in so doing, one transforms a situation of humiliation into a situation of mutual dignity and respect.

Finally, we have also examined the ways in which the fear of love (philiaphobia) is also preventing this final recognition from happening, is blocking the dignity that alone real love can confer on us as humans, as persons, half way between animals and Gods.<sup>42</sup> In examining a few of the ways that philiaphobia may arise, and some of its consequences, we have begun a probably long and troublesome task, and one that will need many helpers, of merely beginning to clear away some of the brambles that occlude the path to the sleeping princess, fallen victim to the long silence<sup>43</sup> and the long forgetting that the failure of loving can bring about.<sup>44</sup>

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example could be given for most other cultures. The problem is that most cultures seem to have a reflex action: when feeling humiliated, lash out, and humiliate, possibly violently, those nearest to you, including yourself. Perhaps an in depth re-reading of Tolstoy is in order.

<sup>42</sup> It is as Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* who likened man to an amphibious creature, half at home in the spiritual and half in the material plane, in this wise

<sup>43</sup> Silence has different flavours, different qualities: there is the long silence of the hidden Imam; the silence of divine prayer; the silence of Jesus before Pilate when asked what is truth; but there is also the silence of collusion, of not speaking up against obvious injustice, the silence of Pius XI against the Nazi holocaust; there is therefore a silence of courage and a silence of fear – and fearful silence can be therefore one way of detecting sophiaphobic or philiaphobic tendencies in a group or an individual; in the case of the sleeping princess in the fairy tale, it was induced by a curse, and a long nursed sense of injustice. There is an excellent history of the Sleeping Beauty / Briar Rose fairy tale on line by Heidi Anne Heiner at [www.surlalunefairytales.com/sleepingbeauty/history.html](http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/sleepingbeauty/history.html): which explains: "*Sleeping Beauty's earliest influence apparently comes from "Perceforest," an Arthurian romance which was first printed in 1528. [A*

Hopefully then enough ideas have been discussed here to indicate some of the ways that focusing some attention on these three problematics might help advance both the task of humiliation and dignity and studies and also that of peace studies, and indeed philosophy more generally. It is to be hoped that by naming at least some of the ghosts in the mists of the peace landscape, we might be able to prepare to see more clearly once the mist has lifted, and without needing to be fearful anymore.

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prose romance, printed at Paris in 1528, and said to have been discovered in a cabinet hid in the massive wall of an ancient tower on the banks of the Humber, named Burtimer, from a king of that name who built it. The MS was said to be in Greek, and was translated through the Latin into French - <http://www.bibliomania.com/2/3/255/frameset.html> ]*The next known version of the tale came from Giambattista Basile's "Sun, Moon, and Talia" also known more formally as Il Pentamerone, Day 5, Tale 5 (1636). This is the tale which is thought to have influenced Perrault's Sleeping Beauty, the version I have annotated on this site. Perrault included his version, the first to use Sleeping Beauty as a title, as the first tale in his Histories ou contes du temps passe (1697). After Perrault, the Grimms wrote down "Briar Rose" for their own collection of tales. This version is the tamest and does not involve any of the cannibalism, adultery or rape that is found in some of the earlier renditions. The Grimm version is thought to be derived from the Perrault version which preceded it, although the Grimm brothers would have vehemently denied such a connection. The Grimm's tale is the most well-known version, barring Disney's animated feature, although Perrault's title is more commonly used. The Grimm tale ends earlier than the others with Beauty awaking with the Prince's chaste kiss. The former versions like Perrault's continued the story with the marriage and the events that followed. In many variations, the king or prince impregnates Beauty in her sleep and then leaves. She wakes up when she gives birth to her twin children.*" One of the author's current projects is a study of the Phenomenology of Silence which explores these different nuances and aspects of silence, including their political implications. Certainly, deliberate silencing, is an act of primary humiliation engaged in whenever instruments or agencies or individuals of power deliberately obstruct or silence those in less powerful positions. It is engaged in worldwide by many vested interests and has been for millennia. The trouble with it is that silencing cuts to the quick of who we are as human beings, namely, Homo Noeticus Communicans, and therefore deeply offends our basic instincts as people, which therefore leads in turn to protests and revolutions and reformations; one of the great cries of revolutionaries and reformers has always been, " to speak up for the silent majority" and it also perhaps why, traditionally, in political or revolutionary demonstrations, the crowd chants or shouts aloud.

<sup>44</sup> The problem of memory in relation to the three problematics of this paper is important, and almost deserves a section all to itself – but a footnote will have to suffice: it was perhaps Freud who first began to speculate that the memory may be strategic in its forgetting;’ and that the task of therapy may be connected with the art of remembering. The antidotes to lack of recognition may often times lie in remembering that what one thought one didn't recognise one actually, at last, remembers... Similarly, the problems of Sophiaphobia may be resolved, as it were Socratically, by remembering that one doesn't fear wisdom after all, in fact one rather likes it. because it is what one is, fundamentally... And similarly, the problematic of philiaphobia may likewise be solved by remembering that one's heart has never actually forgotten to love after all, and that loving comes as naturally as breathing, if only you allow it to do so....

## APPENDIX:

Since completing the above text<sup>45</sup> which can only and ever be a provisional text, in the sense with all new theories<sup>46</sup>, further examples of the 3 problematics discussed above may continue to come to light, and their role in the humiliation / conflict / violence cycle become revealed. In this appendix therefore a list will be kept of such examples for future study and analysis. No doubt pother readers can think of their own such additions, or speak of examples of these dynamics at work in their own lives and circles of experience

## 1. RECOGNITION

1.1. The case of St Anselm and his attempts to seek **recognition as** Archbishop of Canterbury, when, having been appointed by King William 2<sup>nd</sup> of England as Archbishop of Canterbury, and having been enthroned in Canterbury in 1093, he went to Rome in 1095 to receive the Pallium (official authorization as Archbishop from the Pope) but since there were two rival candidates for the papacy at the time, it was not straightforward, especially since neither candidate (Urban and Clement) was **recognised** by King William 2<sup>nd</sup> of England. In fact Anselm acknowledged Urban. He went back to Rome in 1097 in order to continue trying for **recognition**, which he finally won. One of the most important Christian philosophers, he formulated a classic proof for the existence of God known as the ontological argument for the existence of God.<sup>47</sup> This one case is cited from

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<sup>45</sup> September 2 2005

<sup>46</sup> New words to describe old phenomena in new and useful ways can often be classified as new theories – this is both a linguistic and a conceptual observation

<sup>47</sup> Anselm was a friend of Hugh (d 1101) of Avranches; Ist Earl of Chester; Anselm was invited by him to help him found his Monastery of St Werburgh's at Chester. In 1652 Henry Vaughan the poet published a small book of devotions the Mount of Olives with the Excellent Discourse Of The Blessed State Of Man In Glory by Anselm, which he translated from Latin into English.

what would literally be thousands of examples of such Papal and Monarchical and Priestly squabbles over recognition: power and authority and hierarchy always seem to try to create a monopolistic log jam on recognition, and then police access to it, usually in a process which involves a degree of humiliation. Keeping Anselm waiting is just a minor example. Of course, Popes, Christian thinkers and lay Christians, as well as Christian political leaders, have for centuries contested each other's rights to recognition; while Christ himself, supposedly the fount and source of the authority underlying this whole dispute, was himself also largely unrecognized in his own lifetime, while Protestants usually fail to recognise Catholics and vice versa, and Gnostics likewise refuse to recognise exoterics and so on. Perhaps the point is to acknowledge that the validity of a person's worth is no so much in the outer trappings of whatsoever office they may hold officially authorized from whatsoever power, but rather their own internal ability to recognise the good within themselves, and hence within others – heir enlightenment quotient, so to speak. Recognition implies literally, a knowing over again – it is that name we can finally put to a face whose image has haunted us, or that long lost friend we finally meet up with again. To really settle the metaphysics as well as the psychology of humiliation, we are going to have to ask: what is that knowledge it demands ? Where doe the memory come from that enables recognition to happen ? Is it, in Platonic terms, something that we can access from a past life, or from a pool of shared knowing in the collective unconscious? And how do we forget anyway ? What is there in us that fails to recognize things and people and qualities? Why do we so often repeat ou mistakes as people (in whatever context)? here the failure to grant or receive recognition, dovetails over into the problem of sophiaphobia – because deep down, we often know what we need to do to get / grant the recognition that could heal a situation, but often hide from that knowledge (too difficult / too complex / too costly)... Why ? We need to ask: what knowledge do we need, as people to really grant recognition to each other, fully, in our true multidimensional power – what would it really cost we were to do this ? Would I not cost, and demand, that we love one another ? That we recognise the stupendous and extraordinary achievement of being human ? Yet here the problem of philiaphobia kicks in.... see above ! But even here there is a solution: as Rumi said,

“The minute I heard my first love story

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Anselm was the author of many important writings in theology and is regarded by many as the most important theologian in the Western church between Augustine and Aquinas. This data is from my *Cultural and Historical Encyclopedia of the Welsh Marches: a Microcosm of Conflict and Its Resolution* (forthcoming)

I started looking for you, not knowing  
How blind that was.

Lovers don't finally meet somewhere  
They're in each other all along<sup>48</sup>

## 2.SOPHIAPHOBIA

A number of other manifestations and instances of the problem of Sophiaphobia have also occurred to the author since the paper was finished, which are appended hereby as a stimulus hopefully, to further thought and reflection.

2.1. *Odin legends*: there are the complex series of Germanic and Scandinavian (including Anglo-Saxon) legends regarding the primary wisdom deity of their pantheon, Odin or Woden – how he managed to steal, or trick, the secrets of wisdom, in the form of three jars of poetic mead, named Bodin, Odrorir and Son, from Gunnlad, who was guarding them under the sacred tree, and how her father Suttung thereby thought to avenge her, which events will eventually cause the entire sequence of Ragnarok, the destruction of the entire world of humanity and the Gods alike. This myth shows among other things that Odin felt guilty about his knowledge, that deep down he knew he had obtained it unethically, or in contest and against others who obstructing his attaining it. Plenty of Sophiaphobia material to work with here then. Likewise, in his obtain in further knowledge from the Well of Mimir, which led to his knowledge of the runes, there is a similar story attached, with Mimir ending up having his head cut off by jealous giants. Even when Mimir's head is cut off, he goes on prophesying (as does the Welsh deity Bran) Mimir is the owner of the hill on which Lif and Lifthrasir will finally survive global winter / global warming.

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<sup>48</sup> Open Secret, No. 1246, Rumi, translated by John Moyne and Coleman Barks, (Threshold Books, Vermont, 1984)

Again, for anyone that knows and loves the runes, it is always sobering to recall the warning on the packet “this knowledge will cost you an eye” – minimum. Given the fact that the genuine rune masters were imprisoned and murdered by the Nazis, who were content to appropriate their knowledge, but at the same time to kill the teachers, this Sophiophobic tragedy continues to run its course into modern times....

2.2. *Prometheus legends*: In Greek mythology, Prometheus has an even worse time of it than does Odin. In return for giving knowledge, light, fire and intelligence to mankind, he is tortured abysmally on a daily basis by Zeus, who wants among other things to get out of him the knowledge of his own doom, i.e. when the tyrant of the deity will finally be ended. Prometheus is the kind of shadowy patron saint of Greek and later European humanism, therefore, and as such was invoked by Marx as the patron saint of all Philosophers. Zeus acts the Sophiaphobe in this myth; society seems to be too often fond of recapitulating the physiological dynamics of this story – endless Zeus characters using power to block insight. But the whole of Greek thought and mythology is bound up in this story. It finally took Heracles to release Prometheus, another character from Greek mythology who showed the struggle and cost of knowledge, and who had to suffer the humiliation at being killed by his wife.

2.3. *Taliesin and Ceridwen legends*: similar myths occur in the Celtic Druid pantheon, associated with the work of Taliesin. Taliesin was born at Llanfair Caereinion, a small town in mid Wales near where I happen to reside. He had an ordinary childhood, was at first known as Gwion, until, one day, walking in the woods, he was asked by an old woman to help tend a fire underneath a cauldron, where a liquid was set to bubble for a year. This liquid contained a potion which would grant the old woman’s son great beauty and omniscient wisdom, unbeknown to Taliesin (who was at this point called Gwion). Just at the end of the year, a drop of the liquid spilled out onto Taliesin’s hand, and he at once attained omniscience, and in a flash, saw that the old woman was none other than the Great Goddess Ceridwen, and that she would be furious with him for accidentally stealing what should have been reserved for her own son. He fled, but Ceridwen, who came back just after, chased after him across the Mid Wales landscapes (I fancy they ran

past my cottage door): using the power of wisdom given him by the magic potion, he transformed himself into a hare, swiftest of creatures, but Ceridwen became a greyhound and nearly caught up with him; he changed into a salmon swimming in a river, but Ceridwen became an otter and came after him; he became a bird and soared above the stream, but Ceridwen became a hawk and again caught up with him; so Taliesin became a tiny seed of grain and fell to earth, and hid amidst a huge pile of other seeds of grain, but Ceridwen became a hen, and pecked and pecked until she found him. Whereupon, Taliesin became a seed inside the belly of the pregnant Goddess, and was then, 9 months later, reborn into the world all over again. Ceridwen was determined to kill the baby by finding it so fair, she sewed it into a bag and threw it into the sea. 9 months later the bag of skins into which he had been sown was cast up on a river estuary in West Wales, and he was eventually received by Elffin, who went on to become his foster father and raised him as a his own son. Taliesin, for now he was so named, grew up became one of the greatest bards of Britain, and his poetry follows a traditional Celtic and Druidic pattern, revealing a depth of knowledge unusual among poets.

*“ Primary Chief Bard am I to Elffin*

*And my native country is the place of the Summer stars...”*

So begins his poem “Primary Chief Bard” and many of his other verses, of which a few dozen have survived in Ancient Welsh, dwell on wisdom, Sophia, and the struggles to attain it. They read as the triumphant song of one who has triumphed over Sophiaphobia, and won through. But the cost had been immense – a life and death struggle with a Goddess, which he could only win by becoming her child, accepting his own powerlessness, and deep down a secret knowledge that all his wisdom was somehow illicit, not really meant for him. How many of us have had this experience, this sense of inner humiliation and shame ?<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Further details on Taliesin as well as excellent translations of his extant poetry are contained in Matthews, John, *Taliesin: The Last Celtic Shaman*, (Vermont, Inner Traditions, 1991/2002). Robert Graves in *The White Goddess: A Grammar of Poetic Myth*, also reconstructs in his own way the inner meaning of the Taliesin narrative, as well as attempts to decipher the meaning of Taliesin’s poem *The Battle of the Trees* (Cad Goddeu). Grave’s work remains a seminal feat of scholarship, and one which certainly raised the sophiaphobic hackles of innumerable “experts”.

2.4. *Fionn MacCumahail and the Salmon of Knowledge*: another Celtic myth about knowledge and its difficulty of obtaining, is from Ireland, which has a different variant of the Taliesin / Odin tales: Fionn MacCumahail as a young boy enters the service of a Druid called Finn Eger (or Finegas) and for seven long years they watch beside a pool of the River Boyne (Fec's Pool, near Slane). Finegas had been waiting himself to obtain a special Salmon which swam there, the eating of which would bring wisdom. After 7 years of waiting, the salmon was caught by Finegas, and he gave it to Finn to cook, but warned him not to eat of it. Of course, Fionn accidentally caught a spot on his thumb which he licked, and again, gained magical wisdom as result. Differently, in the Irish tale, the old Druid, asked him for his real name (hitherto he had been known as Demna) and on learning it was actually Fionn, willingly gave him the rest of the salmon to eat, since he had long ago heard a prophecy that the salmon was indeed for one who would come and who would be called Fionn. Now Fionn MacCumhail went on to become the greatest and wisest warrior Ireland has even known, and to lead the Fianna, the war band that protected the shores and sovereignty of Ireland from all invasions. Here again, we see the same mythological motif at work, invoking Sophia and Sophiaphobia – the inadvertent taste of too much knowledge, although here, Finegas acts as a proper teacher, and facilitates the birth of this wisdom in his pupil, rather than acting out the angry and cross teacher of the Ceridwen or Suttung versions.

2.5. *“Ignorance is bliss”*: this is another Sophiaphobic saying common in English: if we don't know something, we can be happy. The modern entertainment industry and indeed much of our education system seems to be premised on his false insight.

2.6. *The absence of and difficulty of access to wisdom deities*: Athena, Minerva, Sophia, Ahura Mazda, and Brahma: this is another recurring motif in the world's spiritual and mythological systems – there are deities of wisdom, but they are mighty hard to contact. They are distanced divorced and alien to our normal life on earth.

2.7. *The absence and relative difficulty of access to wisdom teachers*: Hidden Imams, Jesus, (Messiahs), Buddha, Saoshant, Prophets, Hidden Masters etc. – this is another

problem – finding the difficulty of accessing deities of wisdom direct, we then had recourse to accessing teachers of wisdom, or representative wisdom deities in human form, but they too are remarkably hard to get access to . Buddhas, for example, are traditionally only born once in a blue moon, and the next one (by tradition) won't be coming for millions and millions of human earth years. This recurring motif in the collective mind of the planet seems to me to betoken sophiaphobic resistance to the possibility of their greater proximity than we had thought – and the reason ? Because by tradition, such wisdom teachers will judge humanity, and we are afraid of their judgment. Yet all this surely is a profound metaphysical and theological error on the part of official religious understanding which needs updating in the light of modern transpersonal psychology.

2.8. *The “hiding” of hidden masters:* What are they hiding from ? Why ? Do Masters have their own complex forms of Sophiaphobia ? Why have elaborate mythologies built up around such ideas (e.g. Shiaa Islam, Sufism, Kabbalah, Theosophy) – here again we have another great story going on in the collective imagination of mankind – that yes, there are hidden wisdom teachers, hidden masters etc. but they are all in *hiding* – you can't access them – only via me, the Ayatollah, or what have you.<sup>50</sup> The problem of course arises, not in having the myth, which is beautiful , and underlies much great mystical expression and insight, but in the intolerance that foolishly might accompany it sometimes – i.e. I am the ONLY representative of the ONLY hidden master, and unless you accept our authority and wisdom, you will be negatively judged /cast into hell etc. This ideology seems to fuel not a few Islamist and other terrorists in our day, and presumably a version of it inspires Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda's attack on the West. Were the accomplished German scholar of Sufism alive today, Anne-Marie Schimmel, she might be someone to enter into dialogue with at this point. Paradoxically, however, a version may also inspire the West's resistance to Islamic knowledge and our secular

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<sup>50</sup> In Shiite Islam, the office of Ayatollah meaning a reader of signs, is someone who is in contact with the hidden Imam, the true leader of the faithful. Imam Ayatollah Khomeini, founder of the modern Iranian theocratic Republic, based his claim to theological power on this tradition. All theocracies, it would seem, have some sort of variant of this story at their root.

society's fierce repression of metaphysical dissent. The Bush Blair "family" presumably also have their own version of the hidden master myth; in fact orthodox Christianity seems to be really a developed form of this myth, and one capable of justifying just about anything. "I am only answerable to my messiah, and that only at the end of all time" and meanwhile I can do exactly what I choose.... Including ruin the world, engage in unchecked power rampages etc. And my Messiah's better than yours.... (Kafka had an interesting take on this: he said, "the Messiah will only come when he is no longer necessary" i.e. we have to do it ourselves....)

2.7 *"Too clever by half"*: this is another saying common in English, which warns people not to attempt to find too much wisdom in life; it is often used of bright pupils in school, as a warning by teachers, who are trying to explain that educational institutions and systems are no really about disseminating enlightenment, whatever Kant and the other philosophers might have thought, but actually places for repressing and silencing originality, and for ensuring ideological conformity to whatever ruling ideology is in power.

2.8. *"Ignore", "ignoring" and "ignorance"*: there are countless possible insights to be gained, by the etymological and conceptual analysis of these terms – for in most metaphysical systems, ignorance underlies all evil and suffering, but ignorance itself is a kind of denying, a kind of sophiaphobic reaction to the possibility of some kind of knowledge, which is rejected as dangerous, or fearful. Confronted by the harsh duty of knowing, which is the human condition, we often prefer "ignorance", which is a gentle form of sophiaphobia – rather than actively combating knowledge, we simply avoid it, turn away, *ignore it*. How many great teachers, how many wise insights, how many profound thinkers – have simply been *ignored* ? In Buddhism, they are called *pratyekabuddhas* – unknown or ignored Buddhas.

2.9. *The dangerous Magus*: this is another historical myth that speaks to our theme of Sophiaphobia – in Tudor and Jacobean Britain, the figure of Dr. John Dee hovers over the intellectual landscape, as one who was feared and despised both by the mob and also by

the ordinary Tudor apparatchiks – when he went to Europe for his intellectual travels (into alchemy and proto-Rosicrucianism) his library and home was partly dispersed in his absence. Another figure that this happened to later, was Joseph Priestly, the scientist and Unitarian, and member of the Lunar Society – whose house in Birmingham was also destroyed by a mob for his sympathy of some aspects of the cause of the French revolution. ( It could be argued that resistance to revolutionary thought and praxis of all kinds, whether American, French or Russian, has something Sophiaphobic about it – the primary epistemological response of conservatism as a political ideology could be summed up as “it is not for the likes of us, a perfect society, or to change human nature” – but alongside such Sophiaphobic conservatism, perhaps there is a wiser, philosophic conservatism, which would argue that authentic wisdom is indeed home grown, and you don’t need to man the guillotines or the barricades to practice ever expanding degrees of authentic learning and insight....

2.10. *Knowledge and responsibility* – this is another aspect of the problematic of Sophiaphobia – don’t tell me too much, or I’ll be responsible – I don’t want to know. How human is this response. If it goes wrong, and someone gets humiliated, if I don’t know, it won’t be my fault.. I won’t have to take the blame...

2.11. *Heresy and Sophiaphobia* are other all too common bedfellows: we are secretly afraid of being accused of heresy, so we won't say too much; we will mask our knowledge. This same reflex is operative in all theocratic or dogmatic systems. One therefore denies one’s own knowledge in order to conform to whatever orthodoxy is defining itself as such and is holding power at the time. In Cathar country, for example, to permit oneself to adhere to Cathar doctrine, meant ending up sharing the fate of the 200 perfecti who chose to be burned alive when the castle of Montsegur surrendered, rather than conforming to Catholic teaching. Philosophically, this problem, of course, needs addressing, and untangling. We need to reconsider the whole notion of heresy and why human beings ever invented the idea, and to ask whether it has ever served any useful purpose, and if not, then how we can get rid of it. For starters, I would suggest a new approach: whatever philosophical systems counsel love, non-violence, peace, dignity and

non-humiliation, and wisdom and learning and scholarship, can be given a relatively “heresy free imprimatur”. Ironically, many intellectual path breakers end up being accused of heresy in their time: one thinks of Jesus, Moses (surely heretical to the Pharaoh’s Priests), Buddha (heretical to the orthodox Brahmins), Guru Nanak (ditto), Muhammad ( dangerous to the established powers who ran Mecca), Marx (a threat to the established capitalism powers of the day) etc. But the heretics are usually needed, and their insights often stand the test of time. As Kant said, “Sapere Aude” – we must “dare to be wise”.

2.12. *In Christian thought, Gnosticism* saw the god of the bible as not the real deity, there was beyond that an authentic god of wisdom, and it was this deity which had incarnated in Jesus – this distant wisdom deity did not counsel war, violence, hatred, etc. as did the reported God of exoteric religion. But to admit to such a view, to be accused of being a Gnostic, was tantamount to a kind of death sentence in former times, and even now, it is fashionable to study Gnostics or to know about it, but to advocate it or practice it as a Christian branch of universal wisdom, would raise eyebrows in most academic circles. There is something Sophiaphobic going on here, surely, some kind of denial based on fear....<sup>51</sup>

2.13. *The overspecialization of academia:* perhaps this is itself a kind of sophiaphobic reaction to the possibility of gnostic enlightenment – by cluttering up our faculties and academic institutions with “research”, and the minutiae of specificities, we lose sight of the generals. The higher education sector of New Orleans, for example, may well have been studying the minutiae of everything under the sun, and simply failed to realize what would happen if the levees broke, or failed to ask the right questions about the actual situation confronting them in the round. Usually, in my experience as a frustrated peace academic, functioning in the climate of UK academia, if one tries to ask big questions, or sketches out larger terrains of thought, the inevitable answer is “that’s not my specialism”, “I cannot comment” which seems to me to illustrate the mechanisms of defensive

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<sup>51</sup> See the work of German theologian Ludemann, Gerd, including his *Heretics: the other side of early Christianity* and also Ludemann, Gerd and Martina Janssen *Suppressed prayers: Gnostic spirituality in early Christianity* (SCM Press, 1998)

sophiaphobia perfectly. If I say I don't know, I won't be responsible... If I say it's outside my area of expertise, I won't have to do anything about it...

2.14 *Criminality and sophiaphobia*: there is of course a huge area of thought to tackle here, in the problem of actual criminality and criminology: some people don't want you to know about them, because they are actual criminals. They are sophiaphobic twice over, firstly, in that they have committed crimes in the first place, and secondly in that they then want to cover over the knowledge of those crimes from leaking out. This raises the problem of guilt and sophiaphobia – and poses the metaphor of the sword of truth, which cuts through the cloud of sophiaphobia, and the linkage between wisdom and righteousness, or *asha*, which in Persian and Zoroastrian theology, are seen as natural helpmates. True wisdom is about action, life, and combines epistemological insight, with ethical and moral behaviour. The irony of Christ being tried alongside criminals, and having a criminal set free instead of him, is perhaps doubly painful in this regard. But in a world where the prisons are filling up, and where laws and legal process do not always seem to reflect or uphold *dharma*, or cosmic justice, there is room for a huge conversation here. Ironically, I have ended up teaching in a school in Sherwood Forest, ruled over by the memory of Robin Hood – also of course defined as a criminal – but one who was on the side of cosmic right, according to the story. Be that as it may, Sophiaphobia and the philosophy of law would no doubt have some interesting avenues to explore together.

2.15. Closely connected to this is the *whole problem of guilt* – all of us have secrets, all of us have committed things in our life we are perhaps humiliated by remembering, and wish we hadn't done – or can't decide if they were right or wrong, and live in a kind of state of suspended moral torment – and in this sense, we might think that Sophiaphobia is a natural reaction “lest the truth comes out” - but in fact, this seems to me a less skillful psychological reaction to the complexity of the human condition. Better to share the pain and grief of half done things (with trusted friends and counselors) and that way, you can work out the negative experiences and outcomes, and permit healing and forgiveness, and eventually love, to arise again.

2.16. *Gods Wrath*: this is another Sophiaphobic myth which runs much of our psyches: in monotheistic Western religious cultures, God is noticeably jealous and protective of his own omnipotent superiority, as in the Book of Job. In the Genesis myth itself, God does not want mankind to progress to knowledge, and banishes us from paradise as a result of our drive to know. It is because of this primal fall that the subsequent incarnationism of Christianity becomes necessary. Sophiaphobia is therefore at the root of much of our cultural (mis)understandings. We must live in fear of God, rather, and attempt to know as little as possible, or at best, practical knowledge, something useful, a trade maybe, something technical... No wonder it was the Protestant reformation, obsessed as it was with primal guilt and the fall and redemption of man, that gave us technology – as a diversionary tactic from holistic ecstasy ! The Story of Babel is another myth that speaks of the God of Monotheism's angry rejection of our possibly ending up knowing too much, specifically, in being able to make sense of each other's speech. Interestingly, in the Celtic Legends of Ancient Ireland, the founder of the Gaelic race, one Feinius Farsaidh, set up a language school in the Plain of Shinar just after able to try to preserve the original language that we had spoken before that unity was scattered by God's wrathful jealousy, and it was this original language of unity and peace which the Druids of Ireland believed they guarded and preserved....

2.17. *Ancient theology*: it was not however only in Monotheistic cultures that the Gods sowed a fear or anger against mankind's knowing too much – in Sophocles and other Greek tragedians there is a constant sense that true disaster is willed upon us mortals out of hubris, for attempting to know too much, to dare to much – the simple man who accepts his fate in piety, and leaves to God the knowing of the ins and outs of it, is more successful than the person who challenges and questions. The Gods do not have to give an accounting of their own behaviour or morality to mankind – they have the power – and we have the humble position of supplicant or worshipper, who at best might be able to discern some way of appeasing them. Classical religion in both Greece and Rome was premised on this kind of attitude, and from there it spilled over into Christianity, and even into aspects of modern secularism. But the myth, the attitude is profoundly Sophiaphobic – and involves the acceptance of our humiliation as people from the beginning. Perhaps

however, it is possible to reframe this whole narrative and see a different way to make sense of our obvious frailty and morality, and one which can remove the need for humiliation of either self or others once and for all. But there will be work involved – and it might be risky.... Be careful of those mists – the ghosts might well get us before we have time to name them after all...

2.18 *Masking*: many spiritual systems also permit one to mask enlightenment, to pretend one knows nothing, especially in dark and dangerous and cruel times – and hence arises the tradition of the holy fool, whether in Sufism or Russian spirituality or in King Lear and Shakespeare<sup>52</sup>. Only the Holy fool knows, and he dares to speak truth, so he masks his insight with bitter asides. One thinks here also of Socrates, whose wisdom consists in this: he knows he knows nothing, and admits it. Socrates is the Holy Fool at the heart of European civilisation, just as Nietzsche was his echo. This is important – the essence of philosophy insists on our starting from ignorance in a positive way and from there proceeding to lay sure foundations for true knowledge, eventually. Descartes attempted something similar, as did Bacon. But perhaps we must fight fire with fire, and ignore, eventually, our own ignorance – and allow the soft singing of the Muses to call us all home....to a place we thought we had forgotten....and, if the Gods will permit, a place free of humiliation...

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<sup>52</sup> How much of the complexity of modern academic scholarship is actually a complex form of *masking* e.g. many modern and postmodern schools of philosophy seem to be saying something else continuously, which they can never permit themselves to actually say – is this perhaps due to sophiaphobic pressures ?



