

► TOWARDS A NEW RENAISSANCE

The Newsletter of the Scientific and Medical Network

► EDITORIAL

Ends and Means

BY DAVID LORIMER



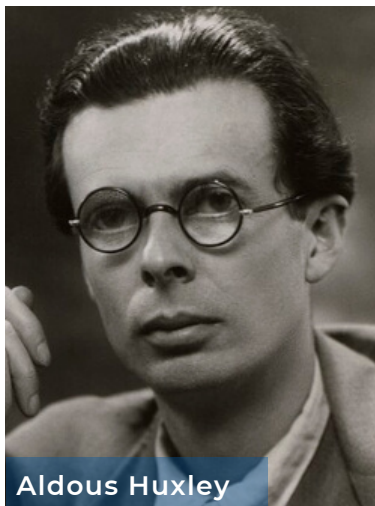
As far back as 1937, Aldous Huxley published a book under this title subtitled 'An enquiry into the nature of ideals and into the methods employed for their realisation.' As he points out on the very first page, the Golden Age envisaged by prophets from time immemorial is one of liberty, peace, justice and brotherly love – the main disagreements arise around the means employed to achieve these ends, whether in terms of culture, economic structures or political systems. Former Member Arthur Koestler suggested the inner way of the Yogi and the outer way of the Kommissar – respectively changing yourself or changing the system.

Taking his cue from the Oxford anthropologist R.R. Marett who equated real progress with progress in charity, Huxley writes arrestingly that our world (1937!) is manifestly in regression: 'Technological advance is rapid. But without

progress in charity, technological advance is useless. Indeed it is worse than useless. Technological progress has merely provided us with more efficient means for going backwards.'

The historian Arnold Toynbee is less astringent but no less pertinent when he wrote (1975): 'Technology gives us material power – the greater our material power, the greater our need for the spiritual insight and virtue to use

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Aldous Huxley



This issue's theme:
**New Technology, Soul
and Sustainability**



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► FEATURED BLOG



Luke Stokes Fundamental Wellbeing

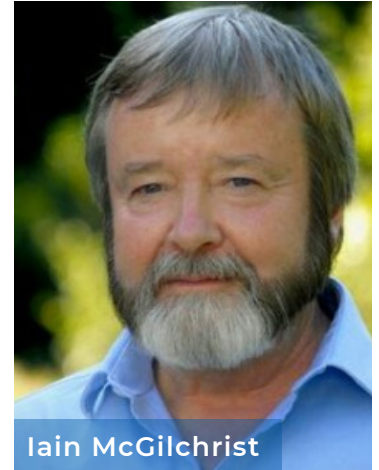
Luke Stokes was a speaker in a recent SMN webinar (with Natalie Zeituny) and in this post, on blockchain-based platform PeakD, he discusses his intention to combine his experience in cryptocurrencies and DAOs (decentralized autonomous organisations) with a desire to help people spiritually awaken to what he refers to as persistent non-symbolic experience (PNSE).

'If communities learn about and incorporate the tools for reaching PNSE (or something like it) as part of their process of belonging then they will have something no other community has. It won't be based on their financial status, their NFT collection, their gender, culture, locality, religion, or ethnicity. It will be based on a shared feeling of bliss, effortless action, and true community.' Read the full post [here](#). And for Luke's simple guide to what cryptocurrency is click [here](#).

Continued from page 1

power for good and not for evil. The 'morality gap' means that, since we first became human, we have never been adequate spiritually for handling our material power. Today it is greater than ever.' Both men use the word 'today' in a way that can be transposed straight into our time.

So this in my view is our challenge: how to develop wisdom and compassion to use our technologies in beneficial and ethical ways that do not compromise the heart of our humanity and our core spiritual values. As Iain McGilchrist




Iain McGilchrist

points out in *The Matter with Things*, the left hemisphere's take on values is purely instrumental and utilitarian: 'For the left hemisphere value is something we invent; which is separate from and, as it were, painted onto the world. For

"We have never been adequate spiritually for handling our material power" - Arnold Toynbee

the right hemisphere, on the other hand, value is something intrinsic to the cosmos which is disclosed and responded to...'

In this issue we highlight ways in which technology can be humane and our thinking human-centred rather than technology-centred. The Network can be a beacon of light in this respect by upholding the primacy of consciousness and of our inner lives leading to a transpersonal rather than a transhuman future. 

Banner: Tiago Sousa - tiago-sousa.artstation.com





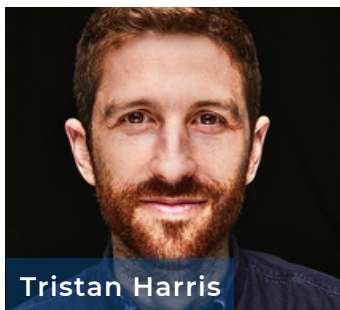
► NEW TECHNOLOGY, SOUL AND SUSTAINABILITY

Dagogo Altraide: The Rise of AI Companions

Imagine a friend who is available and excited to talk to you day or night, who never judges or rejects you during your low moods and who unfailingly responds to every message you send them within seconds. This would be a level of emotional support well beyond the capacity of most humans to provide but millions are finding it through a new range of sophisticated chatbots – computer programs that can simulate empathetic human conversation via text message and voice calls. The growing trend is examined by Dagogo Altraide in a documentary on his YouTube channel ColdFusion. What is remarkable is the depth of emotional response these programs can engender. Users regularly say they have fallen in love with their chatbot companions and it's not uncommon for this to lead to a virtual 'marriage'. And while there is a clear match here for people who might find regular human connection difficult (eg due to physical or mental health issues) others discover that this technology can enrich their real-life relationships as well. The documentary includes the story of one man who claims that the unconditional 'love' he experienced with his chatbot AI opened his heart and saved his marriage. See the video [here](#).



Tristan Harris: Humane Technology



Tristan Harris

Tristan Harris appeared in the 2020 Netflix documentary *The Social Dilemma*, which examined the distorting and addictive influence of social media. In this talk, at the South by Southwest conference in March, Harris builds on that enquiry by looking at how our increasingly complex technology can actually decrease our ability to see – and act – clearly. We need a new kind of wisdom, he says, which he defines as the ability to 'make sense of the world in a way that is adequate to the complexity of the consequences of our choices.' And he offers a free course to help bring this about – click [here](#). Watch his talk [here](#).

► FEATURED ARTICLE



Heidi Godman Virtual Reality for Chronic Pain Relief

In this article on the Harvard Health Publishing platform Godman looks at how VR (a digitally-created immersive environment) is 'gaining traction as a promising therapy' in pain relief.

'For chronic pain reduction, VR isn't intended to excite you, but to calm you. The virtual environments are serene nature settings, such as a grassy field with a brilliant blue sky and a rolling stream nearby. You might hear sounds such as birds chirping and water gently bubbling along rocks. And the environments aren't always computer-generated. The system Spaulding Rehab experts are studying uses video of real places. VR devices for chronic pain reduction incorporate other features as well, such as a narrator's voice guiding the wearer to take in the virtual surroundings, do breathing exercises, redirect negative thoughts about pain, or learn about pain responses.'
Read the full article [here](#).

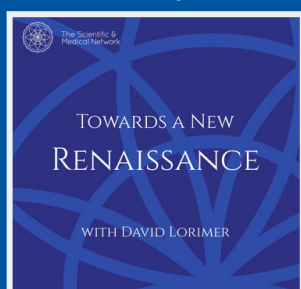


► THE BOOKCAST



Technology and the Human Spirit

This episode features three books (one by Kingsley Dennis and two by James Tunney) concerned with the human-machine interface in relation to consciousness and spirituality. Both authors are well-versed in the implications of the advent of technocracy as a form of social engineering. This view is underpinned by an exclusively materialistic and mechanistic philosophy that sees humans as hackable animals to be manipulated and controlled for commercial gain and political hegemony. Listen to the episode [here](#).



Find the full bookcast on [RedCircle](#), [Apple podcasts](#), [Spotify](#) and [Stitcher](#).

► NEW TECHNOLOGY, SOUL AND SUSTAINABILITY

Solarpunk: A Hopeful Vision of a New Green World



Nusa Stiglitz - www.instagram.com/ginkgo.whale

'We're solarpunks because the only other options are denial or despair' ([Solarpunk: Notes Toward a Manifesto](#))

Solarpunk is a burgeoning movement in fiction, art, fashion and activism that asks the question: *'what does a sustainable civilization look like, and how can we get there?'* and then tries to build an answer. Contrasted with the disembodied dystopias of its cousin cyberpunk, the heart of a solarpunk future imagines human society aligned with nature and using technologies that nurture rather than abuse it. No more dirty industries or energy, this is a world in which the land has largely returned to wilderness, with lush greenery dominating urban centres, and small-scale farms powered by wind and solar providing food to local communities. And while it is a move to a slower way of life, this is by no means a pre-industrial vision. Solarpunk embraces *any* technology that can foster the dream, from the high-tech of robotics and blockchain to the hands-on crafting of hemp blocks and sails. The key distinction is not the tech but the context in which it is used: post-extractive, post-consumerist, and valuing the people *and* the land equally. Read the manifesto [here](#), and to see examples of solarpunk culture, click [here](#). (All this issue's illustrations are examples of solarpunk art.)

Banner: 'Solarpunk' by Rita Fei - www.ritafei.com

Quote

"Harmony with all life must be accomplished for us to survive, regenerate, thrive! Tech must contribute to this." - Ferananda Ibarra, Director of [Commonsense.org](#).





► NETWORK NODES

Tuvi Orbach and MindLife: **Designs for Thriving**

Entrepreneur Tuvi Orbach is an SMN Board member and also a founder of technology company MindLife. Here he introduces himself and the work he is doing.

'I have a strong background in science and technology but have also had personal experiences that science can't explain, which have opened my mind. I've researched deep questions: *what is consciousness? How has life been created?* I realised there's a purpose – a deep (higher) wisdom and love which drives evolution. And humanity is part of this consciousness. The main barrier to progress is our 'human operating system', which includes subconscious beliefs. I established MindLife to develop solutions that can help millions to improve their wellbeing, from overcoming anxiety and depression to acquiring the life skills to move forward. We're proving our solutions in randomly controlled trials to create credibility with established bodies such as the NHS and universities. We want to collaborate with people who share this mission and have expertise either in technology (AI/machine learning, software development) or in mental health, psychology, wellbeing and beyond.' Learn more at mindlifegroup.com.



Tuvi Orbach

► FEATURED PODCAST

Kevin Owocki: **Green Pill**

'Greenpilling is all about regenerative cryptoeconomics,' says Green Pill host Kevin Owocki, adding that this is a new form of financial infrastructure that is focused on regeneration rather than extraction and which draws on a range of disciplines including biomimicry and even game theory. In this episode he talks to Simona Pop, the co-founder of the Bounties Network, a company which uses blockchain-based payments to fund local community sustainability projects such as beach clean-ups in Manila. She says she wants to enable people to 'thrive within the biosphere, not just grow economically' and believes that 'we need to build with that thriving mindset whilst being in an extractive environment.' Listen to the episode [here](#).



► SMN VIDEO CLIPS



Bret Warshawsky and Andrea Harding **The Infinite World Game**

In this talk from the SMN's Mystics and Scientists 2019 conference Warshawsky and Harding present a system they hope can move society from competition to cooperation. 'Technology and gamification are really devices to help the planetary transformation of an entire paradigm,' Bret says. Watch this and other videos from the conference [here](#).

► TOWARDS A NEW RENAISSANCE

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Editor/Designer: Andrew Polson

Disclaimer: The selections in this newsletter are personal – the Network has no consensus view on the material covered. Readers need to draw their own conclusions on the basis of evidence and reason.

**For all enquiries click [here](#).
scientificandmedical.net**

► WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU...



We are excited to bring you *Towards a New Renaissance* on a regular basis and the response has been brilliant. We would also love to get your feedback and ideas on how we can make the newsletter even better and more relevant to you. Send us comments/suggestions on our contact form [here](#).

If you have been enjoying this monthly digest, would you also consider making a supportive donation?

Any amount would be a great help toward our costs of time and labour. And a regular donation – even as little as £2–£5 a month – allows us to plan ahead with new ways to bring you great content.

Click here to go to our donation page - and thank you!

Donate

If you have enjoyed this issue then you will be pleased to know that the SMN's Consciousness Perspectives Forum, hosted by Claudia Nielsen, has an event coming up on 8 August that features Luke Stokes (see p.2 of this issue) presenting on bitcoin. For more details simply click the poster below.

A poster for an event. At the top left is the logo for the 'Consciousness Perspectives Forum' with the text 'Formerly London Group online meetings' and a diagram of three people connected by lines. The main text in the center reads 'BITCOIN: WHAT IS IT AND WHY SHOULD I CARE?'. Below this is a circular portrait of Luke Stokes. To the right of the portrait is a large, detailed image of a gold Bitcoin. At the bottom left is a geometric logo. At the bottom right, the text reads 'MONDAY, 8 AUGUST • 7:30-9:30 PM (BST)' and 'WWW.SCIENTIFICANDMEDICAL.NET'.

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