

## DAVID LOYE: ALWAYS AHEAD OF HIS TIME, WITH PASSION AND CREATIVITY

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### Abstract

This is a brief tribute to the late David Loye in the form of a personal reflection and a summary of some of his key earlier works. Loye was an immensely creative and passionate scholar who was always ahead of his time. He was also a remarkable and generous human being.

Keywords: Creativity; Charles Darwin; Moral Sensitivity; the Future; Leadership; Prediction; Racism; Scholarship

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I met David Loye in 1988, when I interviewed him for an occasional radio show I had on KAZU in Pacific Grove, California. It proved to be a fateful meeting. At the time I was also planning to search for someone called Riane Eisler, who had just published a book called *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*, that seemed very important (Eisler, 1987). To my surprise, they showed up together for the interview at the station's tiny studio. David and Riane went on to become my friends and mentors, and they challenged me to explore new directions and to research in new ways: Riane initially with her questions about gender and creativity, and David with his work on moral sensitivity.

I decided to interview David because I had been fascinated by a number of his books and realized he very conveniently lived on the Monterey Peninsula where I also lived

at the time. David seemed to be able to move effortlessly from one profound topic to the next and present complex ideas in an engaging way without losing any of the depth. He wore his deep scholarship lightly. He was always impressive but never trying to impress. He was fascinated by topics that resonated strongly with me, and was driven by his passionate belief that social science could make a real difference in the world. While David's work with Riane and his revelatory exploration of Darwin are more well known, I want to draw attention to the volumes that I had read before I met David and that I found inspiring. I hope that readers not familiar with them will take the opportunity to explore them.

In *The Healing of a Nation* (Loye, 1971) David tackled the problem of racism in the United States by explicitly showing how findings in the social sciences on topics ranging from conformity to Social Darwinism to cognitive dissonance and self-actualization could shed light on different aspects of the issue by using examples from American history. David was passionate about addressing injustice, and about the role the social sciences could play in creating what he referred to as "the better world."

His next work, *The Leadership Passion: A Psychology of Ideology* (Loye, 1977) explored political psychology, ideology, and leadership styles. As in his previous work, David drew broadly from social science and philosophy, discussing Hegel, Nietzsche, Marx, and *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al., 1950), weaving together a dialectical view of personality and social change that also innovatively reframed the dialectics of liberal/conservative and norm-changing versus norm-maintaining. Particularly now, at a time of great polarization and confusion, *The Leadership Passion* offers a framework for understanding some of the key issues.

In *The Knowable Future: A Psychology of Forecasting and Prophecy* (Loye, 1978) and *The Sphinx and the Rainbow: Brain, Mind, and Future Vision* (Loye, 1984) David combined neuroscience and prediction of the future. His use of hemispheric lateralization of the brain was thoughtful and fascinating, and *The Sphinx and the Rainbow* was probably his most popular book, bursting with ideas and insights,

elegantly written, and quite revolutionary. Around that time David also wrote, but didn't publish, *Prediction in the Dream Factory*, an account of "hit-predictors" in the movie industry that included interviews with studio executives. Combining his journalistic brilliance and his social scientific insights, David created a rich picture of the role and practice of prediction along with portraits of key players and the story of numerous well-known movies. David had set this enormously creative work aside, and almost forgotten it. Beyond the focus on prediction, David had also shown the role of creative collaboration in the movie industry, a topic that at the time had received no interest from creativity researchers. Once again, David was ahead of his time. When, two decades later, I encouraged him to publish the book, we almost got there, but David was at that point diving into his important work on Darwin, so the book once again got put on the shelf. Interested readers can get a taste—not even an appetizer, an *amuse bouche*—in a brief article called "Hemisphericity and Creativity. Group Process and the Dream Factory" (Loye, 1988).

David's intellectual contribution, so creative and insightful, goes without question. I was always delighted by his creativity and the fact that he had tackled so many topics in such an original way. I suspect that among his papers there must be any number of unpublished manuscripts besides the one about the movie industry, and looking through his published articles one can find traces of ideas that deserved to be explored in greater depth. We should not forget that David got his PhD a little on the later side, after he'd already had a successful career in journalism. I suspect that may have made him even more appreciative of the fact that he could devote his life to research and the world of ideas. Given his interests, his personality, and his brilliant scholarship, the fact that he was ahead of his time in everything he wrote was both a blessing and a curse. A blessing because it means that everything he wrote was fresh and innovative and full of creative ideas. A curse because much of his work was simply too far ahead of its time, and difficult to grasp if one was too stuck in the status quo of one's discipline. I hope my brief summary of some of his earlier works will convince some readers to explore them.

Of course, there was also David the man. David took me under his wing and in so many ways modeled what it means to be a mentor, a scholar, and an older, wiser friend. I remember many hours in his library, browsing through books with him, getting a strong sense of his intellectual lineage, of the authors who inspired him. Readers of David's many books will appreciate his ability to write pithy profiles that capture the essence of a scholar's work, of their contribution, and of their context. He was always enormously generous with his time, willing to share ideas and insights, and encouraging me to write and join larger communities of scholars. It was through David that I first started writing book reviews for *World Futures*, *The Journal of General Evolution*. Thanks to David I also became a member of the General Evolution Research Group (GERG), a collection of brilliant international scholars from a range of disciplines interested in integrating the sciences so that they could be applied to the pressing problems facing humanity. I am now the Co-Editor of *World Futures* ([https://www.thedarwinproject.com/gerg/gerg\\_world\\_futures.html](https://www.thedarwinproject.com/gerg/gerg_world_futures.html)) with Ervin Laszlo, and I have made many friends and colleagues because of David's initial invitation. And that is just a small example of the avuncular David who was always happy to introduce me to people, send a book or an article my way, and inspire me to explore a fruitful new avenue of inquiry, or an important new book.

David Loye was a creative, passionate scholar and a remarkable man. I feel tremendously lucky to have been able to spend time with him, learn from him, and consider him a friend. He will be greatly missed by friends, colleagues, and his readers.

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