

DAVID LOYE, THANK YOU FOR “TELLING THE NEW STORY”

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Abstract

This is an account of a creative hero, whom we shall dearly miss; a scholar, activist, scientist, writer, and creative spirit, who heard the call and took the risks to offer a truth that was eclipsed for 100 years, i.e., “Darwin’s Lost Theory.” This heroism is part of true creativity, with courage to challenge the *status quo*. David Loye went further with social implications, and—along with colleagues including Riane Eisler—drew connections with the burgeoning interest in general systems theory, chaos theory, and complexity theory, as well as humanistic and positive psychology and creativity studies. As a social change agent, he helped found important organizations along the way. Today this new story is returning and expanding, in a hopefully continuing process of a valid, inclusive science.

Keywords: David Loye; Charles Darwin; Darwin’s Lost Theory; General Systems Theory; Chaos Theory; Moral Sensitivity

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We shall deeply miss David Loye, this good man, social psychologist, futurist, and scholar of chaos theory and complexity (nonlinear dynamical systems) theory. David was a founding member of the Society for Chaos Theory in Psychology and the Life Sciences, and of the General Evolution Research Group with Ervin Laszlo and others. A scholar and activist, he was also an ethical warrior, a righter of wrongs and a creative being to his core. David wrote many books, ranging from a prizewinning book on race in America in 1971, to a body of work forged not just by scholarship but also personal qualities and diverse experiences including early journalism, and even children’s literature. He had the *curriculum vita* of a creative polymath, acting in the world,

sharing broad ways of knowing, and seeing differently. David co-founded (with Riane Eisler) the Center for Partnership Studies, now an organization with international scope and the home of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies*. The Center also helped launch David's own extensive Darwin Project, with its diverse members, toward vaster exploration of human potential, and a more harmonious human future (Loye, 2007). May we, in all our diversity, honor each other through such efforts and partnership.

From a start in journalism, David later worked in higher education, including at Princeton and the School of Medicine at UCLA. From my view as a longtime professor in humanistic psychology, David continued into his 90s as a growing human being, in Abraham Maslow's sense of self-actualization (1968), with needs for higher healing of individuals and cultures aligned with Maslow's higher being needs/values, of justice, beauty, truth, and aliveness (Maslow, 1970; Kaufman, 2020).

DAVID LOYE, A COMMITTED, INDEFATIGABLE HERO FOR OUR TIMES

David showed deep bravery, which was one of 12 qualitative integrative and healing themes that emerged in *Everyday Creativity and New Views of Human Nature*, the 2007 book I edited for the American Psychological Association, to which he contributed. David assumed a creative role of *hero* –that is, of one chosen by fate at a critical time (e.g. Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Erin Brockovich), as in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Campbell, 1949). From an ongoing life one rises to the call, takes on the new, overcomes adversity, and brings back benefit to the community. We should never take this risk-taking power and bravery for granted (nor did David Loye), most especially today, with dangerous social trends and information distortion that can go much deeper than the influence of any one person (Homans, 2022; “Every Day is Jan. 6 Now”, 2022). For an alternative model, see Richards, 2022; Richards & Byock, 2022.

Crucially, David Loye was also part of a shining power couple, and such “Powers of Two” are in fact an important and studied phenomenon (Shenk, 2015). In David’s case, it was partner and spouse of 45 years, cultural historian, systems theorist, and partnership advocate Riane Eisler. In 2008, Loye and Eisler both received honorary doctorates from Saybrook University for the scope and importance of their culture-transforming work. David was a WW II veteran, and Riane a Holocaust survivor. How clear the call for a vastly deeper awareness, a transformed vision, and a different world. Fortunately the late David Loye still does speak today, through his ongoing influence.

THE NEW STORY

Is there a “new story” David is telling us, or an old one rediscovered? David’s work serves to reveal the historical distortions of Charles Darwin’s writings and to provide modern visions, as documented in *The Great Adventure: Toward a Fully Human Theory of Evolution* (2004), of which he was editor. As with the concept of *emergence* in chaos theory, The whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Schuldberg et al., 2022). Thus, we have not only the older story, and newer story retold, but an ever-emergent present with ongoing new developments. Part of the story may well be the paradigm shift we anticipate at some point in the social sciences (already present in biological sciences), to nonlinear complex systems (Schuldberg et al., 2022). In *The Great Adventure*, David Loye and colleagues foresaw this shift occurring. David Loye shares one reason he edited this book, as something of a passion. Much energy stems from the vital importance today of reviving the “fuller” evolutionary theory of Charles Darwin.

“...[W]e are being shoved into a twenty-first century laden with immense challenges and the most serious kinds of questions bearing on the human future with a scientific theory and story of evolution based almost entirely on the study of the past and the *prehuman* and the *subhuman*... (Loye, 2004, p. 1).

In a forward to this book, the late Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi speculates on “what next”:

At times like these a new worldview often arises at the margins of power, at the periphery of the action unfolding on the main stage. The followers of Jesus, the Buddha, Confucius, and Mohamed were not among the leading cadres of their respective societies.... The recurring question of the chapters in this book is, From where is the new covenant going to emerge? (Loye, 2004, p. xii).

Csikszentmihalyi elaborates on what may occur:

First of all, David Loye’s central insight...is ...right on the money....a faith of human beings about human beings—is evolution itself. Not the...scenario dominated by competition and selfishness, but ...closer to the original Darwinian one that sees cooperation and transcendence of the self as the most exciting parts of the story. (p. xii).

Loye reminds us that parts of Charles Darwin’s full theory have been selectively underemphasized—in fact, some of the most prosocial, caring, collaborative, and ethical aspects. Darwin’s last book, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871) tells the tale. It is not all about “survival of the fittest,” in any case a phrase coined by neo-Darwinist Herbert Spencer. Does the reader know that Darwin once studied for the ministry? (see Richards, 2007). Some readers are amazed by *The Descent of Man*. “Did he *really* say that?” (Yes).

Important as the struggle for existence has been and even still is, yet as far as the highest part of our nature is concerned there are other agencies more important. For the moral qualities are advanced either directly or indirectly much more through the effects of habit, by our reasoning powers, by instruction, by religion, etc., *than through natural selection* (italics added). (Darwin, 1871, p. 404).

Darwin’s was writing long before we even knew about *mirror neurons* or that they cross species. Mirror neurons help us to feel, and are a basic part of our ‘standard operating equipment’ (Richards, 2018). If a baby cries in a hospital nursery, soon all might start wailing. The outcome can be positive too (e.g., a 3-month-old infant’s reciprocal smiling). To Darwin, our empathy (to use the current term) was deeply important to human beings as a social species—our interpersonal glue—and also as a basis for values.

How did David Loye explore this relevance? He did so through textual analysis and through hermeneutics, applied to *The Descent of Man*. The results were transformative. Loye searched for what he thought was the dominant paradigm, including the terms “survival of the fittest” and “selfishness,” and a whole different picture emerged. In the 898 pages of *The Descent of Man*, the term “survival of the fittest” appeared only twice, “selfishness” appeared only 12 times, and “competition” just 9 times (Loye, 2007).

In searching for higher developmental human and humanistic qualities, Loye found that Darwin wrote of “love” a full 95 times. “Moral sensitivity” appeared 92 times, “sympathy” (as in empathy) 61 times, and “mutuality” and “cooperation” 24 times, double that of selfishness. Clearly Darwin was a proponent of mind, and its power for humans, also opening routes to *cultural evolution*.

Although Darwin reportedly rejected parts of his earlier religion (Gruber & Bartlett, 1974), he spoke to potential elevation of spiritual faculties positing that advanced intellectual and moral development were prerequisite to spiritual development. He said too, as per Loye (2022), that “As soon as the important faculties of the imagination, wonder, and curiosity, together with some power of reasoning, had been partially developed... man would naturally crave to understand what was passing, and... would have vaguely speculated on his own existence” (Darwin, 1871, p. 143).

Loye's seeking references to human ethical progress in Darwin revealed the vastness of Darwin's scope—and of his own. Yet, it takes courage to stand up to the prevailing views—and David Loye had this courage.

DAVID LOYE'S CHILDREN'S STORIES

If you were ever called a “dilettante,” today try “polymath.” The Root-Bernstein's (2004, 2020) research into Nobel Prize Winning scientists reveals artistic interests far beyond the norm (e.g., Einstein and his violin). Intra- and interdomain polymathy also appears in other Nobel laureates. You may wonder how one gets to this point from data on Darwin, human evolution, and the bravery to challenge mainstream cultural beliefs. Yet this is precisely the point, honoring the breadth of an open creative mind, and new ideas. David wrote on many topics, and yes, he also created children's literature!

Consider *Grandfather's Garden* (2019) by grandfather and great-grandfather David—a book for children of all ages. These are delightful stories, and always with a moral element. Here we meet The Baby Carrot who wanted to be a speed boat racer (and she does it). Or Babbage the Cabbage, and others including “the powerful Mifwump, who sees all, knows all, and can be everywhere at once.” The Mifwump explains why this book is needed...and in a context of joy. Yes, there is always a moral to learn, yet David Loye could broach the deeply serious for a 6-year-old, in a lighthearted way. Onward today with Arts-Based Research (Leavy, 2020)—where we can learn even more, holistically and richly, through the fullness of imagination and lived experience—and enjoyment.

Still, as Loye tells us, life is not always fun: “The way you big folks in the real world are loading us up with awful problems...” (says the Mifwump), “we just can't take it any more. It's time for the best of us in storyland to break out into your real world to save you with a playful, peaceful, but powerful new Revolution of Joy versus Gloom.” Loye's

work serves to remind us that while things can be dire, we can also find joy in creating and in sharing together.

WHAT IS NEXT?

Although the work continues, change is happening now as David Loye hoped, through forces around the world, of which we’ve given only a sampling. As he hoped, rethinking evolution would be moved to the political front burner in hopes that ‘survival of the fittest’ ideology could be replaced with a more humane explanation, staving off further wars.

We need new lenses. We need to see more clearly, first to know ourselves, then to save ourselves and our endangered world. We also urgently need creative courage and resilience—the heroism of our times—to enable the work in the first place (see Richards, 2018; Richards & Byock, 2022).

We will miss David Loye, whether the caring person, creator of Mifwump and Baby Carrot in *Grandfather’s Garden*, or the principled scientist and Darwin activist. We can see the progress to date in Loye’s expanded understanding of what Darwin really conveyed about the higher realms of our evolutionary potential. We can feel the hope. Yet now, it is indeed up to us. Whatever our own enthusiasms, let us find *new joy* in carrying that larger work forward, together.

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Richards: Thank You for “Telling the New Story”

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