

## HUMANITY TAKES FLIGHT: AN EXPLORATION INTO THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DAVID LOYE AND AN INTRODUCTION TO THIS ISSUE OF *INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF PARTNERSHIP STUDIES*

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### Abstract

This article introduces Volume 9, issue 2 of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies* and the issue's theme of 'moral sensitivity' and its connection to the late evolutionary systems scientist and psychologist David Loye. The article will further highlight how Loye came to reconsider and reinterpret Darwin's work on human evolution, and why this is expressly relevant to navigating the current challenging times we are living through. Additionally, this article will briefly describe the contents of this issue and highlight the diverse collection of contributing authors.

Keywords: David Loye; Riane Eisler; Moral Sensitivity; Moral Evolution; Moral Transformation; Charles Darwin; Partnership Theory

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I am honored to be the Guest Co-Editor, along with Editor-in-Chief Riane Eisler, of our 21st issue of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies (IJPS)*. I recently celebrated my one-year anniversary of working with the journal and feel incredibly blessed to work alongside the exceptional team at *IJPS* that make all this possible. This issue serves as a special tribute honoring the late David Loye: psychologist, evolutionary systems scientist, author, and, most importantly, a devoted father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, and a loving husband to Riane Eisler. From my time spent working on this issue, I have discovered that theirs was a relationship that was multifaceted, based on mutual respect, love, and trust, and above all, built on the foundations of an equal partnership between two individuals who deeply revered each other's unique contributions.

In many ways, the personal and the working relationships between Loye and Eisler embodied the combined vision and mission of both the partnership model and moral sensitivity: to create cultural and moral transformation through the building of relationships based on principles of partnership. Their story began on the foundation of an equal partnership, and the effects of their union will continue to reverberate into the future from the legacy of their contributions in the shaping of organisations, institutions, and global policies. Their own partnership a testament to the core message and vision of their life's work that from partnership, good things can and do grow.

In memory of Loye we have dedicated the theme of this issue to exploring moral sensitivity and how it relates to the human journey of moral evolution and transformation. As such, this issue (V9N2) is structured differently from our previous issues, combining personal tributes to Loye with scholarly articles that explore the theme of moral sensitivity alongside scholarly articles that adhere to the partnership studies framework and partnership theory paradigm.

## **THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DAVID LOYE**

Loye's books and pioneering work cover evolution theory, history, social action, Darwinism, and moral evolution. His earlier work on psychosocial adaptation and neuropsychiatry helped set the foundation for a legacy of social action research and led to Loye dedicating his life's work to building a new theory of moral evolution. After an in-depth dive during the 1990s into the works of Darwin, Loye uncovered a largely unknown and often ignored aspect of Darwin's work, one that shifted the story of human evolution from 'survival of the fittest' to individual and collective moral transformation for humanity. Loye continued to further his research and develop his passion for moral evolution, and pioneered a new theory of moral sensitivity, one that he saw as an emergence of a 'new kind of intelligence' that encompassed a moral dimension, calling many to action (Loye, 1996, p. 610).

## GOOD AND EVIL IN MORALITY

Throughout history, we have seen how versions of extreme morality can result in violence and evildoing, through dogmatic interpretations and practices of religion and oppressive ideologies, such as Communism, and through social constructs of gender and race. Eisler (2018, p. 4) argues that violent and oppressive societies are found across all categories: far right, far left, and through both Eastern and Western secular societies. The interpretation and framing of morality demonstrates how it can be used as an instrument to oppress and violate members of society. However, morality can also be a tool to liberate and venerate members of a society. While the human capacity for cruelty, apathy, and violence exist, the human capacity for empathy, caring, and creativity are already hardwired into the human brain (Eisler, 2018, p. 3).

This is similar to findings by Gray (2010), who conducted an experiment on the power of good and evil in relation to the process of moral transformation. Gray (2010, pp. 255-257) found that both virtue and agency are involved in this process of human morality, in that good deeds and virtues such as empathy and kindness build personal strength. However, the reverse was likewise affirmed when ‘thinking of oneself as a villain’ or ‘villain typecasting’ was found to also increase self-agency (p. 256). These findings suggest that moral transformation occurs across a moral spectrum, and further highlights the importance of building human capacity alongside political and socioeconomic systems that foster positive attributes of empathy, caring, and kindness. Furthermore, these attributes benefit both the collective society and the individual, when given in reciprocity. Likewise, amorality is contested through the development of these attributes, and this is encompassed in our individual and collective moral sensitivity, a term and theory further developed by Loye (2007b) that depicts the human capacity to discern between right and wrong and the ability to ultimately act upon what is in the social system’s best evolutionary interests.

Loye’s works often make the link between ideology and religion as having a core function of bettering humanity. However, along the way some of these institutions

have become misguided and do not reflect the successful evolution of the whole system (being humanity); instead, they start to represent the narrow agendas of certain groups and individuals. Underlying Loye's work is the emphasis on creating environments and systems that foster moral sensitivity and encourage moral transformation. This emphasis lies at the heart of the missions for both the *IJPS* and the Center for Partnership Systems (CPS), an organization with which he was closely affiliated.

## **HUMANITY TAKES FLIGHT**

The question then emerges: What type of cultures best support these capabilities of nonviolence, caring, empathy, and kindness? Research has discovered that the most supportive cultures are based on more egalitarian and democratic structures, both within the family unit and the broader state, and that these cultures exhibit higher levels of gender equality (Eisler, 2018; Estrada Metell, 2020). They value and actively include attributes of nonviolence, caring, and empathy in both women *and* men and across broader economic and social policies (Eisler, 2018, p.5). From this awareness emerged Eisler's cultural transformation theory and the partnership/domination continuum, terminology and language to which Loye's (2015) work was closely linked. The next question then became how to create a social environment that not only supports a partnership system but also the actions and capacities necessary to build and uphold it. This is where Loye (1994; 2007a) was able to rediscover and reinterpret Darwin's little-known theory of the *moral sense* (1871/2014), and reharness morality as a tool for social and moral evolution through the creation of Loye's moral sensitivity theory.

Darwin (1871; 2014) saw the human development of the moral sense as central to social instincts and fundamental to the optimal operations of a successful society. Loye (2008a; 2018) bridged the gap between Darwin's concept of moral sense and human striving, and provided the scaffolding with his earlier work that gave insight into the innate moral capacities present in humans from birth. In particular, Loye (2007b) emphasised the link between empathy and moral sensitivity, and how this ability shapes human evolution through both the form and function of the human

brain. For instance, Loye (2008) emphasised that infants as young as 18 hours old responded more to the crying of another baby than to their own crying, thus demonstrating an inbuilt human capacity for connection and empathy. These innate functions serve to bond individuals to one another and to create wider social cohesiveness by providing the moral pathways for our species' continued evolutionary journey. In this way, moral sensitivity is seen as an integral part of a wider system of whole organism functioning, and not as an isolated aspect of human reasoning (Loye, 2002, p. 146).

Loye spent his life's work championing the idea that moral sensitivity is already innate in us; it is an integral facet of what makes us quintessentially human. If we are geared towards empathy and partnership from birth, then it is in our best interest as a species to remember this ability and how it serves the social system in its entirety. Human empathy can then be viewed as a superpower capable of guiding us through turbulent times and evolving us towards a better future – a future that is deeply rooted in partnership and connected to our human capacity for moral sensitivity. A future that designs economies, social and political systems, and organizations that are adept at effective conflict resolution for global moral and cultural transformation. Then perhaps humanity can finally take flight as one and soar to new heights.

## **CONTENTS OF THIS JOURNAL ISSUE**

Here is a brief outline of the contents of this issue. I hope you enjoy learning more about David Loye and his theory of moral sensitivity as you read the collection of diverse articles from the wonderful contributing authors in this special tribute issue.

### **Cover Art**

*White Pelicans in Flight* is a photograph by Evan Harrar. The photo of a pelican soaring over a lake was chosen by Riane Eisler in memory of her husband and partner, David Loye, for its symbolism of humanity overcoming challenging times and soaring to greater heights.

## **Interview**

This interview is a conversation between Riane Eisler, *IJPS* Editor-in-Chief and Dr. Ervin Laszlo, pioneering systems philosopher and scientist. The interview explores Dr. Laszlo's work with David Loye on moral sensitivity and evolution.

## **Scholarly Articles**

The lead article, "Moral Sensitivity, Moral Transformation, and Evolutionary Scientist David Loye: An Introduction" is by Riane Eisler, *IJPS* Editor-in-Chief and President of the Center for Partnership Systems. The article introduces the themes of moral sensitivity and cultural transformation, and explores how both are intrinsically connected.

"Human Morality: Love or Fear, Partnership or Domination," by University of Notre Dame Professor Emerita of Psychology Darcia Narvaez, looks at the development of human socio-moral capacities and how the optimal development of psychosocial neurobiological systems can be established and maintained as explored through the 'evolved nest' model.

Stefano Mercanti and Antonella Riem of the University of Udine, Italy, present called "The Gift of Partnership" an engaging discussion of the connections between impending globalism and individual freedom, through Loye's theory of moral sensitivity.

An article by Assistant Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Lincoln Christian University, Jonathan Lyonhart, "What if Descartes had been a Woman? An Epistemology of Empathic Partnership," looks at the andocratic assumptions that the male gender has brought into epistemology at the cost of the female perspective.

"Healthy Work Environments: An Interprofessional Partnership Model to Promote Positive Workplace Cultures," by Judith Pechacek, Deborah Anderson, Robert S. Lund, and Laurie Drill-Mellum, introduces a project addressing healthy work environments in the health care sector, and investigates the outcomes of applying

an interprofessional partnership-based model to improve workplace cultures and patient safety outcomes.

### **Personal Tributes**

David Loye's esteemed friends and colleagues reflect on their time with him, and how their own work has been influenced by his contributions to the fields of social science, systems science, evolution, and psychology.

**“Remembering and Honouring David Loye”** by Riane Eisler, President of the Center for Partnership Systems (CPS) and Editor-in-Chief of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies*.

**“The Legacies of David Loye: The General Evolution Research Group, Partnership, Chaos, Darwin, and Action Research”** by Ralph Abraham, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at UC Santa Cruz and a founding member of the General Evolution Research Group.

**“Thinking of Ourselves as Humanity in the Age of Complexity: A Tribute to David Loye”** by Mauro Ceruti, Professor of Philosophy of Science at IULM University of Milan.

**“Remembering David Loye”** by Allan Leslie Combs, systems theorist, consciousness researcher, and neuropsychologist.

**“Tribute to David Loye”** by Raymond Bradley, researcher and theorist on love.

**“David Elliott Loye, Pioneer”** by Kurt Johnson, scholar and award-winning author in evolution and ecology.

**“David Loye: Always Ahead of his Time, with Passion and Creativity”** by Alfonso Montuori, Professor in the Transformative Inquiry Department at California Institute of Integral Studies.

**“David Loye, Thank You for ‘Telling the New Story’”** by Ruth Richards, educational psychologist and psychiatrist.

**“David Loye”** by Tim Seldin, President of the Montessori Foundation and Chair of the International Montessori Council.

“Honoring the Legacy of David Loye” is a collection of tributes by valued members of our *IJPS* and CPS community: *IJPS* Executive Editor Teddie Potter, *IJPS* Editorial Board Members; Heidi Bruce, Stephanie Gingerich, Renee Pardello, and CPS Communications Lead Quincey Tickner.

**Commentaries on *Darwin’s Lost Theory: Bridge to a Better World*.** Twelve colleagues shared comments on one of David Loye’s most popular publications, a poignant book that provides insight into a more complete understanding of Darwin’s theories. It encompasses moral action, love, and spirituality as the true driving forces of human evolution.

I wish to thank the incredible team at *IJPS* and our wonderful contributors to this issue on moral sensitivity, a theme that holds great importance if we are to navigate our current challenging times and traverse the years ahead with wisdom and collective moral aptitude. We invite you, our readers, to consider what moral sensitivity means for you both personally and as a member of the wider community. Perhaps you have also felt the call to action: to do, offer, and become something greater in order to serve and honor this beautiful planet that we call home.

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