

# The Lost Cause

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## PREFACE

*How this book came to be written*

In Boris Pasternak's book, *Dr Zhivago*, the eponymous hero is a victim and outcast in post-revolutionary Russia. Although he is basically in sympathy with the principles of communism, he writes poetry which is disapproved of on quite subtle psychological criteria; it is considered, for example, 'too self-indulgent'. The thought-crimes of which he is suspected threaten the safety of himself and his family, so that he is advised to leave urban environments where he is known and may be recognised, and to flee to the country where he may be able to scrape an unobtrusive living for his family.

I am a victim and outcast in what may be called a post-revolutionary Britain. My position has many parallels with that of *Dr Zhivago*, or of any other member of the persecuted middle class, driven underground in post-revolutionary Russia or any other communist country.

I suppose I should count myself lucky that, although the thought-crimes of which I am suspected generate universal hatred and ostracism, I do not have to fear the knock at the door in the night which leads to the forced labour camp, nor the daytime eruption of men with machine guns. I suppose I owe this to the relatively high level of civilisation that was achieved in this country in the Victorian and Edwardian eras under the auspices of *laissez-faire* capitalism. But it is being eroded fast, and sometimes I wonder. The idea of persecuting people for thought-crimes becomes ever more popular.

'You can't convict people for an attitude if they haven't done anything,' said a journalist to the then Home Secretary, Jack Straw, and he replied, 'Yes we can.'

One difference between my position and that of Dr Zhivago is that he decides to live in exile in order to make himself as inconspicuous as possible, whereas I have always wished, both to stick as closely as possible to the environment in which I should have been having my career, and to publicise my true position. In the latter intention I have been opposed by almost universal censorship. This has produced a situation very similar to that of Dr Zhivago, in that I have been debarred from the possibility of functioning in a normal social environment, and have been left to scrape a living as best I could, out of sight and out of mind.

The effect of censorship on my life has been severe and creates a very oppressive sense of isolation within an impermeable bubble. So let us consider how society at large protects itself against unacceptable aspects of reality.

As I have pointed out in my introduction to this book, there is a tendency increasingly to identify 'truth' or 'reality' with whatever an association of human beings finds congenial as a system of belief or interpretation. Psychologists and sociologists are taught that individuals derive their standards and evaluations from the social group in which they are brought up, and this is regarded as a universal and ideal state of affairs rather than a statistical description of something that is approximately true to a large extent, but subject to variation and occasional exceptions.

In *Psychology: A Very Short Introduction*<sup>1</sup>, which we may suppose to be representative of modern academic psychology, there is a description of an experiment in which it was demonstrated that people would give the same answer to a question as they had heard being given by other people, even when they could clearly see evidence that a different answer was actually correct. This suggests that people have a very strong tendency to conform to majority opinions. The authors do not appear to find this disturbing; in fact they think it may be necessary for the working of democracy.

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<sup>1</sup> Butler et al (1998): Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.113-114.

Another experiment<sup>2</sup> reported in this book shows that people will treat other people sadistically (or believe that they are doing so) if they are in a social situation in which they are told to do so by an apparent authority figure. The conclusion drawn from this by the authors is that people lose their normal inhibitions and moral standards when placed in hierarchical or quasi-militaristic situations in which they are obeying the orders given by an individual. Hence individualistic hierarchical situations are to be avoided.

So far as I am concerned, what this experiment seems to be demonstrating is that people in general have very little inhibition against treating one another very badly, and very little respect for one another's individuality, which I would have thought was confirmed by what is known of human history. If the society in which people live does not provide clearly defined principles and strong deterrents against breaking them, they will easily lapse into extreme maltreatment of one another. This is particularly so if there is implicit social tolerance and even encouragement of certain kinds of misbehaviour. Obedience to an individual leader is only a special case of compliance with a generalised attitude which is widely held. This is of subservience to social norms and uncriticalness towards social authorities (which may be committees). The Milgram experiment, to my mind, illustrates the extreme danger of giving groups of people the power, especially very vaguely defined, of making decisions on behalf of other people about what is 'in their interests'.

Civilisation has been a fragile flower in the history of the human race, which has sprung and withered occasionally on the debris of millennia of some sort of tribal system. At its recent peak in the Victorian era, abstract ideals of individual liberty were tentatively expressed by such writers as John Stuart Mill. But such ideals are entertained, fleetingly if at all, by privileged minorities, and arouse a violent reaction on the part of the majority. (I deplore the tendentious and commonly used word 'privileged', with all the unanalysed implications which it has in modern society, but it conveys what I mean.)

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<sup>2</sup> Milgram, S (1974) *Obedience to Authority*: London: Tavistock

Respect for individual freedom, and respect for what may objectively be the case, are both conspicuous by their absence in tribal psychology, and it is to this that modern society is in the process of reverting, in reaction to a few centuries of incipient deviation from it.

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The circumstances of my birth placed me in the eye of the storm, temporally and socially. British society was not far from the great watershed marked by the onset of the Welfare State. My parents were both persons of high ability, members of high-IQ families with a recent history of social displacement. My father, descended from a distinguished Polish family, was brought up in East Ham, virtually an orphan, as the ostensible son of an engine driver. My parents both had very high IQs about a level nowadays described as ‘genius’, and my IQ was far higher than theirs.

My father’s tremendous efforts to rise to a position in society to which he could feel suited had enabled him to reach only the position of headmaster of a primary school at the docks. The outstanding ability shown by both my parents had aroused the jealousy of many in the local community, including their own relatives.

An American academic called Steven Pinker has written a book entitled *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature*, pointing out in a very mild way that there is a resistance to the idea of innate characteristics. This is regarded as tremendously ‘dangerous’ and he is described as a ‘maverick’ in a recent article in the *Financial Times*.<sup>3</sup>

He [Steven Pinker] says: “In psychology and the social sciences, there is a phobia of any possibility that the mind has some degree of innate organisation. And that distorts the sciences, because certain hypotheses are not even mentioned, let alone tested and proven or disproven.”

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<sup>3</sup> Ben Schrank, *Financial Times*, 14/15 September 2002, describing an interview he had with Steven Pinker.

Here's where it's immediately easy to see Pinker getting into trouble. Even the most conservative Americans rarely – if ever – say what he just said....

He [Pinker] describes his book's opening salvo: "Take research on parenting, for example. There is an enormous amount of research that measures a correlation between some behaviour of parents and some behaviour of their children – parents who spank have violent children, parents who talk to their children have children with good language skills and so on. The conclusion is always that there is a cause-and-effect relationship – spanking causes a cycle of violence, blabber at your babies if you want them to be good readers ...

"But of course correlation does not imply causation. Parents give their children genes, not just an environment. Perhaps the same genes that make parents spank or talk a lot also make their children violent or articulate. We don't know whether the correlation comes completely from the effects of parenting, from the effects of the genes, or some mixture. But virtually no psychologists even mention these alternatives; they dogmatically assume that the correlation has to come from parenting." ...

Pinker suddenly grows grave. He delivers another concise paragraph in defence of his maverick claims: "Many politically conscious scholars believe that claims about human nature are dangerous, because they feel that they could legitimate discrimination and oppression, or even slavery and genocide. They argue that it's politically preferable to say that all human traits are the product of culture." ....

He's aware then, that in exhuming human nature from its century-old burial place and forcing people to reckon with it, he's doing dangerous work. And like all new ideas based in science, it would be best if it didn't get into the hands of those who would use it to terrifying ends. ...

But how is it more dangerous to suggest that some characteristics may be innate than to refuse to consider such an idea? If one is not allowed to consider it, then the way is laid open for oppression and persecution of those who have characteristics, and needs arising from those characteristics, which may be innate and are certainly unusual. This danger was already present in full force at the time of my education, which left me in exile from an academic career, and with no way of returning to one by any effort that I could make in the horrific circumstances of my life in exile. Also it left the lives of my parents ruined since they had committed the crime of manifesting exceptional ability, which might be innate, and having an offspring who showed even more exceptional characteristics than themselves. The idea that "all human traits are the product of culture" is already being used "to terrifying ends".

“Claims about human nature are dangerous, because they could legitimate discrimination and oppression”? But assumptions which are politically correct are made, and were made at the time of my ‘education’, and throughout my life in exile. Even more dangerously, the assumptions made, and the conclusions drawn from them, are not explicit. (“No child or adolescent is precocious or ambitious without the influence of an adult, so both child and adult should be persecuted.”) When I went into exile at the end of the ruined ‘education’ I knew that there was nothing and nobody to whom I could appeal for help. My college would not listen to my plans for taking another degree quickly before my matriculation ran out, under my own auspices. Then I could have got a realistic class which would have given me at least a rationalised claim on an academic career. I was not asking for financial support; I would live as frugally as possible and support myself with some awful part-time work. It would not be fun, but it would be no worse than the past eight years had been, since I was prevented from taking the School Certificate exam when I was thirteen.

But my college would not hear of it, literally, so I thought that was indication enough that, even if I could get a First in something at the thirteenth hour, it would not give me re-entry to an academic career because they could always hold the anomaly of age against me. Anyway, even without a particular rationalisation, they could always claim that someone else was ‘better’, and clearly they just wanted me to go away and never be heard of again.

Although for some time I made plans about getting a degree, I increasingly turned my attention to the terrible and desperate option of setting up my own institutional environment, doing research in whatever I could get funding for, and hoping that I could one day do something spectacular enough, even on their terms, to force them to re-admit me to an academic position.

It turned out that the only research for which I could get funding had no effect in securing reinstatement for me, so I realised increasingly that everything depended on my making money for myself.

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People sometimes suggest that I should be *grateful* for the ‘education’ for which the state paid, even if it left me at the end without access to the forty-year career which I needed, and still need, to have. I am certainly not grateful for it; it was a terrible experience which I would never have wished to have, even if, in surviving it, I acquired some psychological insights. I am not grateful at all because I was not dependent on ‘teaching’, although in some subjects I appreciated practice and reinforcement. But if there had been no state system to tempt my father, he would have had to do the best he could for me with the money he had, and that would have meant either letting me apply for a scholarship to a private school, or letting me teach myself from textbooks, with some of the correspondence courses for which I was always asking him. Exposure to social hostility in the state system only provided interference and retardation. Left to myself I would have had no difficulty in taking a large number of exams very young and getting to Oxford or Cambridge at an early age. And I would have got a good enough degree, at an earlier than usual age, to proceed to an academic career. So all the state educational system did for me was to leave me excluded from a university career after several years of intense suffering, and to ruin the lives of my parents into the bargain. For this I am not grateful. In fact, reparation and restitution is due to me. (It is due also to my parents, but they died before it could be made, so now I can only demand to receive it on their behalf.)

It costs a lot to keep a person in a high-security prison, but they are not expected to be grateful for it. In the process of supervised ‘education’ a person is similarly deprived of their right to make decisions on their own behalf, but they are expected to think that the period of deprivation and dependence on the permission of others is valuable and beneficial.

‘Education’, like ‘medicine’, is regarded as a ‘good’, and it is called by the same name whether a person is paying for what they choose to have, or receiving what other people wish them to have. So far as I was concerned the period of supervised ‘education’ was one in which I was exposed to the hostility of the society around me, and the advantage of

being provided with residential and other facilities during Oxford term times was entirely, and more than entirely, cancelled out by lack of freedom to work at what I wished when I wished and in my own way, and to take as many exams as I wished whenever I wished to do so, and by my exposure to damaging psychological interpretations and manipulations.

I am still in very much the same terrible situation I was when I was exiled from the academic world after my ruined 'education' left me without any appropriate qualifications with which to enter an academic career. The passage of time has not improved my situation.

I still need to have my forty-year academic career of research in a university department, with the salary, residential conditions, secretarial and research support that residential Fellows of colleges take for granted.

Everybody who becomes aware of my situation and my continuing need for reparation and restitution to the academic career and position which I need has a duty to contribute to this reparation and restitution.

There is a convention to the effect that nobody, however great the aptitude for academic pursuits which they may at one time have shown, suffers in being deprived of an academic career, that is, a university career with salary and status, and circumstances favourable to intellectual activity. This convention, like so many others, is implicit but universally applied. The convention carries with it various corollaries, one of which is that a person who has failed to enter an academic career at the normal time and in the normal way will, or should, find it perfectly easy to follow their interest in poverty, and that no provision needs to be made for them to work their way back into a career in a university, or to set up an independent academic organisation of their own to provide them with circumstances comparable to those which they should have been enjoying within an institutional environment.

It does not seem to me difficult to accept that, especially in an obsessively 'egalitarian' society such as that which prevails at present in Britain, the greatest academic aptitude may result in the most grievous



social displacement, which will cause intense suffering and frustration to the displaced person. Of course this is only comprehensible if it is accepted that exceptional ability may carry with it needs for exceptional opportunity (e.g. to take a much greater number of exams than the average person, even than the average person who becomes a professional academic, and to take them at a much younger age). It may also carry with it very strongly determined needs for certain kinds of activity in life, and appropriate circumstances in which to carry them out, so that being deprived of a certain kind of career in the normal social context may be intensely painful.

I was in a society which resented the concept of innate ability, as it still does, and so was scarcely likely to make concessions to it. If not making concessions to a need for exceptional opportunity were to lead to the ruin of a precocious person's life, that was a positive inducement to withhold them, as it would provide yet another demonstration of the unimportance and transitoriness of early manifestations of outstanding ability. In general, my ability aroused hostility, not sympathy, as has also been the case with my discomfort in exile from a university career.

My father was blamed for my precocious ability and drive, which was actually entirely autonomous. Hostility to parents is a predominant feature of modern educational theory. It is asserted in courses on child development that the child derives his values from environmental influences, which implies that parents may confidently be blamed for attitudes which are not inculcated at school or in television programmes. I have never noticed any warnings to future educators that care should be taken not to jump to conclusions, and to bear in mind that exceptional ability may be associated with unusual traits of personality and temperament.

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When I was growing up there was already a pre-judged belief that no-one could be precocious enough for it to be necessary for them to be educated in accordance with their own mental age and intellectual processing capacity; any drive or ambition could not be autonomous and

must derive from parental influence. (Even if it did, would it necessarily be a bad thing, to be punished and perhaps eradicated by any means that suggest themselves? – the pre-judged answer is ‘Yes’.)

If I was happy, it could not be because I was able to get on at a pace that suited me, it must be because I was unhealthily hooked on parental approval, and my father was hooked on the idea of spectacular achievement. (Again, even if he had been, should it be up to a jealous and hostile community to decide whether that was a good or a bad thing for the future welfare of his offspring? The community always consulted prejudice, and never the offspring.)

When an end had been put to my happiness and I had been made unhappy, there was no place in the pre-judged interpretations for the idea that it was retardation of my exam-taking programme that was making me unhappy. This retardation was exacerbated by the active hostility of teachers and the persecutory activities of the educational community, which led my father to override or ignore all the plans for the relief of my position which I made for myself. The nightmare was intensified by the awareness that my parents were handling the situation so badly that they were themselves under pressure and at risk, on a collision course to disaster in parallel with my own.

I do not mean to suggest that my parents were to blame for not finding a better way of handling the situation. There may be no good way of dealing with prejudice, as I found myself at the local High School, which I should have left at the end of the first day, as I told my parents at the time. Perhaps the only thing my parents could have done to extricate themselves and me was for me to leave school, my father to give up his job as a primary school headmaster, and all of us to leave the district. Then I would have been able to get on with getting an Oxbridge scholarship as quickly as possible under my own steam.

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When I have given indications of my early precocity, and of the mental age that might be inferred from them, people often sound as if I could

derive some gratification from considering myself superior to other people. Actually, I give these indications as providing possible support for the ideas that my ability to make progress in research is as exceptional as I know it to be, and that my exceptionality was such as to account for an unusual degree of hostility being shown towards me throughout my life. They also provide some support for my claims that my happiness and wellbeing, both at school and at the present time, was and is dependent on my being granted opportunities which could be regarded as exceptional in relation to those of which most people, even most academics, could profitably make use.

In a 1957 book on child development<sup>4</sup> a case of early reading is quoted as an example of exceptional precocity, with the comment that it appears to indicate an IQ of over 300, while the greatest geniuses of the past are estimated at about 200. Nowadays, of course, the concept of mental age is disliked, so I should remind the reader that the original definition of IQ was mental age divided by chronological age, and that mental age was thought to continue increasing in approximately the same ratio to chronological age, until reaching final stability at the age of about sixteen for an average IQ, a later age for higher IQs, and an earlier one for below average IQs. I was found to be able to read at an early age, comparable with that of the child I referred to. In fact when I first read Valentine's account I wondered whether I might have been the child in question.

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As all my previous distress flares have been ignored, or rather used as the basis for misinterpretation and slander, and as producing these flares at all in my unsalaried, financially unsupported and statusless position is very costly in terms of both money and effort, I should like to state very explicitly that I am appealing for help in gaining reinstatement in a suitable social position, providing at least the advantages of a senior position as a Fellow of a residential college, which I should have been having for at least the last forty years.

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<sup>4</sup> Valentine, C. W: *The Normal Child*, Penguin Books Ltd., Harmsworth, Middlesex, 1957, pp. 258-9.

I am aware that I am violating taboos in making any complaint or appeal at all, and experience has led me to be aware of a system of implicit beliefs which are universally known and applied.

As these beliefs are implicit and never stated it is hard work to define them, and people can always say that they do not have them exactly as you put them and produce some rationalisation. But in general, whatever is not stated to be something which should be implemented by agents of the collective, is considered to be something which any individual or group of individuals should *not* implement, in fact they should oppose it.

Nobody says, for example, that individual academics should look out for wrongfully exiled persons - bearing in mind that there are likely to be special factors which make life difficult for the exceptional, not least the exceptional hostility which their ability is likely to arouse - and help them back into a normal position. So all academics behave as if they should not do anything for such a person, either by contributing financially to their support out of their own salaries, or by using their influence on such a person's behalf. In fact they behave as if they should oppose every effort the exile can make to regain social acceptance as the sort of person they are.

The reason why I should be given financial support is that I would be able to make significant progress in any field of science in which I was able to work, of a kind which would not be likely to be made by anyone else. All that has been preventing me from doing this is lack of funding, even of a basic salary for living to a standard above the barest minimum. My life is being wasted in frustration and this wastage should not be allowed to continue. I am a resource for making breakthroughs in science which the society in which I live appears to wish to destroy rather than to make use of. However, I have very strong drives towards exercising certain intellectual functions, and I suffer greatly from deprivation.

The modern ideology dislikes the idea of innate ability, still more that it can develop to its own level of mature functionality independently (and

even in spite of) the 'educational' system. The idea of entelechy, that is, of an organism developing in a way which will enable it eventually to fulfil the functions to which it is destined by its genetic endowment, is acceptable in zoology but not in modern psychology as it is taught, in which all the emphasis is placed on environmental influence, and intelligence is supposed to be developed by social interactions. (Such as quarrelling with teachers and headmistresses, as I did, I suppose.)

Since the idea of innate ability, or of any innately determined characteristics, is unacceptable in modern society, needs arising from the internal psychological determinants of an individual may be freely ignored, in fact may be obstructed and persecuted. I had very strong drives to provide myself with an education (or programme of exam-taking) commensurate with my precocity and intellectual capacity. My happiness and wellbeing was entirely dependent on my being able to provide for my needs, and the frustration of those needs reduced me to abject misery. At the end of several years of misery I was unable to do well enough in a degree examination to get a Research Scholarship and thus to embark on the adult academic career which I needed to have (and in fact had already been needing to have for several years). However, in spite of my lack of even one usable paper qualification, I was still perfectly well able to fulfil the requirements of an academic career in many fields, and still had the same need to live in the way which permitted me to exercise various mental functions.

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I would have supposed that a college might have some responsibility to help its recent alumni proceed towards the next stage of life after their degree. I do not see why it should be unacceptable for someone to state that they needed to have an academic career and that, since through some mishap their degree result was not as good as expected, they would need to take another degree as quickly as possible at their own expense. In fact it turned out that this was unacceptable. The only acceptable outcome was that I should be whipped out into the desert and give up for ever on the idea of having an academic career.

I was also shocked to find out that the local educational authority, although I was now 21 and had left college (where I had been receiving a grant from the state and not from the county), had considered it their business to attack my father about me behind my back (which I had considered immoral even when I was thirteen and receiving a grammar school scholarship).

My college at Oxford promoted the idea that I should be whipped out into the desert by refusing to discuss with me any plan by which I could have avoided this, and the local educational establishment promoted it by persecuting my father to ensure, as usual, that he would feel it incumbent on him to oppose my plans, and impose upon me an entirely different plan which was considered suitable by my enemies. So, within days of my leaving college, my parents set about driving me out to 'earn a living'.

I would not have gone to work at the Society for Psychical Research if I had not been put under so much pressure to start earning a living immediately, to prove to me that I no longer had any right to regard myself as an academic. Pursuing the word "research" I sought an interview with someone who had some position in the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, to see what jobs they had there. They sounded dreadful, and it did not sound as if anyone ever worked their way back into a university career from them, but I thought if I took one it would be temporary.

It happened that the person I went to see about the DSIR was also an Honorary Secretary of the Society for Psychical Research, and the SPR office was completely unmanned, as their aged secretary had fallen ill. It sounded more congenial than the DSIR, I would not feel so cut off from academia, and it would be as good a jumping-off place when I left to return to Oxford.

The Society for Psychical Research, in those days, was a suburb of the academic world. Its membership included several eminent Professors, many lesser-known academics, leading members of various professions,

including doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists, literary figures and members of aristocratic families.

I had intended to return to Oxford at the start of the next academic year, to support myself as best I could and to carry on with my academic career in exile. When I started to work at the SPR I soon found that a grant for post-graduate work related to psychical research was available at Trinity College, Cambridge, so I resolved to stay for one more year in London to see if I could get it. In the event I did, and returned to Oxford, after a one-year absence, as the current holder of the Perrott Studentship.

When I was thrown out a year earlier, I had thought that all I needed to compensate for not having a university career was money. Obviously there was no socially prescribed sympathy for anyone in the position in which I now found myself, but might there not be a few people somewhere who would think that I should not be kept in total frustration, when I was confident that I was more likely than anyone else to make significant advances in any field of science in which I had the resources to work? I could make something of this muddled and uncharted field of anecdote, only provided there was some genuinely realistic content mixed up with the fraud and fiction.

I was a lot more sanguine than I am now about how easy it might be to get back into an academic career by doing some creditable research. I had realised that you could not be officially working for a D.Phil. unless you had been accepted by the Department concerned, and been provided with a supervisor and a grant, but it was some time before I realised that if you wrote a thesis under your own auspices, with no support or supervision, it would not even be considered if you tried to submit it for a D.Phil.

When I started to consider doing research in parapsychology, senior academics said to me, 'It doesn't matter if your research produces negative findings so long as it is well-constructed.' So, perhaps, it did not matter whether there were any 'paranormal' elements in the phenomena, as it would not matter if experiments on extra-sensory

perception came out negative. But, what was meant by saying that research with negative results would be regarded as equally 'credible'? Did that mean credible enough to get you into an academic career, or credible enough for your papers to be published in academic journals and for people to write you testimonials? That is, however credible it was, could it ever be credible enough to do me any good at all?

There was provision at Oxford for research on psychical research to be done in the Faculty of Literae Humaniores, which meant philosophy. I did not fancy my chances of a career as a philosopher; I knew that I was fundamentally out of sympathy with modern philosophy, and I had not considered it as an option even when I was trying to think what I might take a degree in very quickly, after my degree in maths had ended in ultimate disaster, after so many years of socially supervised preparation, or interference.

I was not interested in the discussion of the 'evidential value' of anecdotal evidence which went on all the time at the SPR. If you got to know something about the types of experience that people had, I thought, you might at some much later stage consider realistically whether they contained elements that could not be explained on the currently available terms. So I based my thesis on the conditions in which ostensibly paranormal phenomena were reported as occurring, and it was agreed that it could be 'inter-disciplinary'. This might lead me, I thought, to a university career as an experimental psychologist or physiologist, neither of which would be ideal, because I could not do research in either capacity without research assistants, but it seemed to be the best option going. If I could get a proper academic appointment in any capacity, with full institutional facilities, I would have a good enough life to spend some of my time doing things, such as theoretical physics, in a way from which I could derive some benefit, in the way of wellbeing and a higher energy level.

Anyway, I did the thesis and, as I did, I became increasingly convinced that there were some quite distinct types of hallucinatory and dream experiences, which formed definite classes with standard characteristics.



These, independently of whether or not they ever contained elements of extra-sensory perception, provided a new area for laboratory work.

I was working for the D.Phil. against considerable difficulties, not the least of them being the hostility which was aroused by the anomaly of my position, and the fact that I had responded to exile from a university career not with resignation, as is socially required, but by working for reinstatement. In the end, I did not get a D.Phil. for the thesis, but a B.Litt., and no-one suggested to me any way in which I could proceed to establish a claim on a university career in any capacity.

I therefore proceeded to set up my own research institute, with no money, but a formidable array of academic supporters, who were prepared to contribute their names so long as there was no question of their giving me money themselves, nor their supporting my applications for funding to institutions or to individuals, nor of them pulling any strings to get me back into Oxford university.

The future was black; any supporters I had had been turned against me long ago. I had no way of getting back into a university career and no-one wished my embryonic research institute to get funding which might enable me to do research that might strengthen my claim on re-entry. All applications were abortive. Taking a degree in something so as to have a qualification would be unappetising but also futile. The aphorism which I had made up at school, 'You cannot defeat motivation', still applied. There was no motivation to let me get back into a decent situation in a university, so however well I did in a degree in any subject, it would be useless.

Fortunately, there now occurred one of the very few breaks in my life, or, rather, one of the few times when an opportunity was not totally blocked by gratuitous acts of hostility. Cecil Harmsworth King (Chairman of the International Publishing Corporation, the then owners of the *Daily Mirror* and other publications) wished to fund some work in psychical research and approached the SPR. None of the prestigious professors wanted the money; it would commit them to tediously active research, and they were well enough set up for squabbling among themselves. I

offered to do some research and so got some money, although, as he subsequently boasted, only about a quarter of what he would have given me if I had been a Professor (with a salary and access to various facilities, and therefore much less in need of it).

Cecil King was coming fresh to psychical research and had no previous association with the people in it. As soon as he had he was turned against me and realised that I was the last person to be permitted any funding, but by then he had signed the seven-year covenant.

I continued to develop an understanding of the various classes of hallucinatory and dream phenomena, although still without laboratory facilities, of which I had clearly indicated my need in my first application to Cecil King. As the structure and interrelationships of these phenomena became clear to me, I started to see how they could shed light on important issues in perception (which were of fundamental interest) and also in psychosis (which was not, so far as I could see, of fundamental interest, but was something that people liked to regard as important for social reasons).

The sort of research I could envisage doing would have to be done on a large scale if it were to have any hope of getting anywhere, which would suit me very well. If I could get an adequate research establishment going, it would be large enough to provide associated institutional facilities comparable with those of a hotel or a residential college, which meant it would provide an environment within which I could start to get something out of life again. I would be able to spend part of my spare time in an enjoyable and progressive way on things that enhanced my wellbeing, such as the theoretical physics which I had never stopped wanting to do (and had had several tantalising ideas about before I was thrown out into the desert). I had the channel capacity for working on several things simultaneously, in fact I needed to do so, but I could get nothing out of anything, however interesting it might be in itself, while I was living in a hand-to-mouth way outside of an institutional or college environment.

The work which I had started to do on the various categories of hallucinatory experience had been intended to contribute to the advancement of my academic career, but as no way was made open to me for using it in that way, I turned it into the form of books and published them, as widespread appeals for funding (or 'distress flares'.)

The King money came to an end, and again the outlook was black. My having even so little funding had attracted attention and aroused hostility; the fact that my work had been successful, so far as was possible in the circumstances, and had clearly opened up new possibilities, did not make me more eligible for research funding, but less. I gradually became aware of the power of networking. Everyone connected with parapsychology or any associated academic subject, and everyone connected with Oxford University, had got the message that anyone should be given money rather than me.

My research institute was starved of funding and I continued to live in Oxford under siege conditions for some decades, struggling to become good enough at investment to build up enough capital to finance at least a small institution, starting from scratch in terms of capital and having to use any gains I could make to pay for the most basic maintenance for myself and any associates I could acquire.

About a decade after the publication of my books on lucid dreaming and out-of-the-body experiences, research on these topics began to be heard of in North American universities. Research on lucid dreams, out-of-the-body experiences and other hallucinatory experiences became an expanding feature of the university landscape and these phenomena, in distorted forms, entered into popular culture and became a regular feature of television programmes.

I received many testimonials from overseas academics and, while remaining statusless and rigorously deprived of salary or any other financial support, was permitted to enter into correspondence with socially accredited academics, write papers to present at international conferences and so on.

The books which I had written gave rise to an expanding field of research in overseas universities, but without my gaining any advantage in academic status or salary, or in funding to contribute to the development of the area of research which I had initiated. (Putting it in this modest way does not mean that I think what other people did was in any way comparable with what I would have done myself, and would still do if adequately funded.)

Eventually the subject of lucid dreams was recognised as acceptable for theses in both philosophy and experimental psychology in the University of Oxford. I had still not been able to get funding for research in this or any other field, and I had not been able to get an academic appointment of any kind, so I still had neither status nor salary. Therefore, as a desperate last resort, I applied to do a D.Phil., in order to enhance my claim on academic appointments and/or theoretically on funding to do research which might further enhance my claim on appointments. (It had often been given as a reason for rejecting our applications that we were not working in a university department, and had no academic status.)

As I did not have a first degree in philosophy, it might have seemed a more obvious thing to do a D.Phil. in experimental psychology, but my research institute was far from being able to provide me with a research assistant, without which it was not possible for me to undertake research of this kind. I knew that I was not in sympathy with modern philosophy, and while I think that contrarian views 'ought' to be expressed, I knew that I had little hope of advancement by getting the qualification of a doctorate. Nevertheless, I undertook a D. Phil. in philosophy as the least hopeless of the options available to me. As lucid dreams had provided me with my *entrée*, I did a thesis in philosophy of mind. It was difficult to find anything that I could say which the examiners might regard as meaningful. However, eventually I wrote a thesis on causation. The assumption that it is legitimate to use certain verbal formulations, which include the idea of a cause, is important in the defence of many fashionable expositions of the philosophy of mind.

## *Summary*

I should be given the funding for an independent university, so that I can contribute unique scientific developments to the advancement of science, and also contribute books by myself and my associates to the culture and intellectual debates of the present time. These books would be expressing points of view, and analytical criticism of widely accepted points of view, which are highly unlikely to be expressed by anyone else.

There seems to be an underlying belief in the modern world that if you are not in some socially recognised position or category you cannot be in need of any help, especially money, to get into a different position or category; and even if you fit into some category, no individual should consider it their business to help you, because you should be able to get help from some recognised source of funding for the social category in which you fit. And so I have to say very explicitly that I do not accept this, and I am making a direct appeal for financial support to any institution which is able to provide it, as well as any university or source of funding for universities.

Also I am appealing to any individual, who considers themselves tolerably provided for, to recognise the fact that I am not, and that I am only being prevented from contributing to the intellectual life of my time by lack of salary or financial support.

Despite appearances we (I and my associates) are actually an independent university – with an associated publishing company – prevented from appearing as such by a shortage of several billions of pounds of financial support and at least a hundred full time employees.

This is also an appeal to individuals to come and work with us in some of the many capacities which are needed, in spite of our lack of social status as an academic institution.

We are also appealing for people who are prepared to act as genuine supporters in presenting our need of support to other people who might be able to provide it. There is not the slightest use in our making

applications on our own behalf without such support. This I have concluded as a result of extensive experience, and it was confirmed by a fundraising consultant with whom we once discussed it.

Celia Green  
November 2002