

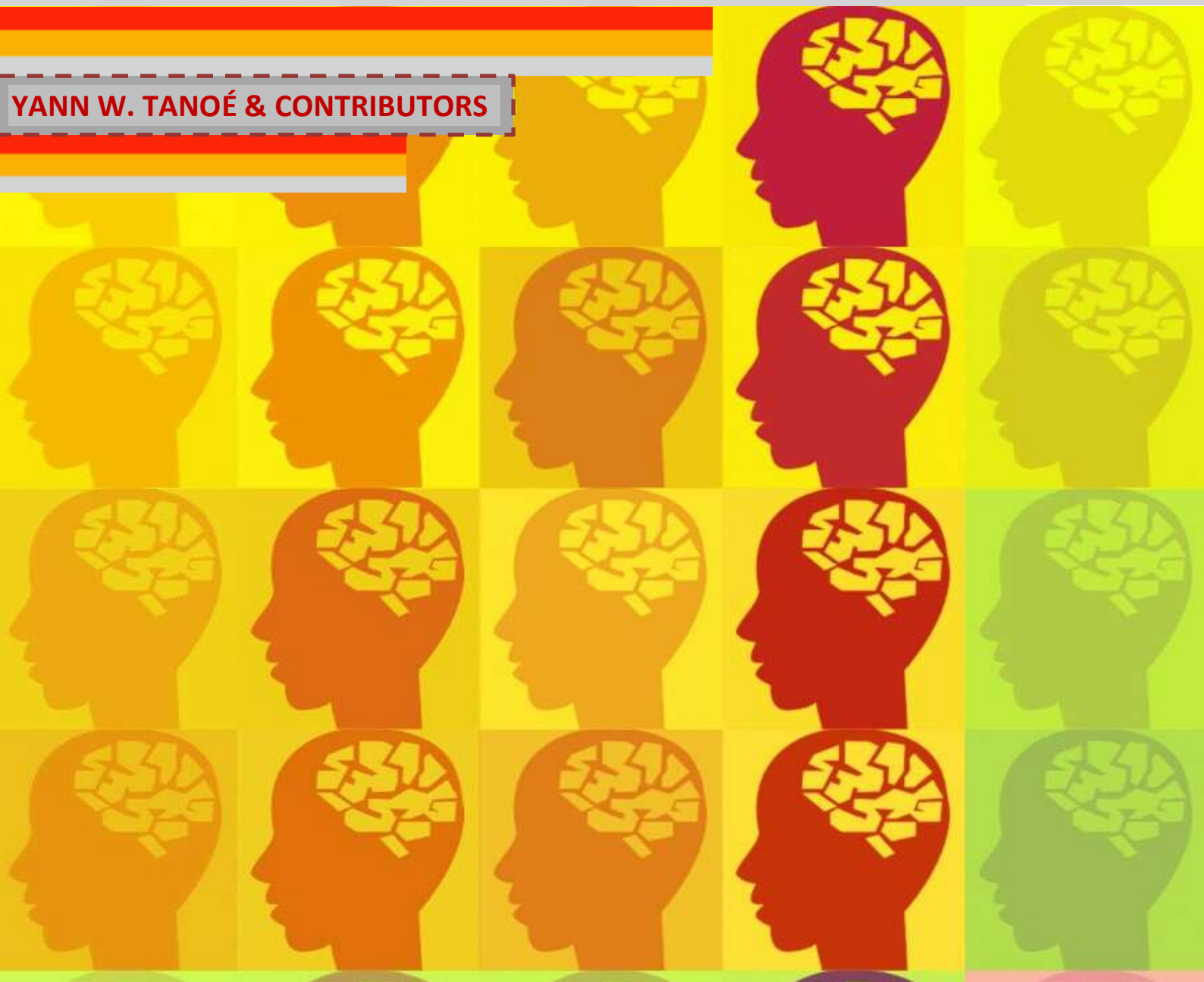
GREY AREAS

JOURNAL

Of Creative and Intellectual Perspectives

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YANN W. TANOÉ & CONTRIBUTORS







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ABOUT GREY AREAS



YANN W. TANOÉ is an Author, Children's Advocate and Entrepreneur. He is lead editor and founder of Grey Areas Journal, an e-platform from SunBird Journal Publishing (his publishing House). With this collection of intellectual and creative perspectives, Yann hopes to add value to readers' perspective of society. He lives in Suffolk-England.

This journal reflects the wealth of perspectives that can come together and shape our view of this complex modern world. This journal is much more than a publication, it is a platform created to feature the creatives, thinkers, innovators, entrepreneurs and individuals who utilise their creativity to build platforms that impact in society and add value in an array of different forms. I believe that the purpose of life is to try to converge towards each other in some way. I believe that it is part of our journey to learn from each other, from the things that we say, from the things we do but more importantly from our perspective. Yes, I believe almost that the perspective we are coming from is even more important to understand than the words that come out of our mouths.

Talk is cheap, everyone can talk, everyone can share their beliefs, everyone can share their opinions, but to me what adds value to the things we have to say is the perspective we are coming from. Our perspective is greatly

determined and influenced by our backgrounds. I believe that trying to get to know others is an investment, an investment that will always yield more that you have put in. I believe so, because regardless of the type of interaction; positive/ negative, fruitful/ fruitless there will always be a valuable lesson to learn, a lesson that will impact in our life forever. I believe that all the interactions that we have with humans are back logged in our subconscious. They are called upon from time when we are ready to learn from them. Never think that any one of your encounters was in vain or useless. They all serve and teach you in time. The idea behind Grey Areas as an intellectual concept is to explore the unexplained; it explores what we think we really believe. It demonstrates the grey areas that exist between our core beliefs and our ideas of what is right or wrong.

Where do we obtain our knowledge from? What swings our moral compass in one direction or another? What qualifies us to



formulate our thoughts or opinions?

I have always been fascinated by the way in which our core beliefs, morals and ideals are constructed and, furthermore, how they evolve.

Over the years, I have come to understand that our beliefs are shaped by the core values that we were raised with, influenced by our culture, our social background, the people we admire and both our direct and indirect exposure of the world.

In my opinion there exists three aspects that constitute the makeup of our beliefs: firstly, there is the knowledge that we were socialised into either through our upbringing or background, secondly there is what we decide to hold onto as our core belief based on our own experiences and interactions with the world; and thirdly, there is another part which, to me, is a grey area, an almost controversial area that exists tucked away at the back of our subconscious. A part that has the potential to challenge, to question these core beliefs and almost undo them. This is the part of reasoning which I believe is self-suppressed by many people because it is viewed as a threat to their beliefs and integrity as a rule.

It seems as though a large number of us are afraid to even consider questioning our own beliefs or venture on to the uncharted territory of 'counter arguments'.

However, ask yourself the question, do you make your beliefs or do your beliefs make you? If you can make yourself believe in something, can you equally convince yourself that this very belief is untrue? I believe this to be an extremely worthwhile intellectual exercise to question and challenge our core beliefs from time to time, to explore and even embrace different points of views. This, in my opinion, can enable us to cultivate and feel more empathy towards the others that we disagree or quarrel with about different issues.

My further rhetoric through conceptualizing 'Grey Areas' are, how true are we to our beliefs? To what extent are we committed to them? Is every belief that we hold flawless? Do we really have enough integrity and conviction to stand up for and even give our lives for the 'purity' of our beliefs? Or do our core beliefs have unexplored corners, corners that we cannot quite reconcile or explain? Do we have the strength to question our belief and to perhaps realise that they may not be as flawless as we think.

I hope that the following subjects and themes approached in this Journal not only challenge, but also add value to the way in which you view your human experience.

Yann W. Tanoé



GREY AREAS

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FOCUS ON ART

*With Art Historian/ Critic
Antoinette Hewitt BA*



The Pieta – Michelangelo

In the renaissance period, many artists showed their faith through art, whether it be painting, sculpture, poetry, music and song, or any other form of artistic expression. The art was on display, usually in chapel, churches and the patrons' homes for the veneration and glorification of God.

I wanted to talk about this sculpture, the Pieta by Michelangelo (pictured above), because, I feel, it shows the adoration that Michelangelo felt for God, but, more importantly, how he feels about the relationship between mother and son.

Depictions of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ were commonplace in art, especially around the 15thC, the

Nativity, showing the birth of Jesus Christ, being one of the most recognisable. Or the lamentation, where the dead Christ, again, lays across the lap of Mary, with many other people such as St. John, Mary Magdalen and others. Here we see only Mary and Jesus.

The portrayal of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ together, on their own, just the two of them, brings an intensity and concentration which can be lost when other figures are depicted alongside them. There is an emotional bond, closeness and tenderness captured by Michelangelo in this sculpture. Michelangelo's mother died when he was only six years old and I wonder if his childhood, growing up without his mother, had an



influence on and enabled him to show the tenderness a mother would have for a child.

Let's look at and analyse the sculpture a little. Mary is the focus of the piece. She is positioned in the middle, the artwork in a pyramidal form, and if she were to stand, she would be huge and out of proportion with Christ. The drapery of her dress is elaborate and draws our attention to her, also.

Michelangelo has depicted the figures out of proportion with one another because of the difficulty of showing a fully-grown man held, full-length, in a woman's lap. However, I feel there is another reason for her shape and size.

The Virgin Mary, according to scriptural accounts and Christian theology, was to be the mother of Jesus Christ, the son of God. When I think about the Virgin Mary and what she was asked to do, the magnitude of her calling, I feel a deep sympathy and empathy for what she is experiencing. No mother should have to witness the death of a child. It must be the cruellest and most devastating pain a human being can feel. Her agony is real; her heartbreak is real; but how do you portray that in

sculpture? Here in this sculpture, instead of depicting a tortured soul, the Virgin Mary is shown as calm, peaceful and serene. Moreover, she is elevated physically, emotionally and spiritually through her stature and size.

When we take a quick glimpse of her face, as I said, it does seem calm, peaceful and serene. But let's look closer. Her head is bowed; her eyes are closed. There is no tear on her face but I feel a multitude of tears shed previously and presently. Her mourning and sorrowing are perceived rather than witnessed.

She has the pristine face of a youthful, young girl – she would have been in her early forties. In renaissance art the Virgin is nearly always shown this way. She is an attitude of reverence for her son, who she knew to be the son of God. She knew His fate a long time ago, had raised Him for this moment, and now her resignation to His and her fate is evident.

Her left hand is outstretched, as if presenting Him to us. She is saying, in effect, "Here is my son who died for the world". Christians believe this doctrine, that Christ was sacrificed for the human race and died that all might be saved. And in



many religious works of art the focus is on the Christ. He is the main, central figure, whose prominence is clear. In this art piece, the spotlight is on Mary, the mother. She draws our attention. It is her pain and suffering we see and feel, passionately and most reverently. Her devotion and dedication to her son and to God is brought forward. Her sacrifice, for me is felt most acutely. She offers her son to us with this gesture. Her faith in God, her trust in Him and her son and the complete faithfulness she has for them can be seen.

However, it is not all sadness and misery I feel when I see this sculpture. I am lifted up by Mary's example of courage and fortitude. Her capacity to withstand this trial is a lesson to me. It is a sculpture that, although holds a sad and poignant moment, is still reflective and comforting to me, also.

Michelangelo has managed to encompass many different emotions into a single piece of art.

I feel that this sculpture is truly a masterpiece and wonder in the art world. Michelangelo, in my opinion was a genius in his field of work. The sculpture has been vandalised

and defaced on numerous occasions and now sits under bullet proof glass in St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome, for its own protection.

On a side note, renaissance artists didn't really sign their work.

However, this one bears the signature of Michelangelo. One evening, Michelangelo overheard people talking about this sculpture; they were attributing the work to one of his competitors. On hearing this, Michelangelo came back that night and engraved his name on the piece, thereby claiming it as his own.

Antoinette Hewitt BA Hons

***Find Antoinette Hewitt on
Instagram @artcrazynotanunlady***





FOCUS ON ENERGY

With Author and Energy

Therapist

Natasha Price



THE SOUL CONTINUUM

In my work as a hypnotherapist I have trained in both Past Life Regression Therapy with the Regression Academy and Future Life Progression with Anne Jirsch. The

Regression training not only included working on past lives but also the negative life experiences and traumas from our current lives, from childhood and even back to the womb, and therefore my clients can go anywhere on that scale, past, present or future. What I have

come to realise through this work is that our soul, the energetic divine essence of us, never dies. It continues throughout time and space, our human body only being a vehicle for it in this lifetime. For me

this is the Soul Continuum; a beautiful stream of energy that flows through the Universe and

which has its own unique vibration. Everything has its own vibration including us, although in our human form this can be greatly affected and lowered by negative emotions, beliefs and life experiences that we hold onto in our energy fields. It is so important to look at the negative emotions around situations in our life so that they can be released. If we continue to hold onto them they can lead to physical symptoms manifesting.

However, it is possible to connect to our unique unfettered vibration through hypnosis, which heightens our vibration in this lifetime and assists us in how we move forward in the here and now. I see the Soul Continuum as a giant 3D cobweb, the intersections or pivotal points being the important events in the lives into which we incarnate, and as time is not linear we have the ability to go to any point on that cobweb to gain wisdom and clarity on lessons that we are learning in this lifetime. Linear time has only

been created in this earthly existence to help us to make sense of events; however when you are in the Soul Continuum time does not seem to exist in the same way, which is why you can move around wherever you like. Of course, your subconscious is extremely protective and acts almost like a doorman preventing you from going to a lifetime to see events which you could not cope with. It will filter



the information that is given to you in order to assist and protect you. Personally, I have found this technique incredibly effective and helpful to how I flow through my current life and the clarity I have gained over people and events around me now. If you are struggling creatively in this lifetime for example, then by using such hypnosis techniques it is possible to set the intention to go into any point on your Soul Continuum where you were incredibly creative, where your Soul at that time had reached a high level of achievement. By linking to the vibration of your Soul at that time, your Soul energy in this lifetime is pulled up to match it and you find yourself leaping forward in this current life with all manner of creativity. This technique can also be used on emotions as I believe this is one of the main reasons that we incarnate on this Earth, to learn about human emotions. There is a scale of intensity for each emotion, so you may be learning about a particular emotion such as anger, guilt or remorse, over several lifetimes and from different perspectives. For example, in one lifetime you may be the victim in a situation, the one that has been wronged, and in a subsequent life you are the one who has victimised or inflicted a wrong on somebody else. This allows your Soul to understand the emotions from both

sides or perspectives, and by seeing that now it can help you to not repeat the same mistakes but to gain real clarity over such a situation and the emotions experienced on both sides.

There are of course so many variations on what you can set your intention to see at the beginning of a session, and the elements that you can gain clarity on, that it is never ending. Every client is different and needs assistance on a different aspect. However, the process of connecting to your Soul Continuum is a fascinating and I believe a life changing one. It gives you such understanding and clarity on why we are here as a race, and what each of us individually is here to achieve. Of course, those points are connected. I saw a lovely quote by Deepak Chopra the other day which read – we are the individual expressions of the same underlying universal field of consciousness.

For Soul Continuum sessions please contact Natasha Price at natprice2004@aol.com or through her face book page Dandelion Therapies.

www.compassioncrusader.co.uk



REHABILITATION



With Author and Activist
Yann W. Tanoé

THE NEED FOR SYMPATHY

To many, religious teachings are blind, unrealistic, and almost irrational. Does religion truly enable us to overcome ourselves? Does it do this at the cost of suppressing our ability to be rational? Does the stance of humanism on the other hand awaken our consciousness and enable us to react on a more rational level?

Christianity teaches to follow the admonition of Jesus in developing sympathy for everyone, for the 'sinner', the unfortunate soul, the sick, the afflicted, even the murderers and so on... I was raised to follow this very Christian admonition. This stance has become normal to me, in my life. I often try to see where people are coming from, what background they've had and what could have possibly made



them commit some of the actions that they have committed.

This belief was, however, seriously questioned when studying the philosophy of humanism in my early 20s. I encountered a very interesting counter argument to my 'religious' stance in a book. The author stated, 'Religion teaches us to have sympathy for everyone. But does everyone deserve our sympathy?' (Cave, 2009); By everyone, I assume that this statement refers to people who have 'sinned', people who have taken others' lives or who are just in unfortunate circumstances in general. I pondered, profusely, on this statement that came as a deeply, challenging notion to my beliefs on the subject. I introspected and asked myself if my Christian stance and the sympathy I extended to others was really necessary or worth it.

Our current world is characterised with the rise of social media. According the Ofcom report 2016, It is estimated that 48% of us are be exposed to news via social media compared to just 32% in 2013. At the touch of our mobile screens we are becoming increasingly confronted with more and more moral dilemmas. We are exposed daily to terrible acts of murder, terrorism, rape, child abuse, hate crimes and so on. Whilst scrolling

down our Facebook, Instagram, Twitter timelines, Whilst watching the news or reading the newspapers, we often have to decide for ourselves the extent of sympathy that we are willing to extend, not only to the victims but also, to the perpetrator. This concept may almost seem alien for many to understand as in most cases, we apply sympathy solely for the victims. It is a sort of emotional common sense to allow ourselves to feel sympathy for individuals that suffered or lost their lives through the free agency of others. And many of us vehemently feel at times that we need not spare an ounce of our sympathy on a murderer, a rapist and so on...

My question is therefore...should we? Should we not? Do these people that commit unspeakable crimes deserve our sympathy? Do they deserve our understanding? Do they deserve us to understand what made them do what they did? I believe this is a question worth pondering.

Does the Christian admonition to develop sympathy for everyone always apply? Would we be right (religious or not) for withholding our sympathy, and understanding, to people who hurt or kill others? Or would we be more humanist and challenge that notion? I still cannot answer this question for myself. Is this just a black and white matter or



is there room for a shade of grey? Is
this a conflict between religious
irrationalism against intellectual
rationalism? The eternal conflict of
mind over heart?

Yann W. Tanoé

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A CUP OF POETRY



With D-EMPRESS DIANNE
REGISFORD

A study in fragility...

POEM: FOIBLES

Can I truly
Offer me..?
Less expecting
Secret wounds
Be seen..?
Revealed
Exposing inner
Prima materia
Sinewed channels
To soul chamber

I Tread tenderly
New-born naked
Holding sweet sensory
Celestial reverie
Tenderly crafted
Under moonlit shards
Magically traced
Through dreamflight

Gilded offerings
To...encounter
Beloved as

Enlivened being
Vitality invested
Deep within
Be akin feeling
Like dancing over
Hot-coals soon
Jumping river deep
In your gifting

For foibles
Dem Nuh worry mi
Dem be stitched creeds
Honouring fidelity to
Life's tapestry
For, less such topology
I be thirsting
Wanting emotion red relief

For foibles
Strengthen footholds
On earth walks
To eternity
Foibles make we
Human
Make for sweet meanders
Through love's poppy fields
To veritable embrace

Oh yes! I believe!
I can truly
Offer all
Of me...

©D-Empress Dianne Regisford
D-Empress Poetics
Scribed in Beauteous Sanctuary
Anthology: 1000 Raindrops
27 June, 2017



A CUP OF POETRY



With YANN W. TANOÉ

**Reflections on the world:
Memories of a World, Like this.**

Casting my memory back, I will always
marvel at how we were, in this world I
once knew.

As I look around today, I ask,
Where is the fraternity?
I see a lot of liberty to hurt and condemn
Indeed, where is the equality?

Who holds their brother's hand in equality,
In heartfelt fraternity?
Who looks at lifeless children, victims of
this triviality and sees their own?
Who sees beyond the frontiers of their
comfort zone, the frontiers of their
seemingly innocent ignorance?

It's just another day for you and me in
paradise
A treacherous paradise in which we can
very easily rotate fortunes
Where a life of privileges is never
guaranteed.

With karma forever omnipresent.
Yesterday me, today him, tomorrow it
could be you.

Humans pain is felt by all,
Every dead has someone to mourn him.
No one fell from the sky.

We are 7 Billion and still counting...
A new blooming life only 7 seconds away.
All statistics, numbers and digits.

You see, numbers are cold, senseless,
It is words that give us warmth, a life and
identity.
Quantity over quality...
What is the real worth of your life?

We have no control over our destinies
Just the hope that a few prayers will sway
good fortune in our favour.

We humans are nothing.
Just like all nature, destined to return to
dust 'Dust thou art and dust thou will
remain'.

Take away the ego, the flash, the
discourse, the stallions we ride...what is
left?
Much ado about nothing.

Yet casting my memory back, I will always
marvel at how we were, in this world I
once knew.

What is the worth of life?
I ask

While I gaze back over
The memories of this world I knew
Memories of a world, like this.

©Yann W. Tanoé
Anthology: Caged Birds
August, 2015



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WRITER'S CORNER



THE ALLURE OF HISTORICAL FICTION PART 1

With Author Aisha Khalaf

My love affair with historical fiction started at the tender age of 7 when, at school in what was then British Guiana, my teacher lent me a book on the life of Christopher Columbus.

I have had to work full time all my adult life, bring up four children and study for the Legal Executives Associate and Fellowship Examinations; an Honours degree in law and the Solicitor's final examinations and whilst I wrote poems and stories continually from the age of 11 I never sought publication.

I became fascinated with Tutankhamun on seeing the

treasures from his tomb and during the last twenty years researched and read all the theories about his life. My sister married an Egyptian and has lived in Egypt for over 30 years. I have visited her and the Cairo Museum many times. My father worked at the British Museum and I spent many summers wandering round the Egyptian artefacts and mummies. Once I retired I made a trip to Upper Egypt with my sister, visiting the Valley of the Kings, Thebes which is now Luxor and sailed the Nile. On returning to the UK I started writing and have not looked back. In early 2017 I self-published Tutankhamun He Is Born (Book 1); early 2018 I published Tutankhamun He is Crowned (Book 2) and in April this year the children's version of Book 1 (age 8+) was published. I am now fine-tuning Book 3 and hope to publish early next year. I would love to find a mainstream publisher only because my books would then reach a wider audience. The Books can be purchased on Amazon. The two adult books are also on Kindle.

All who have read my books and given me feedback have enjoyed it and could not wait for the next volume. Several said they felt as though they were actually there, which is the effect I worked to achieve. It took many, many rewrites following some invaluable feedback from several readers to



get the flow and rhythm of the story. The history is as correct as I have been able to ascertain. The fictional part relates to the many characters who make up the pattern of the Royals life and extrapolating the theories put forward by the experts. In deciding which theories to follow up, I looked at the decisions Tut made when he became pharaoh and worked backwards to assess and evaluate the influences he would have needed to have to make such decisions. I felt I was really 'there' while writing and my characters really surprised me.

One difficulty I found in writing this trilogy is wanting to stay true to historical facts, such as they are, without losing sight of the human story. From feedback so far, I seem to have struck the right balance. The other was I tended to tell rather than show which is something my first born kept saying to me. It took time to understand what he was on about but once I got the idea I was away. Telling is reported speech and can be boring and put the reader off. Showing is live interaction between your characters. The story takes on a life of its own and you are driven to continue the interplay to its, sometimes, surprising conclusion.

The other issue I had to clarify for myself was, what am I trying to

achieve? What do I mean when I say to myself I want these books to succeed? I wanted to create a story that anyone would be able to read and enjoy while learning about life in Ancient Egypt in Tut's time. So many people will never get the opportunity to visit Egypt, see the Valley of the Kings or sail the Nile. By reading my books they can see, feel, smell and taste that bygone time and follow an enigma known as Tutanaten at birth, Tutankhamun when crowned and Pharaoh Nebkeprure.

I have written the books to reflect what I enjoy reading such as Bernard Cromwell's writings on the Vikings and Phillipa Gregory on Britain's rulers and Mary Stewart who excelled at romantic mystery novels. There is now a new East Anglian writer, Martin Ferguson, who has written several Relic Hunter books concerning the Ninth Roman Legion which disappeared without trace in the borderlands between England and Scotland. Eagle of The Empire and Curse of the Sands are fast moving, exciting adventures similar to but different from Dan Brown's style of writing. His third book in the Relic Hunter series is due out soon.

My latest discovery is Hilary Mantel's Wolf Hall. Someone said I wrote in her style. I therefore had to check out her writing. I was



flattered. Hilary has, like myself,
researched her period thoroughly
and you really feel you are there on
the dangerous path trodden by
Thomas Cromwell. She has a
capacious brain and being a fellow
lawyer, a mastery over her subject.

*Aisha Khalaf Pen Name ADP Sorisi
an anagram of the god Osiris.*

21. 06.2018

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FOCUS ON FAITH



**With Shamanic Practitioner
Charlotte Gush**

Shamanism in the 21st Century; how we can heal communities?

The Ancients knew their place in the circle of life, as caretakers of the planet – The Earth Keepers.... ancient creation stories speak of this precious human role, The Inka, The Maya and many others

We were not cast from any garden but gifted these lands by The Great Spirit; to love, tend and care. The Human Race was given the Earth as an act of love, an unfinished canvas, to make beautiful, to grow, to

evolve...a means of expression, union and co-creation...all beings were equal in their respective labours and shared in the bounty

This way of seeing sets up an entirely different relationship with planet we live upon and whom we share it with...one where we have a responsibility to honour, tend and care-take.... to love, create and share.... You see, our belief of our origins creates our reality.

When one thinks of shamanism perhaps the mind is drawn to indigenous tribes shown on National Geographic or perhaps the Medicine man that casts the bones – divining the destiny of the tribe, foretelling the good hunting grounds and the ceremonies needed to bring the rains to replenish the lands....

These images may seem distant or even superstitious nonsense, to some even heathen - a far cry from Western European 21

Century life but it's not as distant as you may think.... for all of our roots are at least Animistic if not Shamanistic.

There was a time when all people believed that all things have spirit, a life force – when humans recognised themselves as part of the planet and the ecology and not as Master of It.

We were all in sync with her seasons, her shifts, moods and



requirements. A time when we all watched the moons cycle to know when to plant the seeds for the ripest harvest, a time when we were all able to speak with the Land, the Rivers, the plants and animals and they would, in their own voice, speak back to us.

We have forgotten who we truly are and the power we hold as individuals and tribes to create lives in tune with the Earth and the Stars.... we all have the skills, the ancestral memories....it is within our DNA, just waiting to be activated.

Modern day shamanic societies still practice these ancient ways including Ancestor worship – These peoples remember the shoulders of whom they stand upon, are reverent and grateful.... they know who they are today because of those who have gone before them...they remember their roots, their stories, their teachings and live in accordance with them

Modern society, cities and the structures that hold them together have offered us many things....

Sanitation, disease control, education, transport, heat at the click of a button, instant communication across the globe but it appears that we have traded something of our birth right in blindly accepting these offerings.

What do I mean by this....in claiming with one hand all that modern life

has to offer, we have perhaps let go with the other hand, much of what made us....

Historically we didn't 'fiddle with time' adding an hour here and taking hours here, rinsing the workforce for all they were worth.

There is a Native American saying which suggests that only the white man would cut the end off a blanket, sew it to the other end and think that he has a longer blanket.....

We live in a manufactured society where success, status and accruing wealth is king.... yet there is something lacking in this false royalty, leaving its subjects feeling restless, lost and disenfranchised.... longing for place, meaning, purpose, love, joy and balance.

You see, there is hypnotism in the air.... told at every turn that we are not enough.... should be thinner, fatter, richer, browner, whiter, seeking like thirsty animals..... shown that God lives solely outside of us, that intelligence is validated through certification and that the Sacred Unseen Life force is a myth.

As science continues to look for evidence that consciousness lives in the brain, the Shaman know its true source...The Earth, The Stars, our collective Heart and the very fabric of the Universe.

Stopping for a moment, an hour, a week, a month or a year.....take



time to connect with beautiful globe
on which you exist.... feel the
ground beneath your feet, feel the
breath that flows in through your
nostrils, feeding our entire system,
before releasing once more to be
recycled by the plant life. Each
morsel we place in our mouths,
whether veggie, vegan, carnivore or
fruitarian has been gifted to us from
this beautiful blue green planet that
we dwell upon.

Reconnect and recognised that you
are part of Her and not simply here
to dash about upon her skin serving
dogmatic agendas.

This third rock from the Sun.... just
perfectly positioned in time and
space, offering us the perfect
conditions for our life to exist and
continue....

What if, as dutifully as we rise to go
to work in the morning, we rose and
focused inward? Checking in with
ourselves, giving thanks for the life
we have and choosing how we will
serve Her that offers us everything?
Making a positive contribution to
the collective, the tribe, the family
and the individual...

Turning to nature just as our
ancestors did. As they say, "Stop
and smell the roses" Listen for the
unique voice of the things that
surround us.

Breathe, Move, Grow something,
Appreciation, Gratitude. Sit around
a fire as many have done before

us.....Nature heals that is no
secret....

Connecting to the environment
encourages us to take responsibility
– taking responsibility changes our
perception and perspective on life
and where we live.... It enables us to
live differently, heal different and
ultimately co-create the positive
future we not only want but
deserve.

It's easy to believe that we are
simply a drop in the ocean....to a
degree that is true, BUT each drop
contributes to the collective
consciousness and ultimately guides
us to the future... The 100

Monkey Effect comes to mind...it
started with one....

Learning and participating in the
Ancient Shamanic ways is an
amazing contribution to make....

- Thanking the Sun upon
waking and thanking once
again before sleep.
- Consciously walking bare foot
on the land.... asking to feel
the Heartbeat of the planet
as you take each step.... Her
pulse is slow and deep....
match your movements to
hers and feel the change, feel
the peace....
- Bless the food that you eat
and the water that you drink,
knowing that as you do so
you offer gratitude to the
provider.



- Thank the waters as you rest in the bathtub at the end of a long hot day.... knowing that you will be cleansed and refreshed.

“Recognise the Sacred within the mundane”

These are very small way that we can begin to engage in a meaningful way with that which supports us. When we become grateful, aware, engaged and connected we create balance for ourselves and those who are around us.

Modern day ailments of Anxiety, Depression, Stress and Separation are all quelled by interacting with way of life.... misfortune is reframed as an opportunity to learn important lessons on the souls’ path. Even death, although deeply saddening, can offer beautiful teaching at the deepest level....

Healing can be called upon from forces outside ourselves when we believe that everything ‘has spirit’

When we view ourselves as part of The Whole so many things are at our disposal. When we are in service to the Planet, love Her and are connected we know where to go to source medicine, renewal and peace.

The seasons show us when to rest and when to ‘make hay’.... it’s all there, laid out for us should we choose to stop, engage and re-

remember what we have always known.

Actively engaging in reciprocity, we feed ourselves and all Our Relations...the Inka call this Ayni – being in right relationship with All That is, living in balance, bringing us back to our centres and our truth....

These aspects which feed the soul cannot be found in any pharmaceutical product or material crutch. Ancient teachings, beliefs, stories, tools, techniques and practices are available for us to find, acknowledge, honour and sooth that which ails us, and heal it ourselves as Sovereign Beings in ceremonial union with the divine.

In Shamanic life ceremonies happen on an almost daily basis; a spontaneous opportunity, a celebratory recognition of The Sacred – a space to manifest into the physical our Hearts intent.... Ritual too is regularly undertaken, following in the well-worn steps of tradition...Both move us from the common-place to the extraordinary....

Recognising the Sacred in the mundane moments, the beauty in the not so pretty, an observance of our place in the cycle of life and a knowing that we can heal ourselves when we source from The Source...this is for me, the Shamanic Way of life.... this is not Alternative Medicine but the original gift that



snoozes within many but lives
within each of us....

*To learn a little more about The
Shamanic Way, Charlotte and her
methods visit*

www.shamanicway.co.uk

*If you have questions, feel free to
contact her directly via e-mail:
charlotte@shamanicway.co.uk*

*Also check her out on Insta:
[@charlotteshamanicway](https://www.instagram.com/charlotteshamanicway)*

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FOCUS ON FAITH



**With LDS Bishop,
Matteo Davide Asioli**

The Need for a God?

**Hello Matteo, tell us a bit about
yourself...**

I'm 35 years old, Italian, residing in Witham, Essex. I have been in the UK for over 10 years now and I work full time in London in a corporate law firm. I have been married to Laura for 10 years and we have three children. I also serve as Bishop of the Witham Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on a volunteer basis.

**What is your faith's belief about
the nature of God?**

I'm a Christian. I believe God is our Father and we are created in his own image and He has a body of flesh and bones. He is immortal, omnipotent and omniscient. He has sent us here on earth to be born of



parents as a type of the relationships which are formed in His realm. I also believe that as man now is, God once was and as God now is, man may be. He is a loving Father who wants us to be like Him and inherit all that He has, provided we learn to walk by faith here on earth. Part of the great plan He has for us is to learn the Gospel of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son in the flesh, and accept him as our Saviour and Redeemer. We look to Jesus Christ to understand the nature and character of God. Feeding the hungry, healing the sick, rebuking hypocrisy, pleading for faith — this was Christ showing us the way of the Father, He who is “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, long-suffering and full of goodness.” In His life and especially in His death, Christ was declaring, “This is God’s compassion I am showing you, as well as that of my own.” God is infinite love, compassion and also power and knowledge. On a personal level what really has meaning with regards to God is the fact I can pray to Him and speak with Him any time, as a man speaks to another, with the outmost respect. I can share with Him my concerns and frustrations as well as my gratitude and joy.

How do you suppose that the nature of the beliefs above clash with society's views?

Today's generations in society have no 'brand loyalty'. Millennials aim to have independence not only economically or artistically but also spiritually. Religion and God are seen as an imposed theory rather than a reality and a belief. Many youth have had no -- or very limited -- exposure to adult role models who know what they believe, why they believe it, and are committed to consistently living it out. So there is no anchor of thoughts and feelings about topics such as, where we come from, why we are here and where we are going. Who accepts God has the Supreme Being in control also accepts there are laws and commandments to live by. This concept of morality is seen as annoying and non-sense, whereas Christians (and other religions) view it as a duty and a way of achieving happiness, whilst also protecting your individual integrity and the one of your family.

In your opinion who is 'the God' of the 21st century? (Who do you think that humans worship?)

Humans, apart from those who are religious, either worship themselves, their ego as the being which needs to be satisfied and listened to at all times. Physical needs, opinions, freedom of expression are seen as the most important principles to uphold. For those who have low self-esteem, idols and role models the world



offers in various shapes and forms become their substitute Gods.

Do you think that human kind is looking more for a God or for answers?

I see a true decline in human beings actually looking for God or for answers. Generations are starting to accept life as it happens each day without thinking too much of the grand scheme of things or who is 'in charge' here. I am grateful for the minority of those who still believe in God, a God of any kind or that at least try to find answers and think of spiritual matters seriously.

Do you think that the concept of religion has been forced to evolve in the 21st century?

The little neighbourhood Church is now often assumed to be irrelevant, and there is no cultural guilt anymore for those who abandon involvement. In the past it was generally accepted that going to Church on a Sunday was the good thing to do. Religion has now also become in the eyes of many as the culprit, the cause of conflict and strife, rather than a benefit to society. For those like me who have tried to live a good Christian life most of their lives, religion remains the source of guidance and direction in life and morality is what keeps the human instincts at bay and within the safe boundaries.

Do you think that the concept of 'God' that is being painted by society has had to have been diluted?

Yes, as a mentioned before, having a God who dictates what we do is too much of an invasive thing to accept for many today. The dilution you refer to can be translated into this: 'Since I don't like the way religion prescribes the way I should live, I will adapt it to my views and opinions.'

To what extent do you agree with the statement that humanity in the 21st century is looking for a God that suits its "lifestyle"?

I fully agree with this statement. That is what is happening, however God's laws are the same yesterday, today and forever. Yes, the World has changed, but for the worse and in most part also because people do not believe in God.

Do you believe that this day in age we are ready to impose our own set of commandments to God?

I don't think humanity wants to impose their own set of commandments to God as such. Rather many simply don't believe in Him and therefore at that point there is free rein and you can live your life based on your own code and morality.



In your opinion, what is the most interesting or thought-provoking notion of what God is that you have encountered?

One of the new Gods, Tolerance.

“Tolerance” today essentially means, “Because my truth is, well, my truth, no one may ever question any behaviour or belief I hold.” This “standard” has become so ingrained that it is now impossible to rationally critique any belief or behaviour without a backlash of criticism. You can see why this is now challenging the traditional Christian view of God...



If you were not of your faith and had to be of another faith, which faith would it be and which other concept of God do you 'warm' to the most?

Certainly the Muslim faith, I have met many Muslim believers for whom I have the utmost respect and their core values I share fully, even considering the substantial differences in doctrine and dogmas when compared to those of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Many thanks for this opportunity.

Matteo Davide Asioli



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EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY

**With Wilfred Willy - Former
president of the Malian Community
Council UK**



**YT- Tell us a little bit about yourself
(occupation / title / where you are
from, hobbies, interests,
inspirations)**

WW: My name is Wilfred Willey, but all my friends call me Willy. Despite the English sounding name, I was born and grew up in Bamako, Mali. My mother's parents were from Sierra Leone and Guinea where she grew up and from where she moved to neighbouring Mali in 1963. There she met my late father who was French. I graduated from the Moscow Linguistics University in Russia with a Master's Degree in Linguistics, translation and interpreting. I fluently speak French, English, Russian, Spanish, Bambara, Malinké (Mandingo) and can converse in

Italian, Polish and Soussou (Guinea). I currently work as a Support team supervisor in a Telecom company in London. But I also do translations and teach Bambara. I have translated the lyrics of several music albums by Malian singers: Oumou Sangaré, Kandia Kouyaté, Fatoumata Diawara and also songs on "Fassiya" by the Gambian female kora virtuoso Sona Jobarteh.

I am a friendly, outgoing and open minded person who is passionate about world affairs, politics and cultures. I like historical novels, documentaries about nature, diverse cultures which allow me to broaden my horizon. I'm always up for a laugh, because it is therapeutic.

**YT - As former president of the
Malian Community Council in the
UK, what was the best aspect of
your role? How did you manage the
council?**

WW: I've always been involved in community organisations, going back to my UNI days in Russia where I was the president of the African Students Association for a few years. When I first came to the UK, I joined forces with other Malians to set up Mali Welfare Association (MAWA), the first Malian association in the UK. The goal was to bring together the small Malian community of the UK and provide assistance and guidance to those in need. This organisation was phased out and replaced in 2006 with the Malian Community Council (MCC), the UK branch of the High Council of Malians Overseas which has its HQ in



Bamako. I was elected the MCC first president. It set out to be the main link between the Malian authorities and the Malians here, as the community began to grow exponentially. Its objective, among other things, is to bring together all the different associations under one umbrella and help channel their efforts towards supporting the community and strengthening the ties with the UK.

The best aspect of my role was being able to help my fellow countrymen and make a real difference to their life. I like people's company and I like being useful to others. This was my way of paying back a little bit for what Mali had given me over the years. I owe the country everything!

When I retired as president of the MCC in 2013, the members gave me an award to thank me for services rendered to the community. To this day I keep it on my desk at home. However, I could not stay away from community organisations for too long. I was soon approached by other Malians to help set up and head a new association called Benso Solidarity.

YT - What does the term diaspora mean to you?

WW: Diaspora, by definition, is a group of people of the same origins who live outside their historical homeland. By extension this can also apply people who share the same ancestral heritage and are scattered in different parts of the world. When I think diaspora, I think togetherness, sharing and personal investment, enormous potential in terms of skills and

competencies.

YT - How important is it for any diaspora to exist as a community?

WW: That is a matter of survival. As an African nation we are used to living in large families in a compound, we grow up accustomed to being surrounded by people in all aspects of our life. As a child we are looked after by all the members of the extended family and the wider community. When we move abroad, especially to the West, we are confronted with a highly individualistic society in which everyone basically fends for themselves. So, this is when we feel the need to find ourselves; to create a new world, an environment where we can be ourselves and meet people who act like us, who feel the same desire and see a common goal. The importance of being a community is countless. But first and foremost, it enables us to speak with one voice and be heard. Secondly, we make sure that newcomers and those in distress feel welcome and know they'll be looked after by their own people. It is vital to exist as a community to promote harmony and social advancement.

YT - What are some principal values that any community should try and develop?

WW: The main value that I think should be promoted at all levels is the respect for authority and the rule of law, especially for our youngsters. If we raise our kids here to respect law and order and instil discipline into them, then we will achieve wonderful



things, provided we give the example ourselves. The other values that will benefit our community is honesty and selflessness. Be willing to help others without expecting anything in return.

This joins up with my concept of personal investment that I mentioned earlier.

YT - In your opinion what is the number one strength of the Malian community in the UK?

WW: This may sound strange, but I think our number one strength lies in our relatively small numbers. You hardly hear anything about the Malian community in this country. We are a proud and hardworking community whose principal concern is to earn a living and help those back home.

YT - Mali is an ex French colony. Is the Malian experience different in the UK than it is in France?

WW: Yes, it is different indeed. Again, the main difference is in the numbers: there are approximately 1500 Malians living in the UK, while there are about 200,000 in France. They are more visible in France, especially in Paris and its Suburbs. The fact that many are undocumented and sometimes live in squalid conditions contributes to giving the Malian community a negative image in the eyes of the French mainstream media. And we all know how perceptions are created....

The UK has always been better in terms of integration and inclusion of foreign nationals than France. Many of our compatriots here have come from other EU countries, where they

acquired citizenship, because they feel welcome here better than the first country where they settled in.

YT - In 2012, Mali as a country was the victim of a division created by the Al Qaeda radical group. The country was divided in two. With the occupied territory claimed as the Azawad.

1. How is this situation being managed at present?

The jihadists were defeated and ousted from the 3 major cities they had previously occupied: Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu. But they are still present, hiding in the hills and amongst the local population. The government is still talking to other rebel groups with whom it signed a peace accord in 2015. This agreement calls on all rebels to disarm and be stationed in UN sponsored centres where they can receive help with their reinsertion. This is a slow process, but it is in motion.

2. In your opinion, what has been the force that kept the Malian people together during these trying times?

Mali has gone through the worst crisis of its entire history and not many countries would have survived it the way Mali has. This is down to the history, the culture and the social structure on which Mali is built. Mali is the birthplace of many major African empires and well organised states: Ghana, Mandé (Mali) and Songhay empires, Segu and Macina kingdoms. Over the centuries this led to ethnic and cultural intermingling. The



Kurukan Fuga Constitution of c.1236 organised the Mandé society into complementary groups and castes and established the Sanankuya, the joking relationship between people of different ethnic groups. This system, which exists to this day across the country, helps to prevent conflicts and promotes social cohesion. So, when the conflict in the North broke out and the terrorists took over the areas, we soon found out that the majority of them were foreign jihadists who were fighting to impose a radical Islam and the sharia law on the populations. We had the presence of Al Qaeda in the Maghreb, MUJAO, Boko Haram and Ansar Dine. When those foreign elements were kicked out with the help of the French army, dialogue was restored with the remaining Tuareg rebels. And as we say, the rest is history.

3. What has been the Malian diaspora's response to the crisis/ current situation?

WW: The diaspora reacted in unison to condemn the terrorist acts and in support of the joint efforts by the Malian government, France and the UN to rid the country of the jihadists. The Malian Community Council and the Malian Honorary Consulate in London organised a march on Downing St against the occupation of the northern regions and for the restoration of the territorial integrity. This was a joint event with other Malian communities around the world. As the president of MCC, I was called to speak at several press conferences,

TV talks and conferences on the crisis. I even took part in a round table with joint parliamentary committee of the House of Commons and some NGOs to talk about the causes of the conflict in the northern part of Mali.

YT - In your opinion where should the bulk of economic/ cultural/ innovative impact of a diaspora be felt? On the continent/ country of origin? In the 'host country? or both? Should one be more important than the other?

WW: In both countries, of course! A diaspora exists only because of a host country and a country of origin. We left our countries of birth to live in another country, but we remain connected to our origins especially to the people we left behind. Therefore, all our efforts here should bring some benefits to the people back home. One is not more important than the other. It all depends on each person's own situation.

YT - In your opinion how key is the role of the Malian diaspora in Malian economy?

WW: The role of the Malian diaspora is enormous, because of what we represent and the experience we have acquired over time. The Malian diaspora is an essential lever for the development of our country. Their economic weight is considerable and their contribution to the national economy is also remarkable. Moreover, the savings they generate far exceed the development aid of our country. According to the World Bank the transfer of funds from the diaspora



to Mali represents over 300 billion CFA Francs per year. This amount is much higher than the development aid Mali receives from his foreign partners.

YT - In your opinion, what should be the relationship between the mentality of the African diaspora and the local African mentality? Is it the diaspora's role to change or influence the local African mind-set?

WW: It is clear that some kind of awareness campaign should be carried out to share more information on how certain things should be done...better. Continuous education of the mind, so to speak. It is often the outdated mentality that keeps us behind other nations. However, there is so much that we, the diaspora, can also learn from them.

YT - Further, is it the diaspora's role to instil a more competitive and entrepreneurial spirit on the continent?

WW: There is no easy answer to this. But I will argue that the diaspora does not need to play that role, because our people back home already have the entrepreneurial spirit. Some of our parents and grand-parents were successful businessmen and women. And so are many younger people nowadays. At times, they travel between African countries and outside the continent to buy and sell goods. However, they all often lack the ability to quickly adapt their business to the

new realities. They also need to step away from the old merchant tradition of buying and selling and instead to start producing goods themselves. This way, they can add more value to the goods and create jobs. This will require help from the government in terms of investment in education and training. It is the best way forward if we want to create wealth and lasting development. Luckily some of our African countries have started this process already. The president of Côte d'Ivoire recently inaugurated the country's first chocolate factory, although the country is the world's first cocoa beans producer.

YT - Mali is a land incredibly tied to its rich traditions. It is almost known as the cultural hub of West Africa. How is this shifting in 2018?

WW: As I said before, Mali is the cradle of many major empires and kingdoms. It is only natural that it will have diverse traditions which translate into one of the richest cultures in Africa and is envied by many other countries.

It is the cultural hub in West Africa indeed. This is actually growing from strength to strength, bar the hiatus of 2013 when the jihadist occupying the North had banned all music and other cultural manifestations.

Now music is back on track and Mali has once again regained its position as the epicentre of festivals of all kinds.

Every time I watch the news on Malian TV, there is a festival somewhere, some bigger than others, but the most famous being The Festival on the Niger. I was last in Bamako back in



January and the culture is very much alive and its manifestations are everywhere to be seen. New venues opening, street events, exhibitions, etc. are a daily occurrence.

YT - What are three things that you wish to see and happen on the African continent?

WW: I'd like to see a rejuvenation of the political class; a stronger regional integration and an end to the meaningless conflicts between brothers of the same countries.

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ENTREPRENEURS & INNOVATION

**With Elvina Quaison –Director of
SESA and AFFORD Business Club
Manager.**



Time to dive into the deep Blue?

There are a great number of you out there with a burning passion to start your own business. Some of you would like to do this on the African continent or in partnership with entities there. The burning question is what can I do there?

My question to you is 'How are you looking for your answer?' Are you talking to friends, family, acquaintances? Are you making assumptions after an exciting holiday where you identified 'gaps' due to your own frustrations or lack of access to



something you are accustomed to getting with ease?

Or are you attending talks, presentations, conferences with speakers who trade in your country/ies of interest? Reading articles, blogs, reports which provide factual data on real (not perceived) gaps in need and demand? This is where your energies should be spent if you are serious about starting, growing and scaling an enterprise with staying power.

I recently attended a conference on the Blue Economy and like a few of you (maybe many of you) I had no idea what this was, yet we should as it is a key sector of opportunity for the Africa focused entrepreneur.

What is the Blue Economy?

The Blue Economy refers to all areas of work, trade, service provision, products and so on, that relates the ocean and its surrounding environment. The World Bank provide a nice concise definition which is 'The Blue Economy is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health.'



With 38 out of 54 African countries being coastal it quickly becomes clear why we should be paying attention to the blue

economy when business planning. While immediate thought may go to fisheries and the fishing of Africa's oceans one should think broadly about the possibilities.

Potential areas of business

Type of ecosystem services	Blue Economy sectors
Harvesting of living aquatic resources (seafood, plant marine organisms and marine biotechnological products)	Fishing (inland, coastal and deep seas) Aquaculture Mariculture Pharmaceuticals, chemicals, cosmetics Genetic research
Extraction of non-living resources and generation of new energy resources	Deep-sea and seabed mining Offshore oil and gas Renewable energy Marine salt harvesting Coastal mining of sand, gravel and other construction materials
Commerce and trade in and around the ocean and rivers	Maritime transport and services Port infrastructure Shipbuilding and repairs River transport Tourism and recreation
Protection	Coastal protection Marine ecosystem protection Water resource protection
Cultural and religious values	Cultural and religious practices
Knowledge and information	Biophysical, socioeconomic,



	and political research
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To help give an indication of what is possible we will look at the case of Cape Verde.

Case study – Cape Verde

Cape Verde or Cabo Verde (Portuguese) as it is officially known is made up of 10 isles floating in the Atlantic Ocean, 500 kilometres off the coast of Senegal. Historically it was referred to as the 'Islands of the blessed' or the 'fortunate Isles'. It is quite easy to see why when you see its beautiful coastline, peaceful environment and diversity of people due to its history and geographical positioning.

In 2012 the Food and Agriculture organisation of the United Nations (FAO) identified Cabo Verde to be a pilot country for a Blue Growth initiative which is based on the Growth charter.

The Cabo Verde government are focusing on fisheries and tourism. To give an idea of the growth and services potential possible, on the island of Sao Vicente more than 350 fishing boats dock per year at the Porto Grande generating more than 17 million euros a year.

The government aim to increase this and serve over 500 fishing ships yearly through improved promotion of the country, services and infrastructure. This means they will be actively looking for experienced internal and external partners. Look at your area of expertise or interest and find out if there is a service or product/s you can provide to support this ambitious initiative.

ENAPOR (Cape Verde's port authority) hopes to handle 3 million tons of merchandise and receive over 200,000 tourists a year. What opportunity can you see here? Logistics, event organising, travel and tours? Open your mind and ask meaningful questions to the right people.

There is also space in the academic realm as the desire to promote better research on environment impact is also a focus as the desire to exploit the natural resources are there but in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way to promote the blue economy.

Next steps

Once you have an idea no matter how broad or vague you can start researching to help you become more knowledgeable and so able to make informed decisions about your venture. Look at the steps below to give you some ideas and direction to begin your path into the Blue Economy.

- Research the government in the country of interests policy on the Blue Economy to find out if there is any support or incentives (grants/ exemptions/ tax holidays)
- Speak to the trade desk in Embassies, High Commissions and government departments in the country of interest if you have access. You can also check the trade agency in your country of residence if you are outside of Africa as many agencies have support programmes for entrepreneurs wanting to look at new environments and sectors.
- Read articles and research the Blue Economy generally and how it pertains to your country of



interest specifically – google is your friend!

- As you develop and explore your interests, find out if you need to be certified in anything or if a course in a particular area could assist you progress with greater ease and validity.
- Look at what other enterprises in the same or other parts of the world are doing that is similar to your idea and learn from them. If there is no direct possibility of competition you can find some business owners are quite willing to share their experiences and provide useful advice.
- If the business you connect with is in another part of the world make sure you factor in the different climate, infrastructure, government support, access to materials, culture (including spiritual beliefs) and so much more that your chosen destination may have to the one you are learning from.
- Many businesses have had problems because they tried to implement an idea flourishing in another environment wholesale in Africa without taking consideration of the particularities of their chosen African country.
- There is so much more that could be said but a key piece of advice I would offer is research, budget for and get yourself a business advisor who has a track record and can help you save time and money by making the right decisions the first time!

There are a number of opportunities for the entrepreneur who opens their mind, is flexible and values strong research to make informed decisions. Good luck and see below for some resources to start you off!

Helpful resources

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2017/06/06/blue-economy>

<http://thecommonwealth.org/blue-economy>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmw4kvfUnZI>

<http://www.fao.org/3/b-bp647e.pdf>

Elvina Quaison

Director of SESA and AFFORD Business Club manager.







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