



# The origins of consciousness



**T**his month, we were pleased to interview best-selling author Graham Hancock. This is the first of a four-part interview with Graham by Brian Creigh, the publisher and executive editor of *Veritas*.

Graham is the author of the major international bestsellers *The Sign and The Seal*, *Fingerprints of the Gods*, and *Heaven's Mirror*. An unconventional thinker who raises controversial questions about humanity's past, his books have sold more than five million copies worldwide and have been translated into 27 languages. His public lectures and radio and TV appearances, including two major TV series—*Quest For The Lost Civilization*, and *Flooded Kingdoms of the Ice Age*—have put his ideas before audiences of tens of millions.

Previously a career journalist, Graham wrote for many of Britain's leading newspapers. His breakthrough to bestseller status came in 1992 with the publication of *The Sign and The Seal*, his epic investigation into the mystique and whereabouts today of the lost Ark of the Covenant.

In 2005, Graham published *Supernatural: Meetings with The Ancient Teachers of Mankind*, an investigation of shamanism and the origins of religion. This controversial book suggests that experiences in altered states of consciousness have played a fundamental role in the evolution of human culture and that other realities surround us all the time, but are not normally accessible to our senses.

While researching *Supernatural*, Hancock travelled to the Amazon to

drink the visionary brew *Ayahuasca*—the Vine of Souls—used by shamans for more than 4,000 years. His experiences with the vine lead to his first novel, *Entangled*, which tells the story of a supernatural battle of good against evil fought out across the dimension of time on the human plane.

**Brian:** *Graham, thanks very much for joining us. It's a real honor and a pleasure to have you with us at Veritas Magazine. First of all, could you just give us a bit of a background on what you've been doing of late?*

**Graham Hancock:** Well, I'm known for large, non-fiction investigations

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of historical mysteries, and my best-known book, which was quite a major, international bestseller back in the 1990s, is *Fingerprints of the Gods*. This looks into the possibility that there has been a huge, forgotten episode in human civilisation—a lost civilisation. Through the 1990s, I focused on that issue, mining away at the evidence. I don't claim that the evidence I put

before the public or the view that I take is necessarily right. I want people to make up their own minds based on the evidence that I present, but I feel that my role in that field has been to provide a solidly researched, alternative point of view.

We have a historical academic mainstream, which looks at history and prehistory and has a particular take

An interview with  
**Graham HANCOCK**

on the past. It's extremely dominant and supported by all the large-scale media, and its point of view is taught in the education system throughout the world. I think it's important to understand that history is a story. It's a narrative. It's an interpretation of fact. And what I've tried to do is to show that there is another reading that can be put on many of the facts that are recognised by mainstream academia, and certain facts which are not recognised by mainstream academia, which might cause us to think again about our understanding of history.

I've done a huge amount of work on this subject, trying to provide a serious alternative point of view to the mainstream view of history, and that culminated in 2002 with an enormous book called *The Underworld*. This was the result of six or seven years of scuba diving all around the world looking for ruined structures underwater. Many people may not be aware that the sea level rose by 400 feet all around the world at the end of the last Ice Age, swallowing up some twenty-seven million square kilometres of land; and we have all over the world thousands of traditions of a gigantic flood that ended

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the former golden age of mankind. It seemed to me that under water was the most plausible place to look for the remains of the lost civilisation.

After I had written *Underworld*, I felt that I had taken the research as far as I could take it and I was interested in exploring other mysteries. That's why I went on to write a book called *Supernatural: Meetings with the Ancient Teachers of Mankind*. This is a very different focus and looks at the role of the altered states of consciousness in human culture, particularly through the medium of shamanism, and suggests that there may be much more to reality than meets the eye. We—through mainstream science—tend to be very focused on the material basis of reality, and science aims to weigh, measure, and count things and to dismiss evidence that cannot be weighed,

measured, and counted. But, in *Supernatural*, I was looking at the experiences that shamans and others have in deeply altered states of consciousness, and looking at the hypothesis that the brain may not be so much a generator of consciousness, but a receiver or a transceiver that manifests consciousness into the material plane.

If the brain's relationship to consciousness is rather more like the relationship of a TV set to a TV signal than to a factory making cars, then it follows that, by altering the receiver wavelength of the brain, we may perhaps—hypothetically—be able to gain access to other levels of reality that are normally closed off to our senses. I was able to mount a direct investigation into that hypothesis, which is what I like in my research. I spent several years taking powerful visionary plants such as Ayahuasca and Iboga with shamans in order to, as it were, dial in to the levels of reality that they often refer to as a spirit world, but I think in quantum physics terms might be better referred to as parallel universes or parallel dimensions.

First of all, my experiences in altered states of consciousness, and particularly with Ayahuasca in the Amazon, had a

profound impact on me, way beyond the pure focus of research, and began to—quite radically—reshape my worldview. Secondly, I wanted to work in a different way. I was very tired of writing defensively, which is what you have to do when you introduce radical hypotheses that are unpopular with mainstream academics. When I wrote *Fingerprints of the Gods*, I was coming from a place of freedom. I wanted to get back to that place of freedom, so I decided I would try my hand at fiction. Also, I'm now in my early 60s. I felt it was time to explore other areas of my own creativity as a writer, to get into a different kind of writing, exercise other writing muscles, and it seemed to me that fiction would be an interesting way to go. It would still be possible to explore extraordinary ideas in fiction, but I wouldn't need to erect this huge, defensive apparatus of argument around them because if the academics do get worked up about an idea in a work of fiction, you can just say, "Well, relax, guys. It's just fantasy, you know."

And so I wrote a book called *Entangled*, which draws a lot on my experiences in altered states of consciousness and concerns two young women—one living in the 21st century, one living 24,000 years ago—who are brought together by a supernatural being to do battle with the demon who travels through time. Since the first volume of that book was finished, I've been writing a major series of novels on the Spanish conquest of Mexico, on the story of Montezuma and Cortez and the extraordinary events that took place in Mexico between 1519 and 1521. And, although it is quite deeply historically based, it is also very much a fantasy adventure novel. This is a genre in which I feel increasingly comfortable as a writer.

The first volume of the trilogy will be published either at the end of this year or early in 2013. It's the untold story of the Spanish conquest of Mexico and of the spiritual forces at work behind history. And it's an adventure story, and it's a story of the supernatural as well.

**Brian:** So, how have your dedicated followers managed to make the transition from your non-fiction work to your fictional work?

**Graham Hancock:** Well, I would say that they haven't, actually. One thing



The story of Atlantis can never be properly understood if it's viewed in isolation. We have to understand that very similar stories are told by supposedly unconnected cultures all around the world.

that I've discovered as I've started to write fiction is that really, as an author, I am—if you like—completely reinventing myself and reaching out to a completely different audience. I wish it were otherwise, but many of my existing readers of my non-fiction seem to define themselves as people who don't read fiction at all. For example, my book, *Entangled*, which is fundamentally a story of the battle of good against evil, that book contains a lot of violence. None of the violence



is made up or invented by me. It's all stuff that human cultures have done to one another down the ages, but I felt very strongly that if I'm going to explore the theme of evil and its role in human history, and our reaction and response to the problem of evil, I couldn't do so with a light hand. I had to show it as it was, in the darkest possible way. And I think there is a faction amongst my readers who define themselves as New Age thinkers who believe that you only have to think good things and good things will come, who would be really horrified and just don't understand why I have devoted pages and pages to describing horrific human behavior. But I—for my part—felt that I had no other choice, and that this is actually a real aspect of human life. When the problem of Hitler arose in the 20th century, one could not just wish it away. At a certain point, something actually has to be done about it on the physical plane. Some wickedness is so wicked and so evil that it actually has to be stopped. It can't just be sent away with good feelings.

**Brian:** Absolutely.

**Graham Hancock:** And this has been true throughout human history, so I certainly wrote, in the first volume of *Entangled*, a book that is, in many ways, very dark. But I felt



that I couldn't show the ultimate victory of the light—and I do believe the light always does win in the end—without also showing the struggle over darkness. So I've had many very negative comments about the violence in the book from existing readers, but I just feel I have to live with that. This is a new area that I am exploring now, and ultimately I am not trying to tailor my work to a specific audience. I am just trying to do the best I can in the medium in which I am writing, and to tell the truth as I see it.

**Brian:** *I personally find that fascinating. In my youth one of my favorite authors was Wilbur Smith and the reason that I loved Wilbur Smith's books was that he used to write fictional characters, but it was all based around historical events.*

**Graham Hancock:** Yes. He's an excellent writer. I think it's often forgotten that the most important role for a writer is to engage and interest their reader. The reader needs to be engaged in story, and the story needs to be page-turning.

I'm writing fiction at the moment, and the fiction is very much historically based, particularly in the story of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, which had never really been told in the English language before. Rider Haggard wrote a book back at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century called *Montezuma's Daughter*, but since then there's not really been a big fantasy adventure exploration of the Spanish conquest of Mexico and of the extraordinary scenes that arise because two very, very violent and dark peoples were brought together in that conflict. That was the Mexica, who people prefer to speak of as the Aztecs, and the Spaniards of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, who were just incredibly violent. And the clash of these two cultures is absolutely fascinating and it made its impact on the whole subsequent history of the world.

I believe the story of the Americas would have been radically different if things had gone differently during the Spanish conquest—if Montezuma and the Mexica had not been so vile in the way that they treated neighboring peoples, which caused those neighboring peoples to support the Spaniards rather than to support



*that has been spoken about extensively by a number of people. You're considered—particularly in this area—as one of the great researchers in this genre. Some academics obviously believe that Atlantis is still a myth. Can you tell us a little bit about your thoughts and your research on that?*

**Graham Hancock:** Yes. I think it's important to understand, and I've been pretty clear about this in my own mind for a long time. I actually hardly use the word Atlantis in *Fingerprints of the Gods*. The story of Atlantis comes down to us from Plato, who said he received it from an ancestor in his family—Solon, the great lawmaker—who, in turn, received it from the ancient Egyptian. The story of Atlantis can never be properly understood if it's viewed in isolation. We have to understand

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them. What happened in the Spanish conquest set the model for the whole genocide of the Americas that followed later on. So, it's a very interesting, pivotal moment in history.

*Entangled* focuses on the period of 24,000 years ago, which was the time of the last Neanderthals. I'm very interested in what happened to the Neanderthals and why and how they became extinct, and whether our species—anatomically modern humans—were implicated in that or not, and what that says about the battle of good against evil. So this is fiction, but it's fiction rooted quite deeply in serious research into aspects of the past that I've been lucky enough to do over the years.

**Brian:** *Yes, that's amazing. Graham, I want to talk a little bit more about Supernatural and Entangled shortly, but before we do I just want to take you back to Underworld. Can you talk to us a little bit about the civilisation of Atlantis? This is obviously an area*

that very similar stories are told by supposedly unconnected cultures all around the world. Ancient India, for example, has an almost identical tradition about a great civilisation that existed on an island and on extended land masses, far to the south of India, that was destroyed in a great flood, that there were survivors and that those survivors passed on the seeds of civilisation to the rest of mankind. This is the story of Kumari Kandam and the Sangam tradition in southern India and, interestingly, it sets the epoch of the destruction of this former civilisation at exactly the same time that Plato does, which is somewhat short of 12,000 years ago.

And you find the same tradition just repeated again and again, with subtly different variants and different names, all around the world. Once we recognise that, then I think the story of Atlantis becomes much easier to get to grips with. We can get rid of all the ideas that it was something that Plato just made up. We can start to connect it with a body of tradition all around the world, which bears testimony to a former episode of civilisation—to a maritime civilisation with a vast ability in

a number of areas. It may have been quite different from our own idea of what the civilisation is today—that was nevertheless highly competent and admirable in many respects, but was brought low. These traditions always indicate that this great civilisation of the past in some way angered the gods, or lost the mandate of heaven, or fell out of its connection with the universe and, as a result of so doing, brought destruction down upon itself.

I think what's interesting about all the traditions is that they focus our minds back on the period of 12,000 or more years ago, and this is precisely the period of the end of the last Ice Age when the Earth was going through a very severe and very traumatic change. Ice sheets two or three miles deep that had sat on top of northern Europe and North America for 100,000 years were melting down very, very rapidly. The sea level was rising. Huge outburst floods were taking place from glacial lakes which broke their ice boundaries and poured out across the land waves of water 600 feet high, moving at close to the speed of sound, just tearing across the landscape, ripping everything to shreds, wiping out any remnant or trace of anything that lay in their path, pouring into the oceans and raising the level of the ocean. Huge earthquakes taking place. Enormous amounts of volcanism are present in the geological records for the end of the last Ice Age as well.

It's just hard to envisage today how traumatic and how devastating that must have been. A Boxing Day Tsunami or a Hurricane Katrina throw our civilisation today into a tailspin, and we don't know how to deal with it. You have to imagine that multiplied one thousand-fold and taking place all over the world at the same time, rendering habitats that

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had been viable for tens of thousands of years completely uninhabitable because they're flooded by the ocean. And it seems to me, if ever there was an epoch when we could have lost a great civilisation almost entirely from the historical record—that is the epoch we should be looking at, the end of the last Ice Age. And that's very much what I focused on in *Fingerprints of the Gods* and in *Underworld*. And part of the testimony that's left in the so-called mythical or legendary record that speaks of that lost civilisation is the story of Atlantis, with its roots in ancient Egypt, passed on to Solon and then to Plato and then to us. But, as I said, it's one of many such traditions.

**Brian:** *Fascinating. Moving to the present day, I know you have something on your website that says, "This is why doomsday fears will survive 2012 apocalypse," and I just want to know what you mean.*

**Graham Hancock:** We run a news desk on my website, which tries to bring together interesting news stories from all over the world every day, and so there is actually no particular editorial line in the news desk. It's more simply a matter of reporting what's out there. And providing the links that connect people to those stories.

**Brian:** *A lot of people are really fascinated and really interested about what's in store for humanity. There is this speculation of the apocalypse and all those types of things. What are your thoughts about what this year—2012—actually means?*

**Graham Hancock:** Well, I'm definitely not going around the world wearing a sandwich board saying, "The end of the world is nigh," because I don't think it is. I think that there has been a lot of almost willful misreading of the Mayan calendar and of what the Mayan calendar suggests. It seems that there is a certain element of humanity that just loves the idea of doomsday, and actually, that idea keeps on resurfacing down the ages. There were elements of that around the time of the millennium—the year 2000. There were similar elements 1,000 years before, at the end of the first millennium—a sense that the world is going to end, and soon. I don't share that view, and the ancient Maya in their extraordinary calendar system—which they themselves inherited from an earlier people called



the Olmecs who we know very little about—didn't share that view either.

What the Mayan calendar says is, however, extremely interesting. It envisages a cyclical view of history, and the Long Count calendar over a period of what are called 13 b'ak'tuns—just over 5,100 years—the latest cycle of the Long Count calendar does indeed end on the 21st of December, 2012, and it started around 3,100 BC. But when it started, it was following on seamlessly from the previous cycle. And when it ends on the 21st of December, 2012, it will roll on seamlessly into the next cycle, into the new cycle. So what actually the Mayan calendar is saying is not that we are coming to the end of the world on the 21st of December, 2012, but that we are coming to the end of a great cycle of the human story and that a new cycle is beginning. And it's really interesting; if you look at the period demarcated in the Long Count of just over 5,100 years, from 3,100 BC until 2012, that this is precisely the period of the evolution and manifestation of the city-state, of the state as an instrument in human affairs. There wasn't much in the way of states—as far as we know—before 3,100 BC, about 5,100 years ago.

But then you have ancient Egypt. You have Sumer. You have the beginning of centralised bureaucratic states with power elites who are imposing a particular vision of civilisation upon humanity. And the last 5,100 years has indeed been the period of preeminence of the state, and we see that most powerfully today with huge nation states, some of which are seeking to agglomerate into larger federal states, but all of which share this vision of a centrally controlled bureaucratic system of order in which the citizen ultimately



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is to be told what to do. The citizen may participate in the state through so-called democracy, electing representatives to parliament and so on and so forth, but once elected, they basically then run our lives for the next five or six years.

And this model of the world run by big states and by super-states and associated institutions, such as the large mainstream religions—whether Judaism, Christianity, Islam—and large corporations, again operating on the bureaucratic model with centralised control, in my opinion—I may be wrong—this system is now, today, in terminal decline. Just as it appears at its most powerful, the cracks are showing everywhere in the system, and you can trace almost all the problems in the modern world to these huge centralised bureaucracies—whether states, religions, or corporations. And all of this has evolved during the last 5,100

years that the Maya demarcated as this cycle of human civilisation.

So what I take from the Mayan calendar and from the Mayan tradition is that somehow—amazingly—they connected to a reality, to a real cycle in human behaviour, and we are indeed coming to the end of that cycle. Something new is going to emerge and it probably will take some time to happen. It's not something that we should regard as happening overnight. It's a process rather than a specific moment, but in this process, we are going to see the failure of the state model, the failure of the bureaucratic corporation, the failure of the mainstream religions—their inability any longer to fulfill the promises that they make—and an increasing disillusionment and a new mood and a new consciousness emerging in the world. I see signs everywhere around the world today of a new consciousness being born, which resists the control of the state and of large corporations, which emphasises the sovereignty of the individual, and which emphasises, indeed, individual sovereignty over consciousness as a key element.

This is what's new. This is the new birth that is coming about through difficulty and pain and problems. But, ultimately, my view is hopeful, and a positive one. We are going to pass through a period of transition in the human story, and we are going to give birth to a new way of

living in the world. A way which is more nurturing, more positive, more healing to the individual and to the planet and to the ecosystem that sustains us, more reverent of the meaning and purpose of life, and more spiritually oriented. I see all of this coming to birth now. Huge forces are resisting it, but it's going to happen and somehow the Maya knew that.

Part Two of this four-part interview with Graham Hancock will continue in the next edition of *Veritas*.

To find out more about Graham visit [www.grahamhancock.com](http://www.grahamhancock.com).

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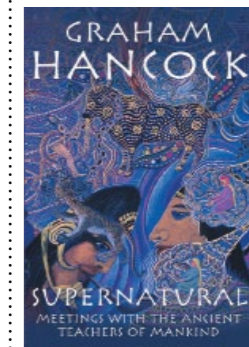
**CALL TO EVOLUTION**

THE ORIGINS OF CONSCIOUSNESS  
AN INTERVIEW WITH  
GRAHAM HANCOCK

1. Think of a mystery you've heard about, but never researched, like Atlantis or the Nazca Lines in Peru. Google 5 articles about it, and read them. Then, think about how you would either prove or disprove the mystery.
2. Write down what you think are 5 examples necessary for a good civilization, such as: society makes sure all hungry people are fed at least once a day. Ignore cost and time factors; just imagine a close-to-perfect society. Look at examples from other cultures, like subsidized parental leave and childcare in France.
3. Identify 10 things you want/need to do if the world were to end December 21, 2012. Do not pay attention to cost or time. Look at your list: which ones can you accomplish in the next year?
4. As we move into the next cycle and give birth to a new way of conscious living, what 5 actions or changes do you want to accomplish in the next year?

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