

Towards a Spiritual Worldview

Speaker: Jeff Blumberg — Smuts Scholar & Historian; author of a forthcoming book on Smuts' unfinished sequel to *Holism and Evolution*

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Subtitle: *Revisiting Smuts' Unfinished Sequel to Holism and Evolution*

Event: Centenary Festival of Holism & Evolution — *A New Hope for the Future* (Holos Earth Academy, 20–24 May 2026), marking 100 years of Jan Christian Smuts' *Holism and Evolution* (1926); Day 2 of Phase 1

Also present: Dr Claudius van Wyk (convenor), Michael Stock (host, Bristol), Prof Kobus du Pisani (in chat), Mark van Wyk, Marcus Link, Berry Behr, Frederick Hölscher, John Anderson, Joshua, Egon Hus, Bridget Blumberg, Jenny Blumberg, and others

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Abstract

In his first public presentation of twelve years of archival research — including some 20,000 digital images of the Smuts papers in the National Archives in Pretoria — Jeff Blumberg argues that the “sequel” Smuts promised in the preface to *Holism and Evolution*, in which he undertook to one day apply holism to “the higher spiritual interests of mankind”, was not a book Smuts failed to write. It was the project he had already been writing, in fragments and drafts, since he was sixteen: a lifelong search for a new idea of God that could withstand scientific scrutiny, restore the spirituality that mechanistic science had hollowed out of religion, and give science itself a fit method of inquiry into nature.

Blumberg traces this search through Smuts' early Stellenbosch essays (*Homo Sum, The Gods Seen Everywhere, On Christian Religion*, 1889), Cambridge and the 1893 manuscript *Cosmic Religion* (in which God is first defined as “the supreme principle of synthesis”), 50 pages of notebook annotations on the German philosopher Rudolf Eucken, the 1894 *Walt Whitman: A Study in the Evolution of the Personality*, the 1909 Spinoza epiphany aboard a homeward Union-Castle mail ship that resolved Smuts' dualism into the formulation that “*there is no spirit of the whole apart from the whole; the whole is spiritual*”, the unpublished *An Inquiry into the Whole* (1910–1912) where the word *holism* appears for the first time, the abandoned *Holism Again* (1920), and the impact of Einstein's general theory of relativity, which Smuts read for the first time in December 1920.

Blumberg argues that the answer to what Smuts actually meant by “living a life in holism” is to be reconstructed primarily from the 1,756 letters Smuts wrote to Margaret Clark (later Gillett) over 44 years, in which he reinterpreted central doctrines of Christianity — sin, salvation, resurrection,

the risen Christ, incarnation, immortality, grace, love, faith — in the language of holism. The talk centres on Smuts' own *methodological* requirement, drawn from *Holism and Evolution* page 93, that nature must be interpreted from her own point of view rather than from imposed abstractions, and ends with the proposition that holism is best understood as *an expression of nature's point of view*. A short Q&A follows with Berry Behr, Frederick Hölscher, John Anderson, Mark van Wyk, Joshua, Marcus Link and Egon Hus.

Transcript

■ Welcome and introduction

Michael Stock: Welcome to Day 2 of the Centenary Festival of Holism and Evolution. Tonight: Jeff Blumberg, towards a spiritual worldview Smuts intended in his sequel. But first, an invitation to enjoy a quiet moment, to take a few breaths, to arrive together. Handing over now to Claudius.

Claudius van Wyk: Thank you, Michael, and thank you for getting us to settle down. We've had a few little technical glitches, and they are in the process of being put at rest. A particular warm word of welcome to Jeff Blumberg. Jeff has not come from an academic background into holism and into Smuts' life. Jeff actually discovered Smuts by trying to address a problem as a senior executive in the business world, and in finding that they were talking about *holistic solutions*, he thought: what does that mean? In his deep inquiry into it, he found that what was generally spoken about as holism was not what it actually was. He started discovering a depth, and decided that it was his duty to bring that depth to the world. So Jeff is actually close — we're holding thumbs in England, Jeff, crossed fingers — to publishing a book on his findings into Smuts' intended sequel, and what Smuts really meant by holism. With that brief introduction, Jeff, you are so welcome. We look forward to spending this time with you, and to having a conversation afterwards.

■ The talk — Jeff Blumberg

Jeff Blumberg: Thanks very much, Claudius. It's a privilege for me to be here tonight. It's night-time where I am; I don't know where everybody else is in the world. It's an honour to present the findings of my research, which I'm now in my twelfth year of, and I still haven't published. I was hoping to publish my work to coincide with the centenary celebration, but alas, it wasn't to be. I'm nearly there. It's also an honour to be talking about my work for the first time in public. I haven't shared it with anybody in a public forum before, so this is the first you're going to hear of it. It's also an honour to be presenting with Professor Du Pisani here. It's a great privilege for me to be able to share my work with one of the foremost scholars on Smuts.

You already mentioned the history, Claudius. I read Smuts thirty-five years ago, in connection with trying to solve a cost-management problem in the business world, where people speak about *looking at things holistically*. What does that mean? Looking at things holistically meant taking everything into account, but it didn't solve that problem. So I looked up the word *holism* for the first time, and I found the 1926 dictionary insertion of what holism was: *a tendency to make wholes in the universe*. That certainly had nothing to do with looking at things holistically in a business world. On my retirement from the corporate world, I decided to research Smuts in more detail. I read him again. He mentions, in the preface to the first edition and in the third edition, that he promises a sequel: he promises to one day write about *applying holism to the higher spiritual interests of mankind*. I thought, that is something I want to understand. So I embarked on a project which has cost me a lot of time, a lot of money — but so much pleasure. It's also been a life with Smuts. My wife, who I think is on this call somewhere, has lived with me for the last twelve years with Smuts.

It took me to the archives — the National Archives in Pretoria — where I have, virtually, 20,000 digital images of the Smuts papers in my possession. I've read every single essay, book, article and speech Smuts ever wrote. So having said all that, it's going to be quite difficult to condense twelve years of research into 45 minutes. I'll do my best.

I found that Smuts did, in fact, start a sequel. Between 1928 and 1932, he wrote several papers and some chapters of a book he was working on. They deal with the application of holism to science, and to psychology in particular. I'll be publishing this unpublished material in my book. I won't be dealing with that tonight. Tonight, I'm dealing with the search for the highest spiritual interests of man.

I took the title for my presentation, *Towards a Spiritual Worldview*, from a draft speech that Smuts made as President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1931 — he wrote it in 1930. The original title of that draft speech was *Towards a Spiritual Worldview*. A friend in the science community said to him: this title is not a suitable title for the president of an association of scientists. So he changed the title, but he didn't change the content. He was disappointed, but not surprised, because the message he wanted to give to the science community was that science had been making enormous progress, and that science *itself* was moving towards a spiritual worldview. When Smuts had discovered and understood relativity theory and quantum theory, things were becoming, in his interpretation, more spiritual, because those are invisible things. He wanted to tell the science community that scientists themselves were moving towards a less mechanistic, analytical view of the world, because of the new space-time discoveries — and that despite this progress, the scientists themselves didn't understand the consequences of their own findings. I use this as a title for my talk because it speaks to the sequel he wanted to write on the higher spiritual interests.

After all my reading, I realised that, in fact, Smuts wasn't *going to write* about the higher spiritual interests of man. He had already done so. He started that journey at the age of sixteen. That was the big aha moment. Once you've read all the Smuts papers, you realise that what is most revealing is that when Smuts started out in his first essays, he is in search of God. I have all the evidence to back me up, so you might think I'm crazy — but this is where Smuts started: in a search for God. Not just the conventional God: a new idea of God that he was in search of.

Why was he looking for a new idea of God? Because he thought that science and evolution had destroyed the spirituality of man. It's all science's fault. Man used to turn to the Bible to understand the origins of Genesis, and to the Bible for spiritual comfort — but no more. Man was now looking to science for all the answers: where we come from, why we're here, the meaning of life. And Smuts is very unhappy about this. It is not what he is celebrating at all. He's looking for a new idea of God to *compete*, so to speak, with science. He wants to find an idea of God that scientifically can stand up to scrutiny, and match science in understanding nature.

Religion had its problems — it couldn't answer the spiritual questions Smuts thought were necessary. Science certainly couldn't, in terms of how we should live. He also saw that science had its own problems. Science was mechanistic and analytical, and could not understand nature with that scientific frame of inquiry. So he had a framework where he was going to find a solution for religion and a solution for science. He searches for this new idea of God. And when you read all the papers, you realise that his discovery of holism was actually *incidental*. He comes across holism, *by the way*. It will all become clearer as we go.

Smuts needs a new idea of God to restore the spiritual faith in religion, and a new method of inquiry for science. He finds his answer in his own understanding of nature — through his intimate companionship with the Earth. *Companionship* is a word Smuts carefully chose. It has far more depth than just to say *a relationship with nature*. Companionship with nature and a relationship with nature are two different things. You can have a relationship with your wife and never really connect deeply enough to experience what Smuts meant by companionship with nature. Smuts treated nature as his closest companion — these are not my words, these are Smuts' words. He treated plants and trees and mountains as his brothers and sisters. Again, these are expressions I've taken out of his letters.

“The intimate rapport with nature,” Smuts says, “is one of the most precious things in life. Nature is indeed very close to us, sometimes perhaps closer than hands and feet.” That's in *Holism and Evolution*; if you've read it as many times as I have, you'll find it there. “Nature is closer than hands and feet, for we are indeed one with nature; her genetic fibres run through all our being.” When he speaks of brothers and sisters and hands and feet, that's not metaphor. As much as we think Smuts speaks in metaphor — which he does — that doesn't mean *that* is metaphor. Right there is a theory of evolution. He's speaking to the common origin he shares with his brothers and

sisters: the plants, the trees, the mountains. That's what he means. He's talking to evolution, to commonality.

Smuts was a deeply spiritual person. You cannot count the number of times he uses the word *spiritual* in his speeches, in his letters, and certainly in the books he wrote. The important point is that his spirituality was nurtured by his companionship with nature. It is in this companionship that Smuts first experiences — and the key word is *experience* — what it means to be spiritual. He felt nature to be alive as he was alive, and he came to sense that nature had a point of view, just like he had a point of view. Smuts had learned to speak nature's language. Again, this is not interpretation — I'm extracting Smuts' own language from his writings and using his language to present the interpretation here.

At the age of seventeen, he writes to his girlfriend Isie Krige — who would become his wife — and points her to a poem by Shelley, saying: “Would you hear how nature speaks?” Nature taught him that there was more to the world than the eye could see, and that the visible world was merely an expression of a deeper, invisible power — an invisible *inwardness*. He learned that from nature. This *deeper, invisible power* is Smuts' language.

Smuts found a word to express this invisible power: he referred to it as *the Unseen*. He got the sense of the Unseen from his deep reading of the Bible. I won't get into the actual biblical portions, but I have them. He got the *word*, however, from Shelley, the poet. He used the word *Unseen* throughout his life to express that invisible power. He would say that *the Unseen is the real heart of the Seen*. It has taken me many years to absorb and understand him on this, but I have it now. When Smuts wants to express his spiritual point of view, he speaks like that: *the Unseen is the real heart of the Seen*.

As he grew older, this early experience of the Unseen, and his close companionship with nature, deepened his conviction that reality was much more spiritual than material. This is key to remember. If you ask Smuts, *what do you mean by the spiritual?*, he would say: the invisible power behind the Seen. That reality is more spiritual than material epitomises his spiritual point of view.

He is now in search of God. He is looking for God. It is not surprising that he starts looking in nature for a new idea of God. All religion pointed to unity, but a belief in the unity of a supernatural God rested on blind faith, according to Smuts. Smuts wanted a new idea of unity that could be discovered in nature itself. He's addressing the religious problem: unity is in front of him; religion speaks about unity — that defines religion for him — but blind faith in a supernatural God doesn't suit him any more. And he's quite young — he's still at Stellenbosch, and he's now writing along these lines.

Where does he start? He starts with man. Was not man closer than his hands and feet to nature? Was not nature closer than hands and feet? So his first essay, written at Stellenbosch in 1889, he

writes in Dutch: *Homo Sum* — “I am man.” Here he finds that the highest manifestation of truth — and by *truth* he means unity — lies in the person, in man’s personality. He’s looking for an example of unity, or truth, and he’s looking at the personality for that example. Can real truth, or unity, or agreement be found in law, or in personality? In other words: if we sign a legal agreement, what’s more important — the signature on the agreement, or the spirit of intention behind that agreement? That was the essence of what he was trying to say in his *Homo Sum* essay, which was actually an essay about slavery. But, as Smuts did, he always diverted and found a reason to talk about unity. He concludes that personality is above the law. The personality has real power, an *invisible* power. That’s where the truth lies, and that’s where unity lies. He coins a phrase in Dutch — *invloed-wet* — the *law of influence*. He describes it as a universal moral law from which we can derive our idea of God. That is the first time he is pointing to a new idea of God: a God that can be defined in terms of the personality, and the power of the personality to influence. Man’s influence on man has a spiritual power — that, which is an invisible power. For Smuts, that has elements of divinity. He speaks of an idea of God derived from the law of influence. He’s nineteen years old. It’s incredible.

In the same year, 1889, he writes another two essays. I have them here, never before seen or spoken about. One is titled *The Gods Seen Everywhere*; the other, *On Christian Religion*. In both, the indications are that the idea of a supernatural God no longer makes sense to Smuts, but the *spiritual message* of Christianity is more important than ever. So he doesn’t want to throw out the baby with the bathwater. He wants to retain the spirituality of Christianity, but he cannot accept the supernatural God — the God who handed Moses the Ten Commandments.

He leaves Stellenbosch and arrives in Cambridge in 1891. This is a journey with Smuts, a journey to find God — a new idea of God — to solve a science problem and a religious problem. Keep that in mind in case you think I’m just wandering off. I’m trying to stay on that track. At Cambridge he’s influenced by writers who resonate with the same spiritual point of view he has, so he reads Goethe, Spinoza, Whitman, Hegel, Schelling, and many others. There’s a pattern: when you look at who he was reading, there’s a pattern that connects. I can’t get into that now.

In 1893, heavily influenced by Whitman, Goethe and Jesus, he starts a book titled *Cosmic Religion*. This is *before* the Whitman study. Interestingly, in *Cosmic Religion* he uses Whitman as a saviour from his puritanical way of life — not yet as the personality he is going to study; that’s still to come. So he’s already using Whitman in *Cosmic Religion* to help him address this rejection of the supernatural God. He was a very pious young man, and this was really radical stuff in the 1890s.

In *Cosmic Religion*, Smuts sets out to solve both his problems with one word — and that word is *synthesis*. He refers to God as *the supreme principle of synthesis*. That’s his definition of God: a God who has a tendency towards unity by synthesis. By synthesis he meant, of course, that if you want to understand nature, you have to look at her as a whole. So he rejects analysis. Synthesis is

the opposite of analysis. He has now found a method of inquiry for science in the word *synthesis*, and he has a God who has this synthesising process, a tendency towards unity. It is incredible that he is already talking about God as a process, if you read it carefully.

Then he has an epiphany — one of his many. He says: if God synthesises — that is, if God makes wholes by synthesis — and science synthesises in order to understand nature as a whole, then synthesis as a process of God, and synthesis as a method of science, both point to *the Whole*. They are both involved with the Whole. So he realises during the writing of *Cosmic Religion* that he needs a *theory of the Whole*.

What does he do? Of course, he turns to personality, because he was already talking about personality as the supreme principle of unity back in 1889. He reckons that if personality is the highest form of unity, surely it must be the supreme example of a whole — because what is a whole if not an example of unity? And if the personality, as a whole, is a perfect expression of unity, and if God is meant to be a supreme example of the One, of absolute unity from which all things are derived, then *voilà* — he has found God in the Whole. He has found God in the personality. The question for Smuts is: how does he prove that? How does he prove that the personality is a perfect example of unity?

And now — I haven't published my book yet, and I'm revealing some really important information. He reads another German philosopher, by the name of Rudolf Eucken — E-U-C-K-E-E-N — 1846 to 1926. Smuts read Eucken's books in the German. He made fifty pages of notes on Rudolf Eucken. In these notes we find a full explanation of *a personality as a whole* — what it means to define a personality as a whole — and Eucken gives Smuts several ideas to work with. As an amateur historian, I declare this a key finding.

Guided by Eucken, Smuts then scraps his book on *Cosmic Religion*, and decides to write a book about *the evolution of the personality* — to prove the idea of the Whole. You can see the thread. If you're not following me, I accept it — it's taken me ten years. In modern terms, all that Smuts is saying is that he needs a method to show how someone, *any* personality, thinks and sees the world holistically. How to prove that someone thinks holistically. I'm using the word *holistically* and the word *holism* well in advance of his discovering holism, but I'm doing that to make the modern language easier to follow. Otherwise, we would be using the word *whole*. To understand how a person sees the whole is not as clear as saying *a person who can think and see the world holistically*.

And this is another important finding. Who does he choose as his first study? If you've read Smuts, you'd say *Whitman*. It wasn't Whitman. It was *Jesus*. His first personality, the one he chooses to conduct his study on, was Jesus. But he didn't have a method yet. The notes he made are incoherent and a little convoluted — he comes up with some terrific expressions, which I won't share with you now — but he scraps the idea of using Jesus as the example of the

personality as a whole. He develops a *method* first, before he selects his prominent personality to study. He calls it the *evolutionary method*: a method of synthesis. It's clear that Smuts' understanding of evolution at this early stage was not the evolution of Darwin by natural selection. He was thinking of evolution more as a method of synthesis — a method of change and development.

He uses this method of evolutionary synthesis to study the development of a person's life experience, in order to show how that person synthesises their experience into expressions that reveal their holistic thinking. That was his method. Or, in the language of 1893: how these expressions of experience reveal the idea of the Whole. The process is completely subjective. It's wonderful that a 23-year-old can even think up something like this, but he wrote with such objective force and confidence that the method is pretty convincing.

His method requires him to read the books, the poetry, whatever you can find to read about a prominent personality, and to search out *expressions of holism*. By that, he will then discover the Whole in the personality. This method of trying to understand the personality, and to find expressions of holism that prove the personality as a whole, would ultimately become his mature method of personality, which he describes in *Holism and Evolution*. When you examine the text of *Holism and Evolution*, you find it coming out of the Walt Whitman study in 1894. It's incredible.

He chooses Walt Whitman, but not after really having a good look at Goethe. He really wanted to do Goethe before Whitman, but he says himself that the amount of information on Goethe was just too much to read. I suspect — this is now me speaking — that because he already had this little relationship with Whitman, and Whitman's idea of God, this convinced him that Whitman was the person. Whitman was already indicating to Smuts: this is the kind of idea of God you are looking for. So he writes the Whitman book — *Walt Whitman: A Study in the Evolution of the Personality* — in 1894, aged twenty-four. He proves the idea of the Whole as an expression of Whitman's personality, and from that he derives the idea of God. He goes to a lot of trouble in Chapter 7, the last chapter of the Whitman book, to explain how he derives the idea of God from the idea of the Whole — which is the personality as the Whole.

Smuts can therefore now claim that if Whitman's personality is a whole — a perfect expression of unity as a result of synthesis — then by deduction, God must be the *cause* of that unity. And if God is the cause of that unity, then not only is the Whole divine, but the personality, as a whole, is divine too. Where before he said that God was the *supreme principle of synthesis*, he can now confidently say that God is the supreme principle of synthesis *that makes wholes*. He has now proven it. When Smuts says, as he does in the Whitman book, that God is the spirit of the Whole, he also means that God is the proven synthesiser of wholes — God as the spirit of personality.

He had developed a suspicion of Jesus' divinity, evident from his essays, in a supernatural sense. But now, after the Whitman study, he felt justified in regarding Jesus as the supreme example and expression of what constituted a holistic personality. I'm getting into deep waters here. He now believed, with Whitman in support, that all self-conscious humans are divine. This is my own comment, because I know Smuts so well, I have to add: but just that some were *more* divine than others.

The formulation of his idea of God was the climax of his book on Whitman. When you study the Whitman book, he had one intention, and that was to prove the idea of God from the idea of the Whole. His entire book was written for that purpose. So he kills two birds with one stone. He solves the problem for religion and for science at the same time. Not only had he derived the idea of God from that idea of the Whole, but he had also demonstrated that the Whole is revealed by a process of synthesis. And if the Whole is revealed by a process of synthesis, then science can confidently use synthesis to understand the Whole. Smuts therefore found, for science, a new method of inquiry — synthesis — and for religion, a new idea of God, all derived from the idea of the Whole, proven to exist by a process of synthesis.

In his mind, science and religion now find common ground. They both agree on what constitutes a perfect unity. Science studies the formation of unity in nature; religion interprets the supreme unity as God. If you follow the logic so far, then you have beaten me by ten years.

The Whole is an expression of unity, for Smuts. And what else is God meant to be, other than an expression of unity? So God and the Whole are blending into one. He calls God the *spirit of the Whole* in his Whitman study — but there is a dualism there that is still nagging him. God animating the Whole. He still has a dualism, and it's nagging him.

I'm going to leave that there and move on. Let me just say that that nagging dualism is solved when he has an epiphany on board ship in 1909, on his way back from Britain. I'll deal with that if there's time.

He tries unsuccessfully to get the Whitman book published, because really, that idea of God in 1894 was pretty radical. He returns to South Africa from Cambridge in September 1895. Over the next four years he writes a lot of articles for newspapers, practises law briefly in Cape Town, then moves to Johannesburg in 1897. He marries Isie Krige, and in June 1898 he is appointed State Attorney of the South African Republic under President Paul Kruger. In the early part of 1899 he returns briefly to the study of personality — and I find another unpublished paper, titled *A Theory of Personality*, a month before the Boer War breaks out. He's State Attorney, busy with all sorts of things, and still writing a paper on the theory of personality.

The important point to make is that in all his writings — political, military, or personal — they always underpinned his spiritual point of view. He was always appealing to the spirit in man to do the right thing. *A contract may bind people legally, but cannot unite them spiritually.* That was

his theme. Whether he was making a speech to kings and queens, that was always his message. The Unseen spirit was the real heart of the agreement. His spiritual point of view helped conclude the Treaty of Vereeniging. But that same spiritual point of view *failed* at Versailles. That is my own poetic expression, to give some force to how severely Smuts was affected by the failure of the peace, the great peace failure after the Great War.

In 1904, after the Boer War, I found 120 pages of notes that Smuts starts to make in a notebook, where he begins, again, studying the idea of the Whole and personality. These first notes are all leading to his *Inquiry into the Whole*. So he actually starts his inquiry into the Whole, which he writes finally over a period from 1904 to 1912. He didn't just sit down in 1911 and write a book — after the unification of South Africa, which he was intimately involved in. Professor Du Pisani will be able to explain better than I can what Smuts was involved with politically over those years, from 1904 after the war to Unification in 1910. He was a busy man politically — and yet you find 120 pages of notes during this time. It's incredible.

In 1905, Smuts meets a very important person in his life, Margaret Clark — later Margaret Gillett. They became friends for life. Margaret had come to South Africa in 1905 to assist Emily Hobhouse in helping the poor women in home industries, etc. I'm sure the story of Emily Hobhouse is well known. Margaret came to help Emily Hobhouse, and they became intimate friends, platonically intimate friends.

Margaret came from a family of Quakers, and the Quaker *inner light* idea definitely resonated with Smuts. But please let me say right now: that wasn't Smuts' idea of God. The Quaker inner light is a God *up there*, felt within. Smuts' God *is* — was — an expression of God. We can revisit that later if there's time. It is fairly common to think he adopted the Quaker way. It resonated with him, but he first met Quakerism through Walt Whitman, who came from a Quaker background. He could see that Whitman went beyond Quakerism. That's a side issue.

Margaret was the person who introduced Smuts to a very important poet, William Blake. Blake played a significant role in Smuts' thinking. Smuts used Blake's poetry — *the human form divine* — to support where he was going: the divinity of the personality. Blake, Whitman, Smuts, Spinoza: the same idea of God.

In 1909, Smuts reads Spinoza again, and has another epiphany. He becomes a disciple of Spinoza. But again, please don't fall into the trap of thinking *Spinoza, pantheism, Smuts, pantheism, everything in God*. Absolutely not. In his 1889 essay *Homo Sum*, Smuts writes — let me read this out to you, and just note that what I'm reading in English was translated by the biographer N. Levi, who wrote a biography on Smuts in 1917. That essay I have not been able to locate in the original Dutch, so I'm relying on Levi's interpretation and translation. He writes: “We do not believe in pantheistic oneness, if that means the disappearance of the individual into the all-whole.”

In another session we can talk about all of this; there's never going to be enough time. Spinoza gives Smuts the direction he is looking for: Spinoza's *natura naturans*, *natura naturata*. Smuts has an epiphany on the 12th of September 1909, on board a Union-Castle mail ship on his way home from Britain. I have this document here — written on the ship's stationery — and on it he writes: “*There is no spirit of the Whole apart from the Whole. The Whole is spiritual.*”

That meant he had discovered holism right there. Where he had before the dualism of God *animating* the Whole, God being the spirit of the Whole, now God *is* the Whole. He sees that the Whole is not only a *result*, it's also an *activity* — and that is the insight from Spinoza. *Natura naturans* — activity. *Natura naturata* — result. He gets the *activity* of the Whole from that, and that is what he is able to name *holism*. Holism is the activity of the Whole. I can't get into more detail now, as much as I'd like to.

This is still 1909. In between politics, he is writing all these notes. He eventually writes *An Inquiry into the Whole*. It is in the *Inquiry* that he coins his word, *holism*, for the first time. The first ever document where he has written the word holism, I have, in his notebook — dated 1910. That's the first time *holism* appears in writing. The purpose of writing his *Inquiry* was, once again, to demonstrate his idea of God. This is what I meant earlier when I said his discovery of holism was incidental to his search for God: he finds God in the Whole, and God is now holism. In his final chapters in the *Inquiry into the Whole* he sets out a religious system based on his idea of the Whole being God. *Holism is God*.

He sends his manuscript to his Cambridge professor friend, Henry Wolstenholme. The Cambridge professor reads only the first three chapters. He doesn't get to Chapters 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the *Inquiry*. He rejects what Smuts has to say. He got stuck at the point where he found Smuts had made a fundamental error in his understanding of evolution. It's very complicated, and I can't get into it now. But Wolstenholme didn't read the end part. He didn't read that the whole reason Smuts wrote the *Inquiry* was to demonstrate his idea of God and his new system of religion — a religion based on holism. *A life in holism*, in Smuts' words. That was the summit of his *Inquiry*.

From 1912, Smuts continues his endeavours. He goes to war in East Africa — not without his books, not without his papers. At the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro — and we know that not just as a poetic expression — he writes a letter explaining how he has now realised the fault he made in the *Inquiry* as far as evolution was concerned. It's now clear to him. He leaves German East Africa, going to join the Imperial War Cabinet in London, and stops over for a week at home in Irene to pick up his draft of the *Inquiry into the Whole* and take it with him to London.

This period in London — I know Professor Du Pisani has also spent a lot of time studying this period — is a very important period in Smuts' life. What I have managed to discern is what role holism played in it. In a chapter in my book I refer to this period as one in which he *tested* holism

— in friendship and in faith. He was testing his holism all the time. He would spend many hours, many days, with Margaret and her sister Alice Clark discussing holism. Everything was in holistic language. Everything was in the language of the Whole. He was really a romantic kind of guy, and he was really taking advantage of these women in the United Kingdom who fancied him quite a bit. He was quite animated in his expressions of holism. In one of these many animated explanations, he told Alice and Margaret that he was a *mystic*. He said: *what is holism, if not mysticism, pure and simple?* I just thought I'd throw that in now, for those thinking along those lines. Holism was a way of *experience*. It was a way of *knowing*. That's what he meant.

Smuts left London after being away from home for nearly three years, and with new insight he was now ready to start again. He goes home in 1919. Louis Botha, the Prime Minister, suddenly dies in 1919, and Smuts is made Prime Minister — I think it's August or September 1919. He would be Prime Minister until 1924. But don't think that doesn't allow him time to settle down with the insight he had from Mount Kilimanjaro.

Between January and March 1920 — remember, he's now Prime Minister — he sits down to write, to start over. The papers we've accumulated include about four unfinished chapters and notes. He titles this *Holism Again*. I was surprised to find a recent paper, written by a professional historian — not Professor Du Pisani — who referred to *Holism Again* as the sequel to *Holism and Evolution*. *Holism Again* is *not* a sequel. It was written *between* the *Inquiry* and *Holism and Evolution*.

He abandons *Holism Again*. The reason for abandoning it is another epiphany. In December 1920 he reads the general theory of relativity for the first time. You would have thought he had read it earlier, but I found a letter between Margaret and himself where she had sent him these books, and from their communication I was quite surprised. He had read the *special* theory of relativity around 1910 — there are indications in the *Inquiry* where the language he uses to express the idea of matter as energy could only have come from a reading of the special theory of relativity, written in 1905. But he hadn't read the general theory until December 1920. With the general theory, everything comes together for Smuts: space-time, gravity, gravity curving space-time, and so forth. All of it falls into place, and he sees this new science as more holistic than he had thought. It changes everything for him.

His argument in the *Inquiry*, and before that, had been that he was looking for an idea of God and a scientific method of inquiry, because science was mechanistic. The discovery of the general theory now shows him that science itself is becoming more spiritual. So his whole argument changes — and he has to change it for *Holism and Evolution*. He's now saying: *despite your discoveries, you, the scientists, haven't understood the consequences*.

This is December 1920. He's immersed in one political crisis after another, and he really doesn't find the time to do any more work, until he loses the general election in 1924 and then starts

Holism and Evolution. He had learned fundamental things. One of them was, when he was in London — when he was at Versailles — he asked: *where is the God of holism now?* That was critical, because for the first time, with the tragedy of the Great War — let me say the *Great War*, more correctly — where was Smuts' God of holism? That played a part in him abandoning his *Inquiry*, as well as the theory of evolution, which he had to rework, and his conceptual idea of the Whole, which Alice Clark actually helped him refine. That's the reason he abandons the *Inquiry*.

Answering the question of the sequel

So now let me answer the question of the sequel. For me now, after all the study, I realise it all falls into place. The sequel to the application of holism — to God and religion, to the highest spiritual interests of man — he has already dealt with. It's in *Cosmic Religion*. It's in the Whitman book. It's in the *Inquiry*. So, when he writes *Holism and Evolution*, it's not that he is saying *I want to address that in the future*. He is saying: *I cannot divulge that now*, because it's just too sensitive to even put on the table. So much has happened since he originally started thinking along those lines.

It's now 1924–1925. He's leader of the opposition, former Prime Minister, and he has been appointed president, to preside over the South African Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in 1925. He's involved with the science community. He wants to present holism as a scientifically strong concept. He cannot go now and *pollute*, for want of a better word, the scientific idea of holism with his idea of God. So he leaves it out. That answers my search for the sequel — for when he said in the preface, *I want to deal with the application of holism to the highest spiritual interests of man*.

I won't go into detail on this new religious system, but in essence, what Smuts was saying — what he is asking us to realise, and I'm going to use his words — is: *“the holism which operates outside of us is identical with the holism which is in us. And with that knowledge, we should live a life in holism. Let universal holism realise its highest in you.”* I'm now going to quote a small passage out of the *Inquiry*: *“Learn to be yourself with perfect honesty, integrity and sincerity. Let universal holism realise its highest in you, as a free whole of personality. And all the rest will be added unto you — peace, joy, blessedness, happiness, goodness, and all the other prizes of life.”* The echo of Matthew 6:33 is unmistakable for those who are biblical scholars: *seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you*. Where the Gospel speaks of the Kingdom of God, Smuts speaks of *universal holism*. The pattern is the same: align life with the highest order of reality, and the rest of life will fall into place.

What I found extremely fascinating was that in Chapter 10 or 11 — I think 10 — of *Holism and Evolution*, he reproduces the exact passage. You can look it up for yourselves — it's on page 312 of the third edition. But he frames the argument now as a solution to ethical and moral concerns, whereas in the *Inquiry* he framed it around a religious concern. So he uses the same language,

but puts it into *Holism and Evolution* under different framing. I thought that was quite interesting.

I'm sure you all agree that in conventional terms, Smuts' idea of God was rather radical. His biographer Keith Hancock, in the two-volume biography he wrote of Smuts, asked whether the *Inquiry* was *wicked*. He used that exact word.

I'm way over time, but I have the best part still to share. I don't know whether you want to let me carry on. If I don't, you miss the whole point.

Claudius van Wyk: No, I can't bear to let you go now. You go.

Nature's point of view

Jeff Blumberg: I'm very honoured to continue. Thank you for that. So, here comes the crux. Getting back to the spiritual Smuts: he's written the *Inquiry*, he's done all of that, he's leaving out the high spiritual interests when he writes *Holism and Evolution*, and we understand why he does that. But what he does *not* leave out, when he writes *Holism and Evolution*, is his deep spiritual point of view. And his spiritual method of inquiry — *synthesis* — that permeates the whole of *Holism and Evolution*. So we finally get a clear sight of how his lifelong companionship with nature plays out in the way he formulates his definition of holism.

I have to read this. I'm going to use Smuts' own words to describe how I feel — follow me for a second. In *Holism and Evolution*, Smuts is quoting a passage on Darwin, and he writes: "*I am free to confess that there are few passages in the great literature of the world which affect me more deeply than these concluding words of Darwin.*" I am using those words to say: I am free to confess that there are few passages in the great literature of the world which affect me more deeply than these words of Smuts, which I'm about to share with you, on how he goes about defining his theory of holism. This is his method of *discovering* holism. From *Holism and Evolution*, page 93, third edition:

Our object in studying and interpreting nature is to be faithful to our experience of her. We do not want to recreate nature in our own image or abstract thought-scheme. We do not wish to spread nature on a sort of Procrustean bed of our concepts, and cut off here or there what appears surplus or unnecessary. In order to understand nature, we have to proceed more modestly, and in closer touch with our ordinary observation of her ways. I wish to get as near as possible to what one might call nature's point of view in our explanation of her. And in this way we shall try to explain nature by reference to herself and her own standards, so to say, instead of by reference to intellectual abstractions of our own devising. Let us therefore proceed in the way I propose, and try to reach a concept of nature which will not be imposed on her from without, but which will keep as close as possible to her own natural evolving units.

This is how — and only how — holism can be revealed, as far as Smuts is concerned: by understanding nature’s point of view. And what Smuts is really saying is *experiencing* nature’s point of view. Holism, as Smuts came to define it, is *an expression of nature’s point of view*. Both his theory and his method — nature’s point of view was his method of inquiring into nature, *understanding and experiencing her point of view* — are expressions of Smuts’ deep spiritual point of view, which was nurtured out of nature.

If I can say this: if, after a hundred years, we celebrate anything about *Holism and Evolution*, let us celebrate the idea of holism as *an expression of nature’s point of view*.

You’d think I’d end my talk there, but I have more. I haven’t answered the second part, which I’m sure is vital. We’ve answered the question of where he dealt with the idea of God in the *Inquiry*, but where is the *detail*? Where is the detail of how he explains *how to live a life in holism*? We have that too. Can I carry on?

Mark van Wyk: Go for it.

Jeff Blumberg: Hello, Mark. I see you there. So where does Smuts tell us about the details of his religious solution? What does living a life in holism *mean*? Will we ever find out? The answer is yes. And where do we find it? In his letters to Margaret. *Letters to Margaret* is a title I at one point considered for my book. That’s how important Margaret Gillett, *née* Clark, was in his life. I have counted 1,756 letters written by Smuts to Margaret over a period of 44 years. 505 of these letters were either published in the seven volumes of Smuts’ papers by Hancock and van der Poel, or referenced by Hancock in his biography. The other — that’s less than a third — I have traced every single letter. I have both the holograph copy of Smuts’ letter in his handwriting, and the copy typed up by Margaret. She typed up all his letters, especially for the biography for Hancock.

Smuts treated these letters to Margaret as a form of diary. He wrote at least one every week, and he told Margaret that one day he hoped the world would discover what he meant by the religion of holism, and what it meant to *let universal holism realise its highest in you*. He also hoped that she would help distil and preserve all his thoughts. He even suggested she should consider a biography — but Sarah Gertrude Millin got in before her, and so forth.

The letters to Margaret enable us to reconstruct what Smuts meant by *living a life in holism*. And it’s detailed. Over a long period of time. There are two persistent themes. When you study the letters, there’s one where Smuts describes what it is to live a life of holism, what it meant to let universal holism realise its highest in you. The other is his consistent reinterpretation of central doctrines of Christianity in the language of holism. There are many of these. Among them are a holistic interpretation of sin, of salvation, of resurrection, of the Risen Christ, of incarnation, of immortality, of grace, of love, and of faith itself. He takes each of these Christian, biblical concepts and reinterprets them — gives them a holistic spin. Because that was his aim: to find a new religion in holism, to replace the supernatural God, but to *retain* the message, the

spirituality, of the Christian Bible. The message of Jesus — he called him *the Prince of Love* — was so important to Smuts. But it needed, he said, a new language: a new language that could compete with science.

Among the many writers who influenced Smuts over time, let me just mention Albert Schweitzer, who is not so well known but played a very important part in Smuts' mature understanding, and in his interpretation.

Let me end with this. Smuts had this idea of God as holism, but he was not dogmatic. Smuts considered God as a mystery beyond human conception. He did not claim to define the divine, or God, in any strict scientific or theological sense. But pressed to speak about the nature of God, he would point to the divine nature of the personality. He sensed *the pattern that connects*. Smuts never used those words, but when he said *the highest in man must bear some resemblance to the highest in divinity* — that is what he meant. *Personality is the universe expressing itself at its highest known level*. Think about that. Can I repeat it? *Personality is the universe expressing itself at its highest known level*. This is Smuts' evolution theory. Therefore, self-conscious personality gives us the best available clue to whatever God is, or does.

A life in holism meant the recognition that all things share a common origin, and are bound together in the process of becoming. To live in awareness of holism — to be aware that the holism within you is the same holism in everything else — is, and was, for Smuts the essence of what a religious life should look like, or feel like. In this vision, religion was no longer a matter of belief in the supernatural, but of participation in the creative process of the Whole, of holism. This was the basis on which Smuts hoped to rescue mankind from its spiritual failure. Remember, he is hurting from the Great War, and he is now in the midst of a second war. Not by returning to older forms of religion, but by reawakening trust in the formative power that works through nature, mind and personality. *In his words: to live a life in holism*. Thank you very much.

■ Response and discussion

Michael Stock: Thank you very much indeed, Jeff. I wonder if we might take a minute to be still. Because you have given us such a rich view of a very long and extraordinary life. Thank you.

Claudius van Wyk: Jeff, I found myself sitting on the edge of my chair. I found myself holding my breath from time to time. And I'm deeply grateful. I just want to open this space to whoever — to respond. Maybe not even questions, just respond. What's happening for you?

Berry Behr: I'd like to respond to that, Jeff. What an extraordinary, emotional and beautiful rendition and interpretation of an extraordinary life. I feel deeply moved. Deeply moved. I've learned so much. I'm extraordinarily grateful. Thank you so much.

Frederick Hölscher: I, also — I'm sitting here, and it sounds as if Smuts is writing to *us*, here, in the time we are living. Because I quite often find that when things seem to fall apart, they actually fall *into place*. I think that is what the belief in holism means. As we heard yesterday, it brings hope. Today I heard that it also brings love — because love is the logic of unity, of reconciliation, of bringing together. And I don't think that is really possible when we are trapped in our two-valued logic between our ears. That muscle is not really able to come to grips with the richness of this. Again, love as synthesis. Love brings together. What you highlighted today, and what I appreciated, is that this is not a mental construct. Spirit is not a *mental* matter — it is a deep, deep existential experience. Unless one goes there, through becoming vulnerable in your mind, between your ears, you may never really experience holism. I wrote a note here that holism for me is not a *state* or a *condition*. It is a *process*. A continuous process towards an unfolding unity in a world that is broken. Thank you very much.

Claudius van Wyk: John Anderson? Are you there, John? He's on mute. Tell him he's on mute.

John Anderson: Hello? Can you hear me?

Claudius van Wyk: Yes — go, John.

John Anderson: I just want to thank Jeff very, very much indeed for a brilliant overview of Jan Smuts and holism. I won't go much further than that, other than to say it's fantastic that it coincides — 1926 — with the birth of David Attenborough, Sir David Attenborough, who is the awful fellow of describing biodiversity on planet Earth. Coincidence between David Attenborough and Jan Smuts. I absolutely love it. Thanks again, Jeff.

Claudius van Wyk: By the way, John will be presenting into the future. John is a palaeobotanist, and he's going to be presenting. Mark!

Mark van Wyk: Thank you. That's absolutely fascinating. Thanks for that lovely comment, John, actually. Quite thought-provoking about David Attenborough being born at the same time the book was launched.

John Anderson: It was 1927.

Mark van Wyk: Wow, what a beautiful synchronicity. I was just interested about, in order to live the religion of holism, as Smuts put it, encouraging us to have a point of view of the universe from nature's perspective — how on Earth does one *do* that?

Claudius van Wyk: Yes. Thank you, Mark. Joshua. — Jeff, sorry.

Jeff Blumberg: Could you read out Professor Du Pisani's comment in the chat?

Claudius van Wyk: Yes. Kobus says: "*You are the real expert on Smuts' thinking as expressed in his writings. Magnificent.*"

Jeff Blumberg: Thank you so much for that comment, Professor. I felt as though I was presenting to you tonight my doctorate, which you might sponsor. Perhaps you would be kind enough to read it for my publishers when the book is done, or even publish it. I'd love to collaborate with you in some way. Thank you for that very nice comment.

Claudius van Wyk: Joshua.

Joshua: Thank you. Just to say: deeply moved by your presentation, Jeff. It wasn't simply the depth of your research and your insight. It was you *modelling* what Smuts was actually speaking about. That is to say, you are living a life of holism in the way you engage with his work and the way you present it here. My hope is that this project, that Claudius has inspired us all with, will take Smuts' work and your work forward. Thank you again.

Jeff Blumberg: Thank you very much. Could I just acknowledge my sister, who is in New York — there she is — and my family, my wife and my daughter; I don't know if my other daughter in New York is on the call.

Jenny: She is, Jeff, she's there.

Jeff Blumberg: They have lived with me, with Smuts, for at least twelve years. They are living this life in holism with me and with Smuts. They are part of this journey I've been on, and I want to thank them — particularly my wife, Bridget. Still with me through this time.

Claudius van Wyk: Beautiful. Marcus?

Marcus Link: I just wanted to add: in a way, you've modelled what Smuts was doing when he was reading Goethe and Whitman's life. *You* have read Smuts' life. That really tickled and touched me — that you went into it with such enthusiasm. You called yourself an amateur historian, but you're a professional on another level — and that's the wrong word, because your boundless enthusiasm didn't have any constraints. You could follow the passion of the work as it unfolded — itself a fractal of holism. A really fantastic experience, to see that bubble up in you, going off on so many tangents, and yet bringing it back together. Thank you, Jeff — really enjoyed it.

Claudius van Wyk: Any other queries or questions specifically on what Jeff presented? Jeff, what we might do is schedule a specific interactive time around what you presented. We'll find a gap, because what you said was so rich, and I suspect there's so much to come from it. Any other observations or comments?

Frederick Hölscher: Could I just ask, on a more historical level — when you talked about the spiritual awakening of Smuts in the late 1890s, when he was still young; in my own studies, I realised that in that same time, all over the world, there was a spiritual awakening, a rediscovery of the work of the Holy Spirit in churches. It was not a very intellectual process; a lot of miracles

happened. I don't want to go on at length — but it is interesting that it is in the same period that he came to the awakening of the spiritual dimension of what eventually became holism. Did you do any studies? Is there any reference to him? In South Africa there was also, in 1906, a beginning of that — the whole spiritual dimension that eventually became the Charismatic Movement of the 1960s. Is there anything about that in his books?

Jeff Blumberg: I didn't find any connection to that, no.

Frederick Hölscher: Okay, thank you.

Claudius van Wyk: Egon?

Egon Hus: Yes — just a very practical one. On Saturday we have a panel discussion with all the presenters, so that can well be a good place to also take the questions we now might have over there.

Claudius van Wyk: Yes. Thank you for that observation. The presenters are going to be gathering on Saturday morning after Dr Jude Currivan has made her presentation. After David Lorimer has met his, they'll get together. David's here, and David has left already. Marcus, of course, is tomorrow — so Marcus will be there. Back to Michael for the thanks, Michael.

■ Closing

Michael Stock: Thank you, Claudius. I'll keep this quite brief. Thank you, Jeff, again, for your deep research into Smuts' writings — looking for an idea of God to replace the supernatural, and the question for us all of how to live in companionship with nature, with our brothers and our sisters, and to feel and see the Unseen. To have a new idea of God that can stand up to science. Holism as mysticism. And, finally, *nature's point of view* — a phrase which will stay with me. Thank you very much, Jeff, on behalf of all of us. Thank you all for your time, your great company, and your attention. And, as I said yesterday, thank you especially to Claudius and Michonne and the core team, who with extraordinary generosity, energy and good spirit have brought us this wonderful time.

Tomorrow, same time, same place: to join Marcus Link in his presentation, which I'm deeply looking forward to, wonderfully entitled *Keystones in the Patterns of Place*, and how, so importantly, he asks how we may leave a wake of regeneration. Safe journeys all. See you tomorrow.

Transcription notes and corrections

This transcript has been lightly edited from the automated Zoom captions for readability. Jeff delivered the talk from notes rather than a written script, so there are more false starts, parenthetical asides and self-corrections than in Kobus's session. These have been trimmed; the auto-transcriber's mid-sentence full stops were re-joined into flowing sentences, and speaker turns were merged into paragraphs. Wording and meaning are preserved, including Jeff's own terms (*the Unseen, companionship with nature, the Whole, nature's point of view*) and his deliberate use of capitalisation for those terms. The longer passages Jeff read aloud from *Holism and Evolution* and the *Inquiry into the Whole* should be checked against the source texts before being formally cited.

Proper nouns corrected (high confidence):

- **Jeff Blumberg** — captioned throughout as “Bloomberg.” Per the festival site (holosearthacademy.org/phase-1), where he is billed as “Smuts Scholar & Historian.” Mark explicitly noted the spelling.
- **Jan Smuts / Smuts'** — captioned as “Smutz / Smutch / Smites / Smarts / Smatsy / SMUT / Smot.” Standardised.
- **Holism and Evolution** — variously “Hellism / Polism / Holismand Evolution / hHolism.”
- **Walt Whitman** — captioned correctly.
- **Rudolf Eucken** — captioned “Rudolf Juken / Jukin / Jurkin” (1846–1926). Smuts spelled the surname aloud, “E-U-C-K-E-N.” German philosopher; Nobel laureate in Literature, 1908.
- **Henry Wolstenholme** — captioned “Henry Walstonholm.” Confirmed via the Tandfonline article on Smuts' formation of holism: H.J. Wolstenholme of Christ's College, Cambridge — Smuts' Cambridge friend who read the *Inquiry* manuscript and was sharply critical of it.
- **Isie Krige** — captioned “IC Cricher / Krisher.” Smuts' wife, married 1897.
- **President Paul Kruger** — captioned “Paul Clear.” (President of the South African Republic; Smuts was his State Attorney from 1898.)
- **Treaty of Vereeniging** — captioned “Treaty of Riene.” (Signed 31 May 1902, ending the Anglo-Boer War.)
- **Louis Botha** — captioned “Louis Berta.” Predecessor of Smuts as Prime Minister; died 1919.
- **Emily Hobhouse** — captioned “Hobhaus / Hobbass.”
- **Margaret Clark / Margaret Gillett** — captioned correctly. *Letters to Margaret*: Smuts wrote 1,756 over 44 years.
- **Alice Clark** — Margaret's sister, captioned correctly.

- **N. Levi** — Smuts’ first biographer; *Jan Smuts: Being a Character Sketch of Gen. the Hon. J.C. Smuts*, London: Longmans, 1917. Captioned “Levi” (correct).
- **Hancock and van der Poel** — editors of the *Selections from the Smuts Papers*; captioned “Hancock and van der Poole.”
- **Keith Hancock** — Smuts’ two-volume biographer (*Smuts: The Sanguine Years, Smuts: The Fields of Force*); captioned correctly.
- **Sarah Gertrude Millin** — captioned “Millen.”
- **Albert Schweitzer** — captioned correctly.
- **William Blake** — captioned correctly. “*The human form divine*” is from Blake’s *Songs of Innocence*.
- **Schelling** — Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, captioned correctly.
- **Bridget Blumberg** — Jeff’s wife. Captioned correctly.
- **Berry Behr** — captioned correctly (auto-detected speaker name).
- **Frederick Hölscher** — Zoom rendered the participant handle as `frederick.holscher`; standardised to *Frederick Hölscher* in the body.
- **John Anderson** — Zoom rendered the handle as `jmand`. Claudius addresses him as John Anderson immediately before, and notes him as a palaeobotanist. Standardised.
- **Egon Hus** — Zoom auto-name; rendered as “Aegon” in one of Claudius’s prompts. Standardised.
- **Procrustean bed** — captioned “procrasties bed.” This is the standard idiom in Smuts’ page-93 passage.
- **South African Association for the Advancement of Science** — captioned “South African Association of Sciences.” (Smuts was its president for the 1925 meeting.)
- **British Association for the Advancement of Science** — captioned correctly. Smuts was its president for the 1931 meeting (the *Towards a Spiritual Worldview* draft was prepared in 1930).
- **invloed-wet** — Smuts’ coined Dutch phrase in *Homo Sum* meaning “law of influence.” Captioned as “influence weight.”
- **natura naturans / natura naturata** — Spinoza’s terms; captioned “Natura Naturance, Natura Naturata.”

Cross-Festival reconciliation: earlier in this transcript the auto-transcriber typed “Dr Jude Caravan” and “David Lorem” in Claudius’s wrap-up. Standardised to *Dr Jude Currivan* and *David Lorimer*, matching the spellings used in the festival programme and the other Phase 1 documents in this series.

Quotations: the passage from *Holism and Evolution* page 93 (third edition) on Procrustean beds and nature’s point of view, the *Inquiry* passage on “let universal holism realise its highest in you,” and the 1909 shipboard formulation “*there is no spirit of the Whole apart from the Whole; the Whole is spiritual,*” have been lightly normalised toward standard wording. Worth checking against Jeff’s own transcriptions of the source documents before being quoted formally — he has the holographs.

Flagged as uncertain — please verify (these are guesses, not confirmed):

- **“RMS Confamps”** — Jeff said this was the Union-Castle (or similar) mail ship Smuts was on when he wrote the 12 September 1909 epiphany note on the ship’s stationery. I have *not* identified which ship this was; possibilities on the UK–Cape Town mail route in September 1909 include the *Kinfauns Castle*, *Saxon*, *Briton*, *Norman*, *Walmer Castle*, *Carisbrooke Castle*, *Dunvegan Castle*, or *Kildonan Castle*. The auto-caption “Confamps” is closest phonetically to *Kinfauns* (Castle), but this is a guess. The ship name has been omitted from the body text and referred to as “a Union-Castle mail ship”. Jeff has the original document; the ship name should come directly from him.
- **“12th September 1999”** — appears once in the captions; clearly a slip in the auto-transcription, since the date Jeff is reading is 12 September 1909. Corrected silently in the body.
- **“the religion of holism”** vs **“a life in holism”** — Jeff uses both phrases. Both have been preserved as he said them; he may use one as a more specific term of art in the book.
- **“Mr/Mrs Levi”** vs **“N. Levi”** — Jeff calls Smuts’ first biographer simply “Levi” and refers to “his” / “the biographer”. I have rendered it *N. Levi*, since the 1917 biography is published under that initial; the first name appears not to be on the title page. Worth confirming with Jeff.
- **“Mark Pearson / Marc Pierson”** — does not appear in this session; flagged here only because Phase 1 transcripts vary on his spelling. Use *Marc Pierson* across the series unless told otherwise.
- **“Michonne”** — Claudius’s partner’s name spelling, as flagged previously.
- **The “Holism Again” four-chapter dating “January to March 1920”** — Jeff says this explicitly. Other published references (e.g. the recent Tandfonline article on Smuts’ formation of holism) cite *Holism Again* as Smuts Papers 295/1, “n.d.” (no date). Jeff’s January–March 1920 date is presumably from his own archival work and may differ from the catalogue dating.
- **“1925 / South African Association meeting”** — Jeff says Smuts was appointed to preside over the 1925 meeting of what I’ve rendered as the *South African Association for the Advancement of Science*. The published record has Smuts as president of the South African

Association for the Advancement of Science in 1925 (and his address at that meeting was *South Africa in Science*). Worth confirming the exact name and year against Jeff's notes.