

The *Wednesday*



Weekly Magazine of the Wednesday Group at Albion Beatnik - Oxford

Editorial

The Birth of the Subject

In his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes thought he was introducing a new proof for the existence of God, the self and the external world. He thought he had succeeded but little knew that he had created problems for philosophy on all these fronts. In a way, modern philosophy, since then, is an attempt to ground the self and the world in a more secular worldview that has started to shift away from Descartes' God.

The danger loomed large with Hume and his rejection of causality as a necessary a priori concept. The development of science and the stagnation of metaphysics were an added challenge. It was Kant who assumed the figure of a defender of faith but on a ground set by these challenges.

Kant puts conditions on human knowledge and proposed transcendental ideas that we don't encounter in experience but which we must assume in order to make sense of experience of the world and morality, such as the self (subject) and God. The world gets demoted in this conception. It becomes the appearance of an unknown noumenal he called 'the thing in itself', and it appears for a subject (self). Kant secures the concept for cause for experience, as opposed to Hume, although he rejects applying it to the noumenal realm.

What is important here is the concept of experience. It is through the condition of the possibility of experience that we come to deduce the forms of intuition, space and time, the categories of the understanding and the ideas of reason.

Kant seems to ground everything in the subject and his experience but without falling into a psychological picture, because reason for him is universal. Kant is critical of Descartes for assuming the subject (the self) to be substantial. He suggests that the self is a

formal condition, the 'I think' which accompanies all my representations and experiences and gives them a unified sense. It is the centre that owns all its activities without being substantial. However, this subject is so close to its experience that it soon came under criticism. Is this subject the ground of itself and the world? Is it transcendental enough? What about its faculties? The theoretical, practical and aesthetic, that Kant seems to have split up, how could they be unified again? Descartes had a foundation in the 'Cogito'; where is Kant's foundation?

These questions triggered much debate in Kant's life and they still do. Some claimed that Kant himself recognised the power of these and other questions when he wrote his third critique, *Critique of Judgement*, and his philosophy of nature. A few major themes came out of this movement which is known as Post-Kantian, such as the subject, the Absolute, the Ground of Being, philosophy of nature, the aesthetic, art and literary theory. It was remarkable that the great names we now know came in at about the same time, and were contemporaries, writing to complement, criticise and develop each others' ideas, sometimes in harmony and peace, at other times leading to declarations that disowned the new interpretations, such as the famous letter of Kant denouncing the philosophy of Fichte. Ironically, the latter thought he was helping to ground the philosophy of the former and make it more consistent and secure. With Fichte, Kant's subject had moved from being an individual to being the Absolute.

The question of the ground became important, not only in the epistemological sense but also in the ontological sense, as in Heidegger. But the immediate effect for the post-Kantian is the talk about the Absolute which we may have the opportunity to discuss next time.

The Editor

From Descartes to Searle

The Problematic Concept of Personal Identity

Descartes had famously said, 'I think therefore I am'. Philosophers since then have not just been concerned with Cartesian dualism but also with the question, what does 'I' refer to? This is the question of what is exactly 'me' or the self? What makes me, me? We shall examine the important views in this debate of whether there is any such thing as an essential identity of a human being which persists over time even if the body changes.

RANJINI GHOSH

Body-Based Theories

The proponents of the physical or body-based theories have identified bodily continuity as a criterion for personal identity. This school of thought states that for a person at a particular time (t_1) and at a later time (t_2) to be numerically identical, i.e. maintaining a single identity over time, the person at t_1 and the person at t_2 must possess the same body. (Chris Durante, *Philosophy Now*, July/August 2013). If we consider a person with the name John, and the same person John at a later age of 30, then one can say that what is important for personal identity is the continued existence of the same physical

entity. The problem of physical continuity is also found in the famous example of 'Ship of Theseus'. A ship made of wood is gradually rebuilt over a period of time. The ship continues to sail around the world but gradually each of its wooden boards is replaced at a particular point in time and it is made of entirely new boards. Can we say it is the same ship? Let us consider a situation in which someone gathered all the boards of the earlier ship and made a new ship out of it. The question is, which is the original ship? The important question in the matter of personal identity is that there must be something over and above the mere parts of the body that



René Descartes



David Hume

constitutes the essence. In the famous story by Kafka, if we were to wake up like Gregor Samsa and find that our external physical appearance has changed, how would we know we are the same person?

PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

The main exponent of this school of thought was John Locke. He considered memory to be the sole criterion of personal identity. He called it 'consciousness'. Later versions of this theory have focused on psychological continuity or psychological connectedness. This theory states that if a person P_1 at time t_1 is to be identical to person P_2 at time t_2 then there must be some continuity of memory or personality between them. Unless there is some psychological continuity over time, one cannot postulate the same personal self or identity.

Paradox Of The Brave Officer

Thomas Reid refuted Locke's consciousness criterion for personal identity. He gave the example of a child who grows into a young man and then an old man. The memory criterion would say that if the young man continues to have substantial memories which he had as a child then they could be said to be psychologically connected. The same also would hold for the young man and the old man. But it is possible the old man does not have the memories of being the child. So, there is no psychological continuity between the child and the old man.

Derek Parfitt

British philosopher Derek Parfitt in his book *Reasons and Persons* (1984) has shown that there are problems with the concept of personal identity. He gives the example of a thought experiment which asks what would happen if we were to get into a teletransporter. In this device our body is first scanned atom by atom and then completely destroyed. The information is transmitted to a teleportation device on Mars where the person me is exactly re-created using local materials. So, this person will be just like



Derek Parfitt

me. But Parfitt asks us to imagine that we go into this device again, except that it is now malfunctioning. We are normal on Mars but this device fails to destroy our body on earth so now there are two of us. There may be hundreds of such me's created like this. Each of us will have the same memories. Therefore, the Lockean idea that memory anchors identity is not correct. Parfitt stresses that what matters for personal identity is the relation of mental continuity and connectedness. Parfitt had written on the subject of his death: 'My death will break the more direct relations between my present experiences and future experiences, but it will not break various other relations. This is all there is to the fact that there will be no one living who will be me.'

Parfitt argues in his book that it is not true that every individual possesses only one self that persists over his lifetime. He does not believe in the concept of personal identity. He has given an experiment called 'My division.' He asks us to suppose that I am one of identical triplets and my brain is removed surgically and each half of my brain is transplanted into each of my brothers who have also had their brains removed. The resulting persons all have my memories, my personality and can be said to be psychologically continuous with me. So what has happened to the real me? There are four possibilities:

1. I do not survive
2. I survive as both
3. I survive as the other person
4. I survive as one of the two people

As regards the first objection, I can survive even if half of my brain has been given to someone else. This has been clinically shown. The second possibility goes against the very logic of identity since one cannot survive as both. Regarding the other two possibilities it doesn't make sense to say that either possibility three or four are true since both the brothers are exactly like me. Parfitt has tried to show through this experiment that what matters for the question of identity and self is psychological continuity. It is not necessary that the resulting person is identical with me. If there are sufficient psychological facts which are common to me and the other person, then it can be said that the other person is continuous with me (Stefan Snævarr, *Philosophy Now*, February/March 2017).

Parfitt insists that for psychological continuity there must be a string connecting me and some past me. Parfitt has also given the example of clubs as analogous to selves. If a certain club disbands and later a few members of this club join together to form another club, can we say it is the same club? He maintains that we can change selves over a lifetime and it is also logically possible that a person can have simultaneous multiple selves. An example is the English singer David Robert Jones who later changed his name to David Bowie. Bowie then became Ziggy Stardust, Aladdin Sane, The Thin White Duke and so on. He was truly the author of his own self, as Nietzsche and Michel Foucault said.

Parfitt's view has important moral and existential ramifications. Since our selves do not remain the same over time, our past mistakes should not worry us and also that there is no such thing as a continuous ego. The French philosopher Paul Ricoeur has said that the self may be

essentially a social phenomenon. How we define and construct ourselves may be a result of our society and culture. American philosopher Marya Schechtman does not agree with Parfitt's concept of psychological continuity but emphasizes the characteristics of a self. To be able to say that John is the same John of the past is to answer the question as to what are the essential characteristics of John. She says that what is important is not psychological continuity but continuity of the same body or corporeal continuity. Each person has a set of essential personality traits that defines the person.

David Hume

The Scottish philosopher David Hume believed that the entire notion of self is a mistake. Hume argued that all our ideas are derived from impressions. Until we have tasted a jackfruit – i.e. have an impression of it – then only can we have an idea of how it tastes. For Hume the self is nothing more than a bundle of experiences and perceptions. There is no concept of self over and above this. He does not find any unifying impression which unites all his perceptions. We only have a sequence of particular experiences. It is an illusion to suppose that there is something over and above the specific experiences that constitute myself. (John Searle, *Mind*, 2004).

Searle argues that Hume left out something important. We need to postulate something in addition to our bodies and sequences and experiences. A self has to be postulated in addition to the sequence of experiences. Searle argues that we do not just have disordered experiences but that all experiences which we have at any moment are part of a single unified conscious field.

Searle admits that the need to postulate a formal notion of the self has to do with the notions of rationality, free choice and reasons for action. He gives an example to illustrate what he means. He asks us to consider the following two statements:



Thomas Reid



John Searle

1. I made an X on the ballot paper because I wanted to vote for Bush
2. I got a stomach ache because I wanted to vote for Bush

The two statements above have different logical forms. Statement number 2 states causally sufficient conditions. The desire to vote for Bush was sufficient to produce a stomach ache. But statement number 1 does not state causally sufficient conditions. Making an X on the ballot paper is not causally sufficient because the author might not have made the X or he decided not to vote for Bush. If the explanation does not state causally sufficient conditions then it does not adequately explain the phenomenon. But statement 1 does make sense to the author as to why he made an X. The question is how to interpret any statement which gives an explanation of voluntary behaviour by giving reasons.

Searle says that in addition to the bundle of perceptions, a person also acts under certain constraints. It is necessary therefore to postulate a rational self or agent who is capable of acting freely and taking decisions. The point being emphasized is that in addition to a simple sequence of experiences in a body there is a whole complex of notions of free actions, responsibility and reason. To account for free rational actions we have to assume an entity X that is conscious, persists over time and formulates and reflects on reasons for its actions. Searle agrees with Hume that we cannot experience an entity over and above a bundle of perceptions or experiences, but that does not mean we do not have to postulate

some such entity.

Searle wants us to think of designing a robot that will replicate all human rational capacities like reflecting on reasons, making decisions and acting on its own freedom. This would require the robot to be conscious in the sense that it can process the perceptual input and use its reason towards action. It would also have to have the capacity to initiate actions, i.e. acting on reasons. The notion of acting on a reason is different from acting causally.

The illustration given earlier by Searle of the two statements emphasizes this very point. It was the difference between the claim that I got a stomach ache because I wanted to vote for Bush and the other claim that I performed a free action. I acted on my desire to vote for Bush. The acting on reason involves the concept of free will. Therefore, giving a robot consciousness, capacity for reflection and reasoning to take actions itself means that we already have a concept of self.

This concept of self is a formal notion which involves the capacity to organize intentions under rationality so that voluntary actions can be undertaken. Crucial to the concept of self is also the notion of responsibility. Actions entail responsibility which in turn will lead to questions of blame, reward, justice etc. Hence one could say that Hume's conception of experience through impressions and ideas is problematic. We have a total, unified conscious field and this is further related to the concept of self. The concept of personal identity is therefore a complex one.

The Poet and the Rose

Who was Rainer Maria Rilke?

SCHARLIE MEEUWS

S ometime ago I was given a very unusual book by my husband. It was a first limited edition of Rainer Maria Rilke's *Les Roses*, printed in 1927 by the Halcyon Press. In it are 23 exquisite poems about the rose all written in French, which show the poet's deep interest and spiritual thoughts about this flower. In his introduction the French poet Paul Valéry had written the following:

Cher Rilke, qui me paraissiez enfermé dans le temps pur, je craignais pour vous cette transparence d'une vie trop égale qui à travers les jours identiques, laisse distinctement voir la mort. Rilke had died a year before,

in 1926 aged 51. There was a myth about his death and roses, which developed shortly afterwards. One day, when picking roses in his garden for a young Egyptian woman, he pricked his finger on a thorn.

The small wound failed to heal, grew rapidly worse and affected him badly. He was diagnosed with leukaemia. After suffering ulcerous sores in his mouth and severe pain in his stomach and intestines, he died a painful death.

Years ago, I wrote a poem in memory of this world-famous poet, born 1875 in Prague, as I was intrigued by his life and untimely death:

Die Langsamkeit des Sterbens or the Death of the Poet Rainer Maria Rilke

He rose aroused
by white and yellow roses
and went for those
he saw afar, from where
the broken wall
that somehow death imposes
in its deep-set enclosure,
hugged them all.

He singled out just one,
buried himself
in its deep heart space,
overcome by sorrow
of fleeting time,
he tried hard to ignore.
Instead he felt a shiver
to the core.

He hardly noticed
when he cut his finger
in a light gesture
brushing at a thorn.
A drop of blood
showed on his skin for seconds.
It was the moment
when his death was born.

He grew his death himself
a talent or a tumour,
as he came here
to realize this world,
to raise it from a numbness
to awareness.
And pain and sorrow
were but one thing more

It took him months to die.
The poison crept
so very slowly
conquering cell by cell,
taking away
his dreams and hopes in sequence,
emptying his mind of light
as darkness fell.

He never though complained,
sick in his room,
while rising shadows mingled
with the cold
and softly, softly to his last desire
he ebbed away,
his stories still untold.

Life merged with death
slowly as colours go
from red to yellow,
blue to dark, then black.
He was a stranger
in a world of strangers
where nature kept its own
mystical track.

Roses had climbed his life
as on a trellis
shedding their petals
on his days foregone,
until their scent
no longer could be noticed,
withdrawn by sleep
towards an endless dawn.

Rilke came from the Impressionism, most of his work was written in the heydays of the Impressionism and reveals, speaking about his relationship with the real world, (for example in the narrative of *Malte Laurids Brigge*), how important for him were the basic thoughts of the Impressionism, obtaining the image of an object straight out of the sensations and not the imagination. It is difficult to place the exact moment when his art left mirroring the world and developed a relationship with the transcendental, also a steady growing tendency in the times he lived in. A good example are his *Sonnette an Orpheus* (Sonnets to Orpheus) written in 1922. In the 14th Sonnet to Orpheus Rilke writes:

*Sieh die Blumen, diese dem Irdischen treuen,
denen wir Schicksal vom Rande des Schicksals leihn,
aber wer weiß es! Wenn sie ihr Welken bereuen,
ist es an uns, ihre Reue zu sein.*

*Alles will schweben. Da gehn wir umher wie Beschwörer;
legen auf alles uns selbst, vom Gewichte entzückt;
o was sind wir den Dingen für zehrende Lehrer,
weil ihnen ewige Kindheit glückt.*

*Nähme sie einer ins innige Schlafen und schliefe
tief mit den Dingen, o wie käme er leicht
anders zum anderen Tag, aus der gemeinsamen Tiefe.*

*Oder er bliebe vielleicht; und sie blühten und priesen
ihn, den Bekehrten, der nun den Ihrigen gleicht,
allen den stillen Geschwistern im Winde der Wiesen.*

Look at the flowers, so faithful to what is earthly,
to whom we lend fate from the very border of fate.
And if they are sad about how they must wither and die,
perhaps it is our vocation to be their regret.

All Things want to fly. Only we are weighed down by desire,
caught in ourselves and enthralled with our heaviness.
Oh what consuming, negative teachers we are
for them, while eternal childhood fills them with grace.

If someone were to fall into intimate slumber, and slept
deeply with things, how easily he would come
to a different day, out of the mutual depth.



Or perhaps he would stay there; and they would blossom and praise
their newest convert, who now is like one of them,
all those silent companions in the wind of the meadows.

To bring this immensely spiritual poet alive as a
living person, one has to read descriptions of friends
who had met him in actual life.

Dora Heidrich-Herzheimer writes in her memories:

‘People, who were lucky enough to have met and
befriended Rilke, were always astonished about the
harmony between his poetry and real life. Man and
poet were inseparable.

One hour with him turned out to transform itself
into one of his soulful creations. His physique:
slim, delicate, eyes brilliant like sunrays. Any
badness would dissolve under his pure and
kind glances. In the street, hurried, simple and
nondescript, often emerged in deep thought.
One evening between the years 1906 and 1910,
in Paris, in the Rue Cassette a tiny clean hotel, a
narrow staircase leading up to the first door on the
left. I enter into a small room, where Rilke has left
his standing desk, turning towards me. He meets my
eyes in a happy mood: “I worked very well. Would
you like to listen?” And I sit down in the corner and
listen. Out of a great calm sounds are rising, words
shape into form, become alive, sparkle and die away.

The reading poet stops exhausted, overwhelmed by what had just happened. One of Rilke's most famous poems *Der Panther im Jardin des Plantes* was created just that afternoon.

When darkness fell, we walked into the evening to find a place, where we could drink a cup of milk. That was this undemanding man's daily supper.'

*Rose, oh reiner Widerspruch, Lust,
Niemandes Schlaf zu sein
unter soviel Lidern.*



Rilke's Epitaph

Oh, rose, pure contradiction, desire
to be no one's sleep
beneath so many eyelids.

Rilke dictated this epitaph, which he wrote in 1925, a year before his death in 1926, to a friend to be inscribed on his tombstone. He also asked for a weathered old gravestone suggesting the flux of time, that death was only one more phase in the eternal cycle of earthly existence.

The words of this epitaph have been discussed by various scholars and have been written about in many pages. With their deep and also double meaning they are intriguing and unforgettable.

Emptiness is only a sleep within a rose. Its petals are like the closed eyelids of the dead, but also dreamlike songs (the German word is 'Lieder'). Rose being an anagram for 'eros' and with the connotation of the desire ('Lust' in German) Rilke links Eros to death and turns the rose petals into a metaphorical night cover under which love and death are consummated.

By carefully reading the epitaph, the word 'reiner' (purer in German) springs to mind, which is also the name Rainer (same pronunciation), which Rilke's lover Lou Andreas-Salome had given him, after deciding that his original name René was too effete. Thus, his name appears twice on his gravestone. Once engraved under his family crest, and once hidden within his last poem.

But for the archetypal poet Orpheus (in his 5th Sonnet to Orpheus) Rilke dismisses a gravestone altogether.

*Errichtet keinen Denkstein. Lasst die Rose
nur jedes Jahr zu seinen Gunsten blühen.*

Erect no gravestone. Only this;
Let the rose blossom each year for its sake.

As long as we read Rilke's epitaph, the rose starts blooming anew, honouring forever the memory of the dead poet, even away from his last resting place.

January 2018

‘Color’ by the Italian artist Sara Berti



Showings (Wittgenstein): a double sestina



CHRIS NORRIS

This inseparableness of everything in the world from language has intrigued modern thinkers, most notably Wittgenstein. If its limits—that is, the precise point at which sense becomes nonsense—could somehow be defined, then speakers would not attempt to express the inexpressible. Therefore, said Wittgenstein, do not put too great a burden upon language.

Peter Farb, *Word-Play*

If a person tells me he has been to the worst places I have no reason to judge him; but if he tells me it was his superior wisdom that enabled him to go there, then I know he is a fraud.

**Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Personal Recollections*
(ed. Rush Rhees)**

The real discovery is the one which enables me to stop doing philosophy when I want to. The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* into question.

Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

The world is everything that is the case.
All that's the case is all that we can say.
Some things cannot be said but may be shown.
These are the most important things in life.
A change in them will be a change of world.
Let silence show where saying leads astray.

So many ways we can be led astray!
Delinquent speech is not the only case,
Though certain evils may infect our world
Through word-abuse. Believing we can say
What matters most, in language or in life,
Is Russell's error. This much can be shown.

That's why my faithful few won't have it shown
How moral compass-points can swing astray
Even with such ascetic forms of life
Or utterance as mine. Count it a case
Of things-gone-wrong that nobody could say
Belonged exclusively to word or world.

Russell and Moore: they were my Cambridge world
Back then although, despite some kindness shown,
They failed to grasp how using words to say
Those things unsayable led sense astray.
Their verdict on me: genius, but a case
Of life screwed up by mind and mind by life.

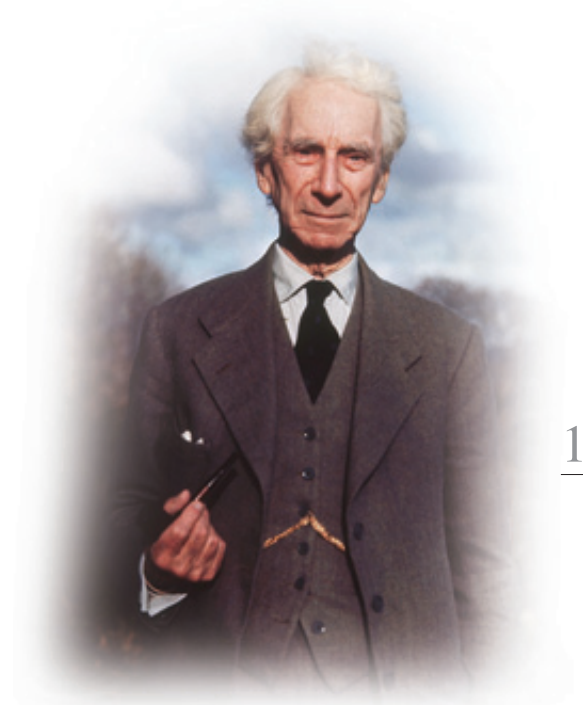
'Just tell them that it's been a wonderful life.'
My dying words, and spoken from a world
So distant, now, from all that is the case
With their world that what's said by them, or shown,
Will likely lead my auditors astray
As much as anything I've had to say.

Yet there's some truth in what the others say,
My critics, who'd regard a tortured life
Like mine as leading and as led astray
Since formed within the solipsistic world
Of my obsessions. That's the sole thing shown,
They'd say, by such a cautionary case.

I keep my life a closed book just in case
Some rogue biographer should have his say
And seek, for no good cause, to have it shown
That there were certain chapters in that life
Kept secret from the academic world
Lest scandal lead my acolytes astray.



Moore



Russell



Wittgenstein



Yet could it be some young men went astray
Because I'd cruise the Prater and then case
The gay joints in my craving for a world
As far removed as possible from, say,
The wealth and privilege of my old life,
Or the mixed spite and condescension shown

By Moore and his Apostles? If I've shown
A seamy side, a will to go astray
In quest of what they'll call 'his other life',
It's not (the vulgar-Freudian view) a case
Of my abject desire that they should say
Harsh things that show me up before the world

For what I am. Rather, I deem that world
Of theirs a world in need of being shown
Such truths as neither they nor I can say
Since, in the saying, sense would go astray
And make me out a monster or a case
For some corrective treatment. It's my life,



Vienna

Not anything I've written, but my life
As lived that bears sole witness to the world
Concerning just those matters in the case
Of Ludwig Wittgenstein that should be shown,
Not said, since uttering them sends words astray
And has them mimic what they fail to say.

And yet I ask: why think of 'show' and 'say'
In such bi-polar terms unless your life,
Like mine, has gone unspeakably astray
And left you stranded in an alien world
Where your 'condition' can at most be shown,
Not talked about or stated, just in case.

A modest claim: to say, not save, the world,
Yet still too statement-bound, as life has shown.
What was it went astray with what's the case?

No world exists that logothetes might say
'Here's all we've shown: that words bring worlds to life'.
What if 'the case' just is what goes astray?

The Romanian National Opera House at Cluj A national Treasure Created by a Great Man

DENNIS HARRISON

I had a private viewing of the Romanian National Opera House at Cluj. Seen first in greyscale silhouette; somebody then turned the lights on! I gulped as I saw history as more than nostalgia or as banal recreation, but as a patina, a lived-in aesthetic.

The ceiling painted the same as when it opened in 1906, Cluj then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; the fire curtain perhaps the same as that which dropped in front of hapless apparatchiks in the 1970s.

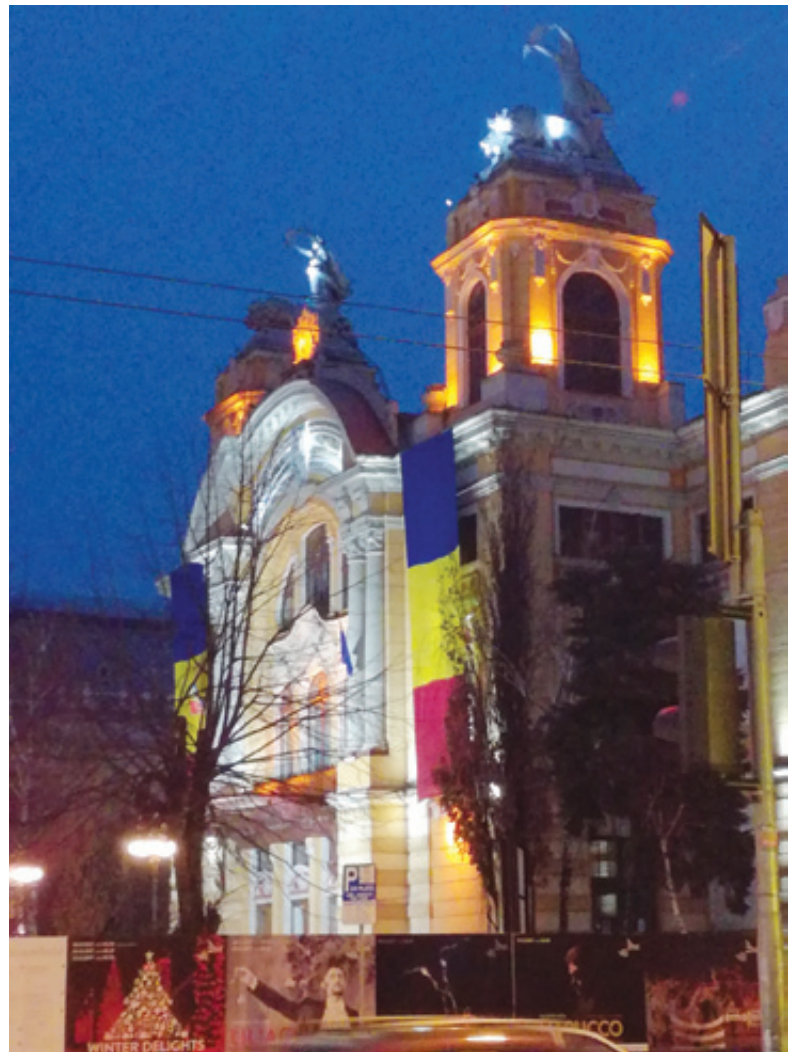
The theatre's faded cushions, tarnished woodwork, its floorboards in disrepair and curtains hanging (weighted by the dust and cigarette smoke of generations) - each added living history to its splendour.

Compare it, say, to Manchester's Opera House which was built at roughly the same time, its head hung in shame since as a bingo hall in the 1980s and now, kitted out in a new livery, as a commercial host to Take That tribute bands and not much else. Cluj has a fulsome operatic itinerary. It shares its huge stage - as big as Wimbledon's Centre Court - with the Romanian National Theatre.

Jenő Janovics was its first director who, using his own money to fund the interest on the city's borrowing, then had built another huge theatre for lightweight shows. In 1918 he was made to move on, and he made operatic camp in this sister theatre, the new home for the Hungarian Opera Company.

I listened to remarkable stories of Janovics

from a current director at the National Theatre, editor of his biography. A life of remarkable achievements. For instance, single-handedly he created a Romanian film industry. He struck a deal with the Pathé Frères Co, made his first silent film in 1913 using the theatre's players; by 1920 he had produced 66 films, founded



The Romanian National Opera House at Cluj



3 production companies, opened 26 cinemas. The early directors he hired included Sándor (aka Alexander) Korda and Michael Curtiz (*Casablanca* et al).

Janovics' alabaster yet jovial bust is in the foyer. Yet his nameplate is missing, and the theatre's story, etched on the wall behind, like the grand entrance to the theatre where there is a barely visible trace of its original Hungarian

typography, is a palimpsest of history, crayoned over in 1918, the year Janovics was ousted, the year Cluj became part of the new Romania. It all happened again in 1945, Janovics recalled to be in charge of his first theatre (Cluj again part of Hungary), to be shunted aside when post-war treaties made the Cold War a probability, and returned Cluj to Romania.

The Wednesday

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PREDESTINATION



Why did I get on this train, I don't recognise the stations?
By the looks on everyone's faces they are on a familiar journey.
I envy their certainty, that the next station will be theirs.
I on the other hand don't know whether the next stop
will bring me nearer to or further from where I need to go.
I can't read my ticket it's been defaced by my sweaty fidget.
I should ask someone but they already look as if I am not here.
Best not to ask they won't recognise my fear -
only gawp in astonishment that I am so lost.
I have decided I **will** go where the train takes me,
and that will be my destination.

David Burrridge

David Burrridge is a retired employment lawyer, philosopher and a poet.
He is an active member of the Wednesday group and he publishes his work regularly
in **The Wednesday**. His poetry collection '*Pausing For Breath Along My Way*' is
available from Amazon.

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