

# The Wednesday



Weekly Magazine of the Wednesday Group at Albion Beatnik - Oxford

## Editorial

### *The House of Mirrors*

The present issue coincides with the start of the month of Ramadan. Millions of Muslims start their fast. The aim is to purify themselves and be close to God. Fasting is supposed to be a complete abstaining from actions that distract from focusing on God. You are supposed to abstain from bad talking, listening, food and other things. But the place of purification is the heart. Such purity has a special place in religious thought, nowhere more so than in the teachings of the mystics. They talk about the heart as a superior source of knowledge to that of the rational thought adopted by the philosophers.

The mystics detailed the layers of the heart from the chest to the deepest point that is essentially linked to the Divine. We can understand this in terms of the empirical I and the Absolute I, with the empirical I involved in daily experience. But it is also possible to abstract from all such experience and to reflect on its ground, the absolute I. Fichte called such a reflection intellectual intuition. The difference between the philosopher and the standpoint of the mystic is that the first is active in reconstructing this intuition while the mystic is more passive.


Al-Ghazali in his short treatise, *Commentary on the Book of the Marvels of the Heart*, narrates a fable to show the difference between knowledge obtained by discursive thinking and knowledge acquired by inspiration (or in the mystical language, unveiling). The story is as follows: there was a competition between the Chinese and the Romans about their art of painting. The King who judged the competition ordered a hall to be divided in two parallel halves. The Romans ordered lots of paint and started working hard. The Chinese ordered nothing; they just kept polishing the wall on their side. When all had finished, the king came to judge their work. He

was first very impressed by the work of the Romans but when the partition was removed he was even more impressed. All that he had seen on the wall of the Romans was now reflected on the Chinese wall. But in addition to that he could see his own image also reflected on this wall. He judged them to be the better craftsmen.

The poet Rumi has narrated the same fable but changed the nationality of the second team from being Chinese to be Greek with reversed roles. Here the Greek are the ones who did the polishing. Muslims refer to Plato as *al-Ilahi* (divinely inspired). Centuries later his successor Plotinus influenced Islamic mysticism profoundly. Maybe Rumi was referring to a much subtler conception of reflection than generally has been taken when he mentioned the Greeks. He said of them: 'The Greek art is the Sufi way'. I take it that he is referring here to figures like Plato, Plotinus and Empedocles as opposed to Aristotle and the Peripatetic. It is interesting that both Avicenna and St. Aquinas shifted their position towards the end of their lives from being Peripatetic to Neoplatonism.

But surely the reflection depends on the capacity of the individual for knowledge. The great mystics who left us reports of their experiences and commentaries all have a high degree of intellectual alertness. William Chittick says: 'The Sufis do not deny the findings of the intellect; they only claim that it is inadequate to reach truth about things without outside guidance, i.e. first revelation, and then unveiling.' Perhaps the mystics are talking about inspiration. This is a poetic idea that we find in the writings of Holderlin where the poet takes the mediating place between the gods and the people. We may come back to this point on another occasion.

*The Editor*



AMERIKANER, IN VIETNAM  
MACHT IHR UNS MITSCHULDIG

## Frankfurt School and the Student Uprising 1968

**Fifty years ago, the students were marching on the streets of many European countries and America. What was the context of their protest? Who influenced them? What were their ideas? The article below gives some of the answers.**

DR. IBRAHIM AL-HAIDARI

**T**he uprising of the students and youth during the summer of 1968 was a social protest. It was a social critique and one of the means of social and cultural changes. It was distinguished by the growing 'student consciousness' that is almost similar to 'class consciousness' of the workers of the nineteenth century and so, the students inherited the proletariat (according to Alain Touraine). This is close to what the German sociologist Herbert Marcuse affirmed in that the intellectuals and students were capable of making 'radical' changes in society.

Critical trends started in the 1950s in terms of the attempt by some sociologists to study and analyse the world in the post second world war period. At this time the power of the United States started to grow, due to increasing scientific and technological advances as well as the changing of American society to a consumer society. But with the beginning of the sixties, the state of

optimism and comfort which characterised the thoughts of the theoreticians of the fifties started to ebb. New forces started to challenge Western ideology and were taken up by the New Left in what became an international phenomenon. The tripartite invasion of Egypt in 1956, the Algerian and Vietnamese wars, the reactions against Stalinism, all led to the formation of youth and student movements in Europe and made them a new opposition force. This force became the focus of the New Left in France, Germany and other European countries. There was also the influence of the Civil Rights Movement in America which was led by Martin Luther King, the Cuban Revolution, Guevara's idea of a world revolution and America's foreign policy in south east Asia. All these factors contributed to the formation of the New Left. There were in addition the social, economical and cultural conditions that alienated the youth and students and facilitated their involvement in the student's movement to express their anger and protest





**Herbert Marcuse**

against the existing political practices. In Germany, in particular, the ideas and analysis of the leading thinkers of the Frankfurt School with their critical sociology played a very important role in exciting student consciousness and led them to raise critical questions and engage in new social thinking. The new consciousness reflected in a clear way the new generation's disappointment with the existing social system and its ideology. They thought of themselves as having a special task beyond their functional occupation as students. They had their awareness of the great dangers of the nuclear weapons and the increasing possibilities of war. This can be clearly seen from their slogan: 'Make Love, not War'

There was also a contribution from the state of capitalist societies, such as increasing violence and internal divisions, besides the increased individualism and consumerism. This reflected to some extent the contradictions of American society and the strategies of control used by the government, and different pressures and techniques to domesticate the will of society. This was especially true when science and technology turned into ideology (as explained by Habermas), expressing itself through propaganda, advertising, material luxuries and entertainment. Society now changed from

that in which the value of work played a major role to one in which the value of consumerism played a much larger role. The nature of work itself changed from being subjectively satisfying to that which is designed to satisfy others and their interests. The individual, accordingly, became directed by another individual or a group who decided his interests, his work and his relations. All this led to alienation and fragmentation. The process of criticism, especially social

criticism, started in the fifties among sociologists. The American sociologist C. Wright Mills was one of the pioneers. He built his theory on the work of Marx and Weber. Mills had published his book *New Men of Power: America's Labor Leaders* (1948) just after the war. The workers, then, aspired to be the new national elite in the American society. He followed this with his book *White Collars: The American Middle Classes* (1951). The book was a study of the middle class in the American society. He studied their lives and their social, economic and political situation and the ideology that dominated them. He found out that the ideology concentrated on independence, individualism and monopolies. It was nothing but a way of keeping them ignorant and stupid to such a limit that the old middle class lost everything that distinguished it. It was alienated and unable to defend itself and unable to take up its responsibility politically. In 1956 he published his book: *The Power Elite* which analysed the structure of power in American society. He found that the elite had a control of wealth and social prestige that enabled it to control the major establishments, politically, economically and militarily as well as taking all the decisions.

The American economist J. K. Galbraith analysed the social and economic aspects of

work in his book *The Affluent Society*. He directed strong criticism to what he called 'conventional wisdom' that concentrated on the quantity of consumer commodities without paying attention to social and economic factors. Capitalist behaviour was concerned with profits but it created serious side effects for the worker and his happiness. Galbraith's ideas were shallow and did not go deep into the political factors, but it still gave a good analysis of the existing social structures and directed a sharp criticism of the economic system of the affluent society, which does not produce equality and justice for all individuals.

These events occupied the youth and students but also intellectuals and university professors, especially in the faculties of sociology, politics and anthropology. There were at the same time changes in the trade unions in more than one European country. They became bureaucratic organisations and started to be involved with capitalist establishments, and directly and indirectly exploiting the workers and making profits. The students also had grievances of their own. They wanted to reform the universities and ensure their independence. They wanted to have a part in running them and to be given more opportunities to decide their future. They also called for freedom and equality in the universities and society at large. These became the main slogans of the 'student revolution' and signalled a new awareness with an international outlook that emphasised freedom. They thought they could achieve that by rejecting the existing system and the ideology that supported it.

The ideas of the pioneers of the Frankfurt school in critical sociology had a large influence on the students. These ideas became slogans that the students used in their demonstration and protests, not only in Germany, but also in America, France and other European countries. Marcuse expressed the ideas that the others failed to express. He liberated Marxist Phenomenology from its restrictions by using Hegel and Sartre. He also built on the ideas of Husserl, particularly in his critique of science and technology. Scientific and

technological developments show that the social structure is based on capitalist foundations. It sanctifies the relations of power and oppression. The joint influence of technology and ideology impedes social development and prevents the formation of new alternatives. Marcuse thought that there was no way out of this incapacitating condition except through spontaneous protests by marginalised individuals and groups against the existing order.

These ideas made Marcuse the philosopher of the 'student revolution' and its ideological leader. His ideas became slogans whether the attribution to him is correct or incorrect. Marcuse expressed his thought clearly in his book *The One Dimensional Man* (1964) where he directed a sharp criticism of the bourgeois culture and its underlying ideology. According to him, the practical existing situation, with its contradictions, was based on illusion and trickery. It needed a revolution of the current thinking and the existing order. The book also called for new thinking that opposed the old ideology and a new philosophy. The new philosophy ought to have a true dialectical understanding of reality, so that it can reveal the contradictions underlying all illusions. Society had lost its real vision because of the dominant oppressive capitalist ideology. It made the human being lose his critical vision and he came to believe in continuous progress. He lost the tools that helped him to examine ideology. He started to believe that there was no better alternative to the existing reality. The social system, power and ideology forces on the individual a one-dimensional thinking, in terms of working and behaving without leaving him the freedom to think the opposite and hence there was no true freedom in his destiny. The lack of a critical outlook was enforced by the socio-political structure, supported by technology. There was also brain washing in the media. It distorted consciousness by providing false information that aimed at preserving the existing system and its continuation.

The alternative that Marcuse presents is a change in the one-dimensional outlook, changing

reality through negative thinking which refuses to participate in the imposed 'game'. It also involved the rejection of traditional culture and a continuous criticism of the existing cultural situation and the means of supporting it, but also the rejection of the social reality by revolting against it and destroying all forms of oppression imposed on the individual.

It was not by accident that the youth and students who rebelled against society thought that Marcuse's ideas were aimed at them in particular, and they came to believe that the road to freedom was open in front of them. And so, the ideas of Marcuse spread quickly and became a dynamo for their movement and gave them some direction. It started first at the Universities of California and Berkeley (US, 1965) after the banning of a demonstration against the war in Vietnam. In France, there was the May 68 revolt in Paris. In Germany, Frankfurt and Berlin in the summer and autumn of 1968 there were similar uprisings. It went further to Italy, Spain, Czechoslovakia and other European countries.

The students protested against the existing system, aiming at a strategy to change the whole of society in a revolutionary way. This aim could not be achieved except through continuous revolutionary struggle and a unity of theory and practice. It resulted in the noisy demonstrations that filled the streets of Paris, Frankfurt and West Berlin. They were accompanied by violence, anarchy and destruction but the students were calling for freedom and democracy. They were supported by small groups of workers and marginalised people. When the authorities couldn't absorb their anger and rebellions, the faced up to the students as anarchist gangs aiming at destruction.

There was a second level of protest which was directed against the university bureaucracy and called for its independence. The aim was to reform the university and let the students participate in its administration, as well as deciding the teaching and educational policies.



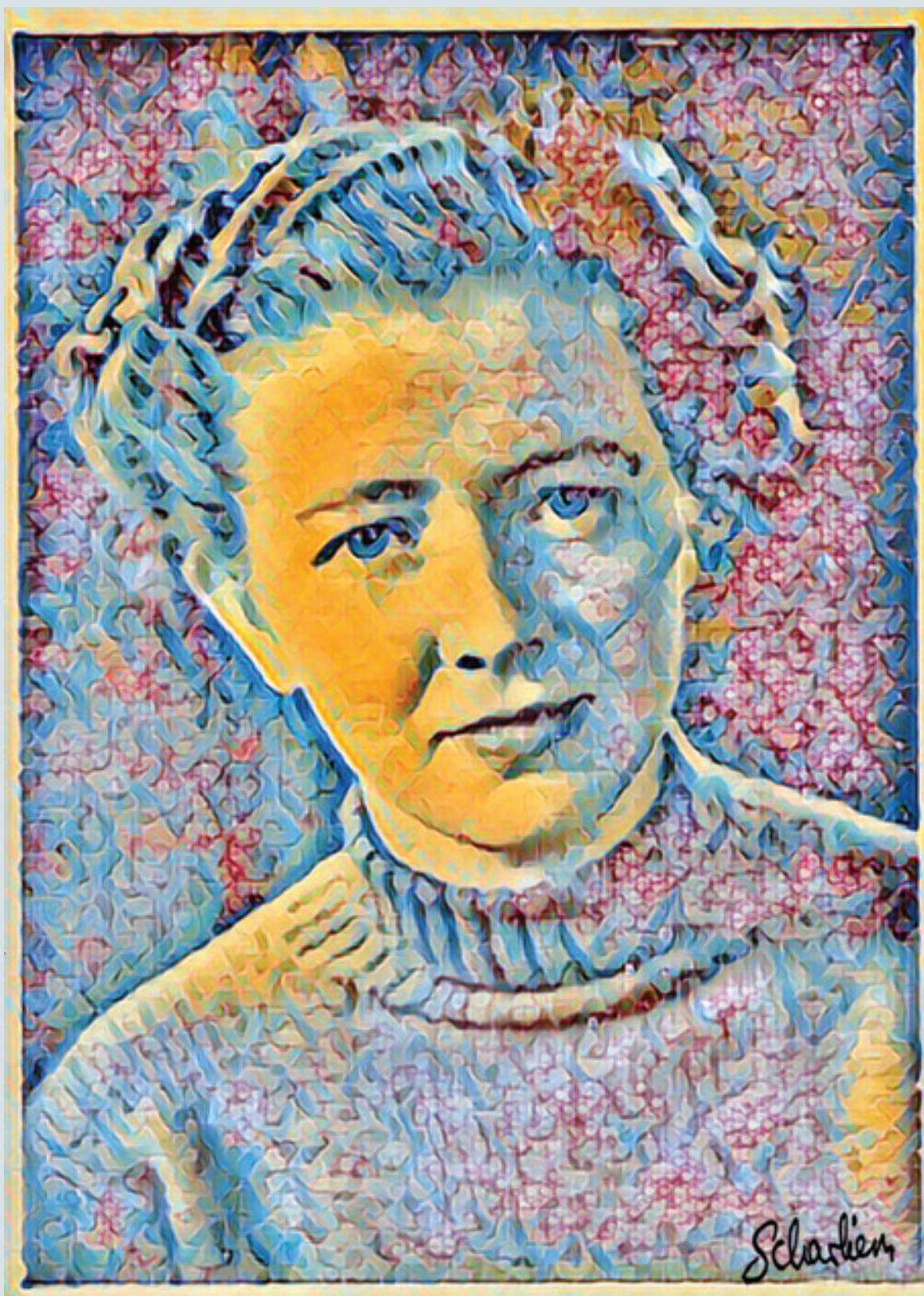
**C. Wright Mills**

The university, on one side, is the establishment in charge of carrying the torch of culture but from another side it is a bureaucratic system aimed at providing workers for the existing system. The latter is an economic role that gets lots of attention but it involves a loss in knowledge. The university, then, must not be a 'factory' for knowledge that provides graduates to work for the system. It had become a bureaucratic system connected to big industrial companies. In reality the main objective was independence which could be used to generate new social traditions independent of the values and traditions of the existing bourgeois society.

Rudi Dutschke who led the students in Germany was inspired by his professor Herbert Marcuse. He called for an international revolution. The student revolution should be radical and directed against all forms of oppression in capitalist countries. He also criticised the socialist countries and called for the rejection of old concepts and the creation of new ones that come through struggle and the complementarity of thinking and acting. He kept moving between Berlin and Frankfurt giving speeches and leading the demonstrations.

The result of this serious movement is that the students became a force to be reckoned with, highly critical of the establishment which they had opted out of.





*Elizabeth Jennings by Scharlie Meeuws*

# The Half-seen, the Just-heard...

## Remembering the poet Elizabeth Jennings

**The poet Elizabeth Jennings was a special character, besides being a famous poet. Below are images of her handwritten poems and books.**

Some moments in the hubbub of the day, a flash, as, for instance, a shard of glass hit by a sunray, that starts sparkling like the most beautiful diamond. And an all-familiar voice you thought you had forgotten rings in your mind. You become silent, you think back and you are beamed back in time into your old shop. It must be around 1975 when she, Elizabeth Joan Jennings, meets the Antiquarian bookseller for the first time, as she lives just around the corner from his newly established Oxford shop Holdan Books in North Parade Avenue. She often comes visiting, as this bookshop is different and unusual. And she finds it vastly attractive. For instance, she never tires of looking at the large array of foreign books in most European languages, especially in Russian, French and German and even in Arabic, Georgian, Persian, Amharic and Armenian. She loves the whole atmosphere of the bookshop with the majestic beautifully carved old bookcase dominating the entrance as a first impression.

From 1983 onwards, she also becomes a frequent visitor to his next shop Thornton's, in Broad Street, already well established since 1835, once the bookseller took it over from the previous owner. He actually saved it from closing down and converted it into

this treasure trove, where books are stacked in nooks and crannies, in crookedly bulging shelves on tilting walls, on many floors, even piled high on the winding staircase, where ghosts had once or twice been seen earlier. Her voice reminds him of her difficult times, when she suffered a lot with low income and could not afford a holiday. Poetry for sure does not make people rich. She lives in baggy clothes, colourful striped leggings, her hair wildly put up, indifferent to fashion, yet the beauty of her poetry, the delicacy of her words shine, little jewels, throughout her verses. People discover her and listen. That makes her known and well loved. Most of the days one can find her writing and sipping coffee in cafés by the Oxford's Open Market.

One day she asks the bookseller, if he wants to buy her copy of 'The Hobbit' signed by Tolkien. He suggests she should sell it at auction and she listens and gets £4000 for it. She spends that summer in Italy and returns tanned and happy.

Elizabeth Jennings is not shy of expressing her opinion on all kinds of issues, especially with the manager of the Slavonic Section. Be it in a debate or a fight, often deliberating over theological issues, which is the true belief, Roman Catholicism or Russian Ortho-



doxy, her discussions are passionate and loud.

The bookseller suggests to her that she writes a collection of poems on Oxford themes, which he promises to publish and even pay her royalties beforehand.

She returns within two weeks with 16 poems. In 1987 Thornton's publishes *An Oxford Cycle* in a limited edition of 538 copies. Numbers I to XII should all have been signed by Elizabeth, but she only ever signs 6 copies. He pays her the full amount of her royalties, but a few months later, he, by chance, overhears her complaining loudly to a customer, that she has not been paid anything for the booklet. He then reminds her of the cashed cheque. He cannot resist making that clear in front of the other customers. Suddenly she falls very quiet and does not know what to say.

One of the poems is an ode to Blackwell's *They will not ask you what you want*. The bookseller lets her know, that however much he admires his competitor further down in Broad Street, he is not inclined to offer him free promotion. She then, in a hurry, writes a poem about Thornton's, which she hands him with a smile. The hurry indeed is obvious...

Sometime later, the last 300 printed copies mysteriously vanish from the shop, presumed stolen.





Here is the original handwritten poem about Blackwell's, which together with the proofs and other materials is now in the Georgetown University Special Collection, the Lauinger Library.

they will not ask you want you  
 want. ~~they~~ You are free  
 To stand there all day long  
 or sit indeed  
 If you can find ~~a~~ ~~customer~~ ~~for~~ ~~books~~  
 a ~~customer~~ ~~for~~ ~~books~~ to lead  
 To Barker & Hughes in the  
 English Department, freed  
 Among Skelton and Shakespeare,  
 Plath and Pope. They  
 stand  
 Some shored ~~for~~ ~~in~~ ~~by~~ ~~another's~~ ~~peniless~~  
 hand.

If you want to sell books - not  
 "want" - the word is  
 You have to toil ~~up~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~top~~ ~~floor~~ ~~unless~~ ~~you~~ ~~are~~  
 field  
 Is philosophy, classics or ~~modern~~  
 languages, then you must  
 tread

Paradise Square

These may well be true  
at their small house here,  
once in Paradise Square,  
here once lived ownership and grief  
shopping cart. From everywhere.  
this is all this life.  
Paradise Square,  
your home is.

Demonstrations and Balls

at school when I'd done  
made me ill.  
the thought of exams.  
temperature upon  
high until  
would say  
but through  
I would stay  
one  
to this day  
the papers, the  
Ne. SPACe  
will stay  
in a town  
carefully on  
kindly done  
balls  
after you'd  
done you base  
dressed,  
our glorious gown  
wielded.  
different  
child  
The tower  
Through the Cheese  
or there  
game  
mystery of touch  
think out  
if reach.

Deford's Prologue

that is your voice?  
it is a straggling of foreign tongues and traces

Above, A page proof



She sold Thornton's her notebook, which she wrote, when she was about 10 years old; it is now also in the Lauinger Library.

Elizabeth Jennings never was an ambitious poet, she found poetry readings an ordeal and avoided poetry gatherings altogether. But she was always searched out by admirers coming across her poetry. She wrote reviews for the *Daily Telegraph*, but was not searching for fame as Poet Laureate, and neither would she have appreciated a street named after her. She lived frugally, liked the little pleasures in life and often could be found in the Häagen-Daz ice cream parlour, or – another of her passions – using her free pass for the cinema in Walton Street. She frequently travelled by bus to Stratford-upon-Avon to watch the latest Shakespeare play. On her few foreign travels she connected with Italy's culture. Her translation of the Sonnets of Michelangelo (1961) is still the standard version and remains unsurpassed.

*Only one thing must be cast out, she wrote, and that is the vague. Only true clarity reaches to the heights and the depths of human, and more than human, understanding.* The words are from her study of 20th-century authors but sum up her own poetry. She was a mentor for many students in the sixties, whom she invited for tea at her rented flat, full of knick-knacks, music boxes and dolls houses. In her poetry she mixed childhood impressions with reflections about nature, sometimes reminiscent of the German

poet Rilke.

*I watched as a child the slow/ Leaves turning and taking the sun, and the autumn bonfires./ The whips of wind blowing a landscape away./ Always it was the half-seen, the just-heard which enthralled.*

She received several awards and the CBE (1992).

Never married, (there is somewhere the mention of a lost lover) and plagued for years by mental health issues, she kept on writing until her death in October 2001. Some lines in her poem 'Winter Argument' convey some of her thoughts:

*We drift into the dark where each dream goes/ with unexpected order. What insight/ will shift in sleep towards us/ No-one knows.*

And in the poem 'More than spring' she writes at the end:

*A hawk streaks down to kill a mouse and show/ what dark we move to, what dark we come from.*

Elizabeth Jennings, RIP.

**SCHARLIE MEEUWS**

Faringdon, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2018



# On the continental/analytic philosophy split

*Notes of the Wednesday Meeting 2nd May 2018*

PAUL COCKBURN

**T**he Wednesday group has been called ‘the refugees from the analytical school’! that is because we seem to be critical of that school. In our Wednesday meeting we discussed how psychotherapy works, and why is analytical psychotherapy analytical? How does it relate to psychoanalysis?

The therapist analyses the patient’s problems mostly in terms of childhood trauma in Freudian analysis, but the patient has to accept the analysis, work on it in some way and (hopefully) change his or her behavior for the better. But surely just to analyse a psychological problem does not solve it. Another problem is that our memories, particularly of childhood, can be unreliable. In bereavement counselling, the empathy of the counsellor may be important to help the bereaved to deal with their grief. Jungian psychoanalysis is considered mystical and goes beyond the individual into the ‘collective unconscious’. Melanie Klein thought psychoanalysis was an art not a science.

We moved on to discuss the continental/analytic philosophy split. When did the split occur? It probably began with Kant; whose philosophy was initially a response to Hume’s empiricism and

antagonism to metaphysics. For Kant the objects in the world conform to the mental concepts we have of them. Otherwise we could not successfully work in the world, for example construct buildings, or predicting experimental results. But our mind ‘frames’ our experience of the world, and we cannot know the ‘thing in itself’.

Heidegger and Wittgenstein, although from the continent, are to some extent accepted by analytical philosophers. But Hegel’s idea of ‘Spirit’ being revealed in history is too difficult to prove and is generally not accepted by them. Analytical philosophy deals with ‘what is’, in terms of what can be clearly shown and logically deduced, while continental philosophy is speculative, looking at what might be, dealing with concepts which are not clearly or simply defined. Maybe it is the type of person we are which determines the philosophy we adopt. We were privileged to be visited by a student from South Korea. Mr. Sung Hun Song emphasized the socialist principles and religious nature of the people of South Korea, and the importance of harmony in South Korean society. He thought the ‘old-style’ Communism in North Korea should change, as it had in recent years in Russia and China.



From left: Rahim Hassan, Sung Hun Song, Ray Ellison, Phil Walden, Mike Simera, Paul Cockburn and David Clough

### Early In The Century

London clerk muddles through horsepower and flesh,  
an omnibus conveys him to his city seat  
to scratch a balance without a blot.

Winding streets are cracked with alleys,  
the poor stare out like cellar rats.  
He turns his head away  
just shillings from there himself.


*Double click and a century has slipped,  
ink stains washed away  
I am tubed to a keyboard tap  
a balance still to be drawn*

*Gunmen crouch in Syrian streets.  
I see it all without a shift:  
high definition pain and pleasure,  
visuals I never need to meet.*

Rumours of war lean close.  
Not the overturn he wants in his head,  
but one plotted behind high walls.  
Men will be munitions until they are spent,  
then heroes carved from their remains.

*Savvy with electronic wit.  
a steel finger taps out the old beat,  
Behind fire walls they make their pitch  
Slaughter is now a virtual drill.*





**Bookish men say God is dead!  
between sherry sips, then forget  
to mount the pulpit steps. Their  
Truth then found in frozen fields.**

*Now they say God is on the mend. Sunday school  
crayons, colour in the world again.  
Stains are cloistered and big belts are strapped  
to craving men*

**Standing on his plot of dust, he watches  
a comet blood the sky and wonders  
about kingdom come.**

*A trick of wind or the old tin drum –  
Victory roars as new graves are dug.  
I snap my laptop shut, there is  
nothing new to download*


Philosophy Graduate / A Final Date

She'd met him on campus  
in the eighties,  
turned on by grey-green eyes  
and erudition.

A killingly bright nineteen years,  
with a head of blonde hair,  
badly hurling a Frisbee.

She slept with his ideas  
more than his body.  
Sorry to quit  
the Foucault debate  
and dress. Pulled back  
by the booze and a mind  
of wonderful retention.





She has a husband now,  
not as clever,  
more a solid  
core of attachment,  
undreamt of through  
the long semesters  
with her ironic animal.

The partner lives  
for his work.  
The lover's dead.  
She ignores these strangers  
drinking at his wake;  
remembering frenzied days  
of letting go.

**ALAN PRICE**

## *The Wednesday*

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