

The *Wednesday*



Weekly Magazine of the Wednesday Group at Albion Beatnik - Oxford

Editorial

Philosophy and the Universities

Philosophy started with the search for knowledge and wisdom but soon found itself flourishing in the Academy that was founded by Plato. It became more academic with Aristotle. During the Middle Ages it became subservient to theology and was taught in the schools and the early universities, such as the Sorbonne. But philosophy in the Sorbonne, as part of the liberal studies (Faculty of Arts), started to challenge theology. It used certain interpretations of Aristotle, particularly Averroes, to challenge the Aristotle of the theologians.

It has been reported that Kant was the first professional philosopher. Fichte put great faith in the idea of a university and its role of reforming society. Although he had to leave Jena university because of the atheism dispute, he became a dean and then a rector of the University of Berlin in its early days. Philosophy seems to have established itself at the newly founded universities. But Schopenhauer was critical of both Schelling and Hegel accusing them of being career philosophers and charlatans. The reality of the situation is that he had the financial means to be independent, while they didn't.

The universities of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were the environment great philosophical development and innovative philosophical ideas, especially in Germany. The number of universities was limited but the output of books and ideas was impressive. Many of these philosophers just had a first degree and they published their work at a very young age, especially Schelling who wrote his first book when he was nineteen. Novalis wrote his philosophy and poetry and died when he was twenty-nine. Less than a century later, Nietzsche became professor at twenty-four.

The universities had expanded beyond what the pioneers expected but creative philosophy shrank.

There is no denying that philosophy developed in a more precise way and became too technical. There is also no denying of the huge talent of professors, students and researchers. There are highly trained minds that can take any argument, even from the great philosophers of the past, and they could reduce them to nothing or find mistakes in the original text. But what about originality? Philosophy seems to have fallen victim to its success and to the paradigms it made. Did too much professionalism kill philosophy? Have the technicalities squeezed the spirit out of free thinking? Has the system killed the vision of the new students? Is this part of the trend of the end of big narrative in science and philosophy? Science now works through piecemeal development and specialisation.

At the early stage, students of philosophy at the new universities were freer to develop their own ideas. Fichte gave an interpretation of Kant that the latter didn't agree with but which resulted in an advance of philosophy. If this same idea occurred to a present-day university student he might possibly fail his thesis for misunderstanding Kant. But at the time of Fichte the university was the centre of cultural, social and political life. The philosophers themselves (Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) wrote on epistemology, ethics, politics, philosophy of nature and aesthetics in a very original way. Not today.

But does this amount to a call for abandoning professional training in philosophy? Not quite. But what is needed, in our opinion, is a vitality that is not stifled by too hard academic discipline. Edward Said said once that an intellectual should keep in himself the spirit of the amateur and not get fully absorbed in his academic concerns. This could only happen when one keeps one's independence of mind and the courage to have a vision and to articulate it in the most daring way.

The Editor

BODY
MIND
SOUL
+ SPIRIT
you?

Who Am I?

An Examination Of The Self As It Has Been Defined By Different Thinkers

Part one of this article dealt with the philosophical views of the self. This second part of the article deals with the psychological view of the self.

DAVID BURRIDGE

Part 2

I want to use Maslow's Theory of the Hierarchy of Needs as a basis for exploring the arguments as to what behaviour governs ourselves. I would first like to explore Maslow's thinking. Once I have drawn out what I think are the implications of his theory I will review what they tell us about Human nature.

omits certain important principles. The first principle he argues is *the integrated wholeness of the organism is the foundation stone of all motivation theory*. But picking out particular separate factors may not do full justice to his arguments.

Of course, a physiological need is a basic drive - if someone is starving then the priority is nutrition: *The receptors and effectors, the intelligence and memory, habits, all may now be defined simply as hunger gratifying tools*. There is a need in our bodies for a balance of nutrition as with any animal, but this does not explain the physiological craving for more and more food, which is leading to a massive increase in obesity worldwide. In 2014 39% of

adults were overweight and 13% obese. This figure has more than doubled since 1980. So, a physiological need gives way to a psychological craving.

Norms may explain this using Sripada and Stich's *Norm Mechanism*: a normative rule is kept in place by a combination of *compliance motivation* and *punitive motivation*. Keeping to a modest healthy diet might invite social praise and overeating lead to social disgrace. The breakdown of such social norms not to eat too much may be caused by a reaction to changing social conditions. If there is an imbalance between the food available and the need to exercise, obesity may result. Why doesn't the normative mechanism or nature switch off the food craving? Perhaps there are other emotional triggers. For example: 'I don't belong so I might as well over eat'. Or have we so much control over our nature that we can decide the importance of food consumption to our nature.

A different response is when a mother is hungry but pushes aside her need to provide for her child. Maslow clearly recognised this as lifting a physiological need to a higher level of need. He argued that motivation should be seen as both a gratification as well as a deprivation model. It might be argued that 'putting the child first' behaviour would be characteristic of any higher mammal. Is this a characteristic drawn from our nature? Are physiological drives just instincts? In her book *Beast and Man*, Mary Midgely distinguishes between closed and open instincts. There are in nature closed behaviour patterns fixed genetically in every detail, like the bees' honey dance. Open instincts on the other hand are programs with gaps. Parts of the behaviour pattern are innately determined, but other parts are left to be filled in by experience. Even in satisfying basic needs there is scope for intellect and reason.

As we are a social animal there are of course social norms that influence our judgement. It can be argued, that the need to belong is the



Maslow

most powerful of all human needs. It is so much so that we would even deny facts if they are felt to conflict with a social belief. Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance gives a good account of how people will strive to belong. Even Steven Pinker accepts that '*people have a powerful urge to do as their neighbours do*'. He argues that our minds are fitted with mechanisms designed to read the goals of other people so we can copy their intended acts. Social norms are powerful factors in determining Human Nature.

But they can be open to question always assuming there are no *thought-police* enforcing them. We can start with instinct or inner drive, test these against social norms and use our intellect to find the best solution for the gratification of the motivational factor. Maslow argues that motivation theory should be human-centred rather than animal centred. Perhaps it would be better to describe ourselves as a higher order animal with a potentially complex cognitive process which we can use to survive.



Mary Midgely

Of course, we do revert to a low order beast (Id) at times and this is particularly the case when fear drives us. Maslow describes these as safety needs: 'The organism may equally well be wholly dominated by them. They may serve as the almost exclusive organisers of behaviour...' He uses the example of a child afraid of so many things including being beaten by the parent, but he acknowledges that safety is a complex matter.

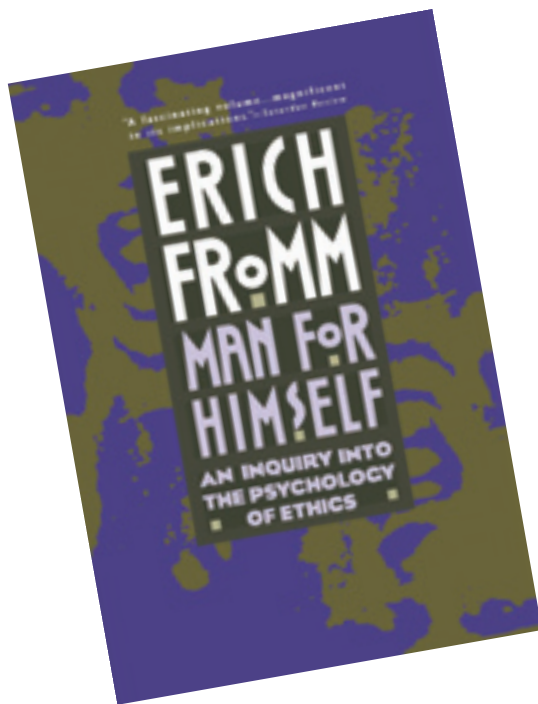
Clearly, we all want to live in a safe, orderly, predictable, organised world. But I think there are three states of social anxiety. The first is fearing some actual practical danger: say a major storm that might cause flooding. Secondly there is the fear of re-occurrence. If a lion attacks a herd of zebras, they will be terrified as long as the threat is imminent. Once the lion disappears, they go back to grazing. As humans we have the problem of conscious memory. We will forever think that a disaster could come back again and such a fear could shape the lives of individuals, even whole communities for generations.

A third fear is what might be called a belief-fear. This is where a threat to safety is based not on any facts but rather prejudices that have been nurtured through time or created by powerful social agencies. Of course, a classic example

is the antisemitism which haunted Europe for so many centuries. A more recent example is the fear by many English people that there are millions of *foreigners* waiting to come to this country and steal their social services. I call this social introversion, resulting from a fear of change. Safety is a massive motivational factor for the human '*organism*'. The answer is always to seek the objective truth and challenge beliefs.

Why should we do this? Because we have what Maslow calls the '*Love Needs: In the absence of friends---- He will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general*'. It might be argued that this need reflects humanity's social instinct, but this is a bit weak when one considers this hugely creative force that has been characteristic of human beings, and which has probably saved us from extinction. The narrow self-interest contrived by philosophers like Hobbes does not deal with a fundamental need in humans to love our neighbour. The big question put by the Jesus-man and which we are always struggling with: *Who is my neighbour?*

This leads to esteem needs or *self-esteem*: *All people in our society have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, high evaluation of themselves----*If we want to be self-confident in our social dealings and have a sense of self-worth then we need social recognition that



Man For Himself

gives the feeling of independence and freedom in society rather than being marginalised or subject to racial or social discrimination. Social norms must often be challenged. How would this be possible if our minds are blank slates? Perhaps Robert Audi's *Intuitionism* is the explanation. Here the claim is that we intuitively know several basic moral principles each of which has a distinct ground. We know for example that harming others is wrong. It is what Kant called goodwill, something that exists in our human minds a priori and not subject to any social training.

At the top of the hierarchy there is the need for *self-actualisation*. It is the desire for self-fulfilment, in that an individual can do what he/she is best fitted to do. This involves both an innate ability and a supportive social outlet. Think of a Mozart who was prevented from playing in public and one can feel the horror of suppression of black Jazz musicians in US in the early twentieth century, who had to play with their faces turned to the wall.

I want to argue that there is no blank slate. The individual can have innate gifts which need to be developed and nurtured. We have a need for individual fulfilment: *The specific form that these needs will take will of course vary greatly from person to person ... The clear emergence*



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

of these needs rests upon prior satisfaction of the physiological, safety, love and esteem needs. I would argue that each of us has an individual cluster of ungratified or partially gratified needs and until we can find reasonable satisfaction of these we will not feel we have realised our full selves and there is in practice an interaction in the fulfilment of different needs. Yes, we are a species of animals and have perhaps evolved from an instinct-motivated creature. But we have the capacity to develop both socially and individually through reason and vision.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs gives us a ladder to climb. But in order to want to climb it there must be a psychological self that is shaped by society and indeed contributes to the shaping of society. Freud's Ego would seem to fit that function. It is an organisation of self that includes defensive, perceptual and intellectual cognitive functions. But it is preoccupied with struggling with the instinctual and all its desires and aggression. The Super Ego reflects the internalisation of cultural rules which means that it ensures that the learnt social values are imposed on the Ego and Id. Or does it just mean that we are often torn between what we know is respectable and right as opposed to what fills us with pain or pleasure?

Jung defines the Ego as follows: *The Ego is a*

complex datum which is constituted first of all by a general awareness of your body, of your existence and secondly by your memory data; you have a certain idea of having been a long series of memories.

The expression of the self is a balance of: thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition. Whether we are a thinking or feeling type for example will vary with each individual. We are classified as introvert or extravert. The extravert's bias is towards the external world and the introvert's is to an inner psychic world. Looking back at the sociological world, the extrovert actor plays his role by active interaction and the introvert actor turns things over in his head.

I want to complete my inquiry into the self with Fromm's assessment of character. He sees it as *the pattern of behaviour characteristics for a given individual* and this means the behaviour I see is a description of the character I am addressing. These are to be categorised into productive or non-productive orientations. They are both fully described in his book: *Man For Himself*.

The Non-productive type is further analysed into a *receptive orientation* and *exploitive orientation*. In a *receptive orientation*, such a person believes that everything good is on the outside and he wants to be outside absorbing it all - whether it is love, food or drink. Then there is the *exploitative orientation*. This type, rather than producing anything himself, grabs what others have produced or own. On the other hand, the hoarder pushes away the outside world and seeks hoarding and saving, seeing spending as a threat.

Finally, in this negative category of self, Fromm poses the *Marketing Orientation*. This seems to me to be an updating of Homo economicus, but a hard driving version: --- *the individual derives a feeling of identity from the experience of himself as the agent who is one with his*

powers; this feeling can be briefly expressed as meaning: I am what I do! ----

On the productive side Fromm uses the term to characterise a particular kind of love and thinking: *Care and responsibility denote that love is an activity and not a passion-----*. He posits: *Productiveness is an attitude which every human being is capable of unless he is mentally and emotionally crippled*.

In society we can assimilate and socialise either positively or negatively and in reality probably do something of both. For example, in a marketing orientation we can be either purposeful or opportunistic. Or in a receptive orientation we can be accepting or passive without any initiative. In effect Fromm is simply leaning toward religious ethics of being good and loving or bad and hateful. We are left with a self that always needs to sort out what is ethical and live and die accordingly.

In summary to go back to my original question: Who am I? I am of course a social animal who has been constructed and developed by all the social values that I have experienced particularly during my early development. But I am potentially more than that. I can reason for myself and break away from any hard fixing of my moral values. But I am also a creature individually responsible for the decisions I make and am capable of both good and bad decisions; sometimes a muddle of both.

The three entities described by Freud are a useful description. There is the animal in me driven by fear or pleasure. There is the self, capable of reason and responding in a humanitarian way to other people. Finally, there is the inspector (Super Ego), imposing high social rulings, when the other parts of my self are in conflict. But is there also a higher self reaching out for more than I can know from everyday experience? Unconsciously seeking fulfilment through some form of transcendence. *A Thing In Myself?*

True Self and Time

Notes of the Wednesday Meeting 16th and 23rd May 2018

PAUL COCKBURN

The month of Ramadan came under discussion. The fast makes us sympathise with the suffering of others, and desirous of alleviating it; and it makes us remember the blessings of life which we normally take for granted. The discussion went on to relate hunger to the ascetic practices, mysticism, and the benefits of meditation.

The True Self

Thinking about free will, Hume talked about the effect of custom and habits. This is based on repetition, repeating behaviour we have learnt or become used to. Perhaps we repeat doing things we enjoy! Also, we get bored and want to try something new. Are animals more limited than humans in this respect? A cat seems to behave as 100% a cat, perhaps it has evolved and developed to be exactly that! While we often just react and can't find our true self. Animals are perfect in terms of the instinctive behavior they perform: for example, birdsong is beautiful to our ears. But as humans, we seem to have to struggle to be ourselves, to find ourselves. If we feel too much discomfort we are disturbed, too little discomfort we stagnate. Self-consciousness can help us to develop and be ourselves, so that we change.

Time

We also talked about time. At the deepest level of mathematical physics, time hardly exists



Hume

at all. There is, according to Carlo Rovelli's book *The Order of Time*, just one basic equation that points to an arrow of time: the second principle of thermodynamics, which says that entropy is always increasing, that the journey from order to disorder is down a one-way street. But one view was that it is hard for humans, built to be a certain size, to understand what goes on at the atomic or the very large scale.

Brought To Time

‘Me time’ she cries. ‘I need more quality me time’
Her friend opposite nods back out of fear.

Why should time be specially designated?
Quantified for her alone?
As if time, for the *me*, were being prepared.
Like her meal now in this busy restaurant.

She looks forty, same as the table number.
A waiter serving up time. Choice cuts
of animal fate. Rare. Medium. Well done.

In the rare time, you’re given a reprieve.
Rapture for the few. Time is underdone.
More innocently cooked.





Tasting the medium. Unseasoned.
Banal of flavour. Time put up with.
Routine. No ritual dressing on the meat.

Served well done. Possibly smug.
Never quite burnt time. Self congratulating.
But was the food authentic?

Cutlery attacks. Me time, your time, our time.
Pleases. Deflects. Feeds illusions.
Satisfies, for a moment, our role.

Cracks on the surface of the golden bowl.
Nothing's labelled. Nothing's that certain.
She must learn to adapt.
Memory comes and goes.
All is a shedding.
brought to time.

Alan Price

Fathoming



CHRIS NORRIS

Before Cox's Proportional Hazards Regression model came along in 1972 the tools used were Kaplan-Meier estimators, developed in 1958 after Edward Kaplan, working at Bell Labs on the problem of vacuum tube survival in transatlantic telephone cable repeaters, was put in touch with Paul Meier, who was working on cancer survival using a similar method.

Thomas Laqueur, 'Nothing Becomes Something',
The London Review of Books, 27 Sept 2016, p 14

No taming hazard by a throw of dice.
Odds are a tube will fail or cell mutate,
One mid-Atlantic, one mid-life. Our best
Chance may be: take no dicey-wise advice,
Just let things fall out as they will, with 'fate'
To cover all we might have second-guessed

If adequately primed. A heavier price
For cell-mutation than the failure-rate
In vacuum-tubes, though burn-outs may have messed
Things up for irate callers once or twice
When lines went dead. So the task was: create
A failsafe tube or else a handy test

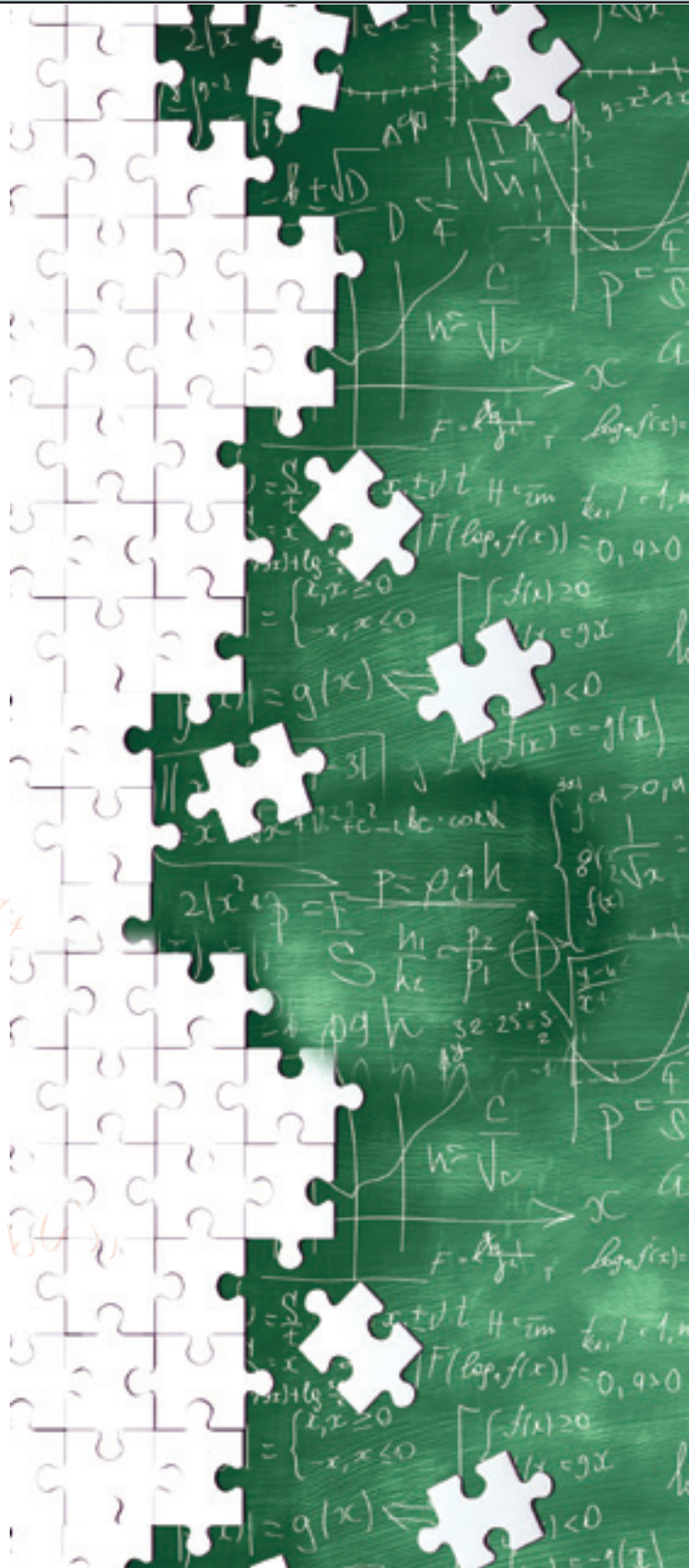
For breakdown frequencies that would suffice
To steal a march on chance. They'd indicate
How shrewd Ananke might contrive to wrest
A glimpse of order from the imprecise
Yet hefty data-mass that, with each spate
Of burn-outs, added to the palimpsest

Another retro-providential slice
Of deep-sea history. Till the solid-state
Repeaters came along they kept abreast
By using extra vacuum-tubes to splice
The signal-path, plus methods to update
The canny almanacker's pattern-request

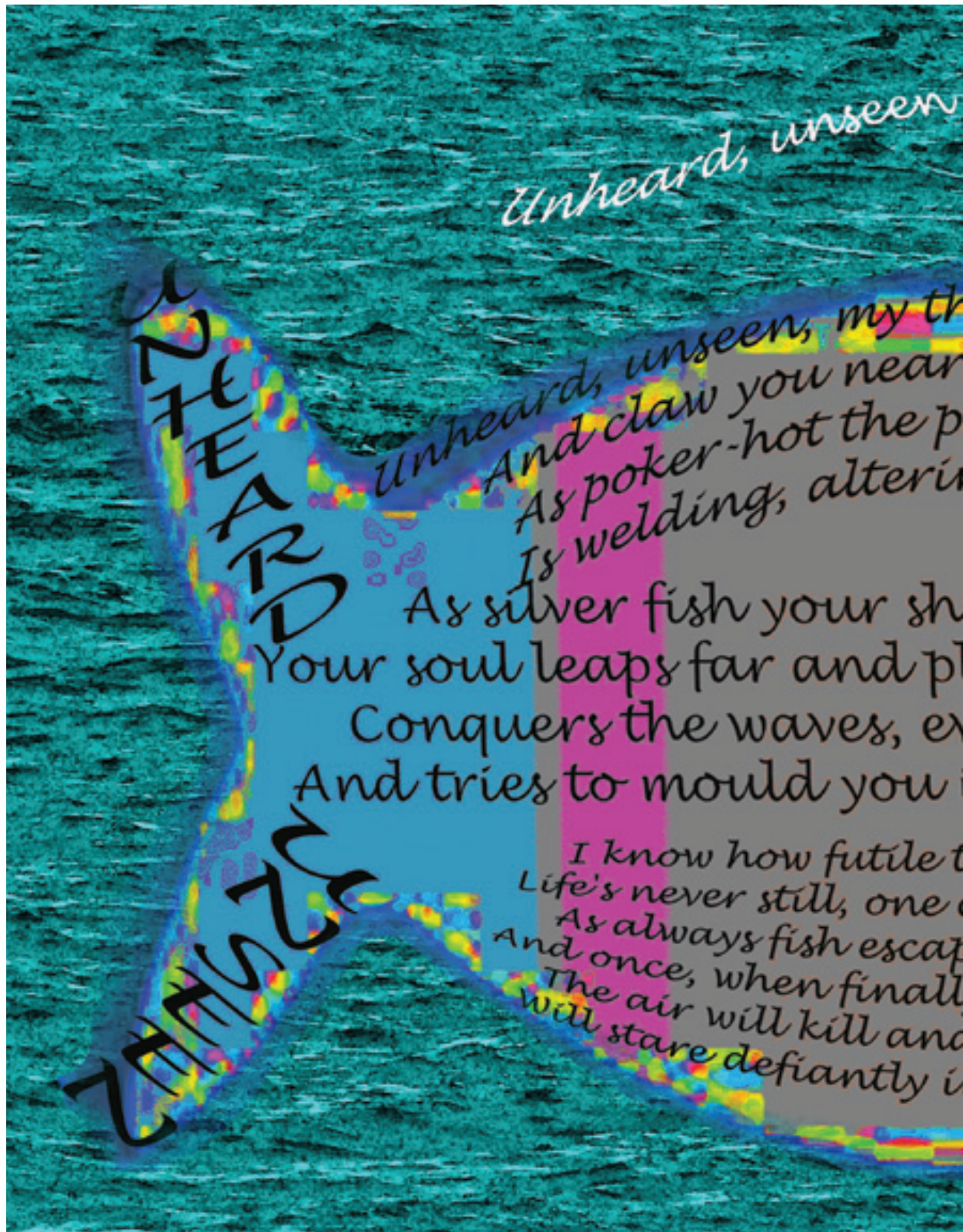
By way of Kaplan-Meier's joint device
For working out the odds. Never too late
For scientific purposes, though – lest
The point gets lost – discoveries kept on ice
Too long may see the mutants replicate
Till Cox's hazard-chart says we've regressed

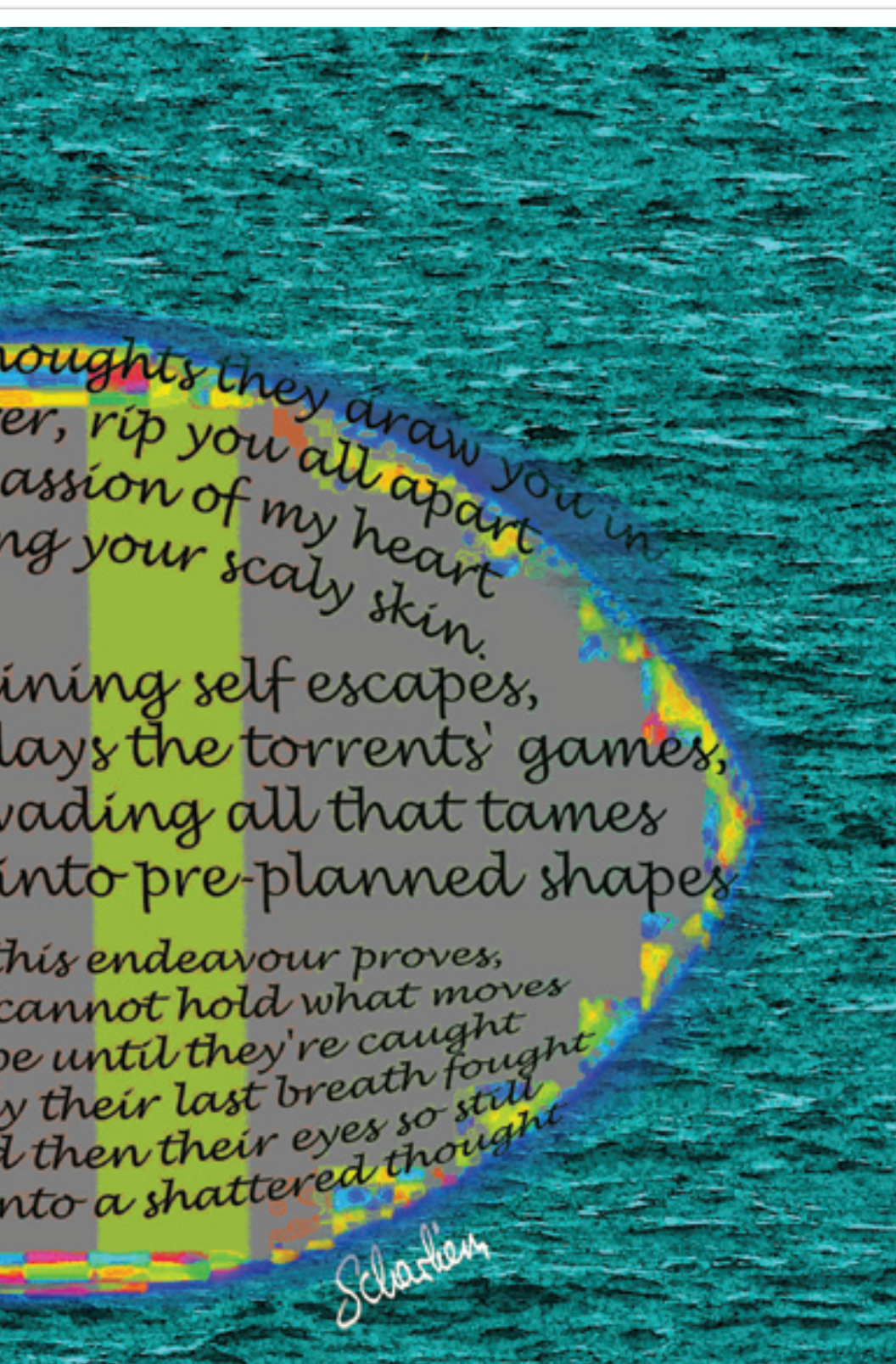
Too far for the appliance of such nice
Though chancy calculations to abate
Our mortal fear. True, Meier's stats suggest
Those estimators may not be the spice
Of life but bitter-tasting. Still let's wait
Awhile before we opt to disinvest

**All round, denounce the flaky paradise
Backlit by fizzling tubes, and cultivate
An outlook neither heartened nor distressed
By savvy diagnostics that entice
The credulous. They might just tell us straight
If it's the tubes or us soon going west.**



Unheard Unseen





Unheard unseen



Poems and Artwork by *Scharlie Meeuws*



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