

The Wednesday



Magazine of the Wednesday Group at Albion Beatnik - Oxford

Editorial

Different Views - a Continuing Creative Process

One feature of discussions, conversations and dialogues is the fact those who are participating have different points of view. The aim of the discussion is not reaching consensus but to reach a higher point in the debate; to move from an initial point which sets the debate to another that is more productive. This might happen to an individual as much as a group of people. The German Romantics developed the idea that a creative artist or a poet *plays* with his creations moving beyond what he has achieved to a different and new creation. It has been termed the *Romantic Irony*, the theory of which has been credited to Schlegel. It is another form of the concept of *Play* that Schiller promoted when he said that an artist or a poet is more creative when he plays with his creations, mocks them and goes beyond them.

Nietzsche also talked about Gay (Joyful) Science; one that is more creative and less dogmatic than the current scientific laws that claim more permanence and absolute validity. That is why for him science, and scholarship generally, came to be considered as a form of the Ascetic Ideal. Such knowledge moves beyond the world of change into a Platonic sphere of fixed forms, far removed from life and the world of particulars and change. The idea is that Truth is not residing in a different world, since Nietzsche argues that we only have this world (See *Twilight of the Idols, IV*) and the world we live in is constantly changing, we need to play with our ideas and not take them as absolute facts.

This is not a sheer rhetoric but based on the thesis that the world in itself is nothing but *Will to Power* (*BGE*, 36). It became the basis of Nietzsche's theory of interpretation. In a remarkable paragraph

in the *Genealogy of Morals* (the 2nd Essay of the *GM* Section 12), Nietzsche makes a startling claim that interpretation is related to the Will to Power. Nietzsche says:

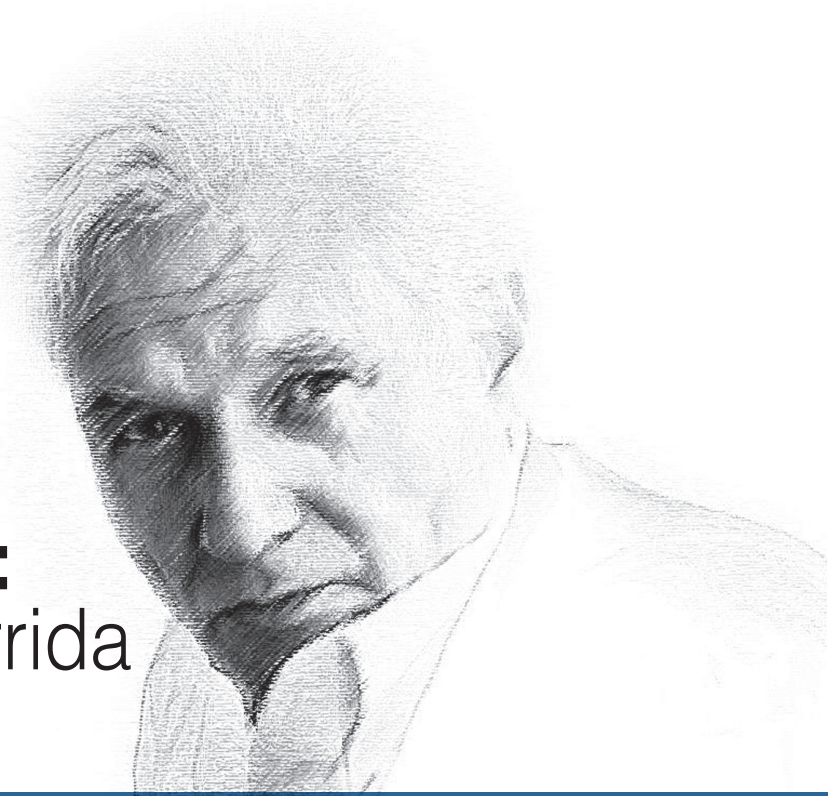
“...all events in the organic world are a subduing, a *becoming master*, and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaption through which any previous “meaning” and “purpose” are necessarily obscured or even obliterated.”

This is a full naturalisation of meaning. It works in a similar way to Marx's material base and the superstructure of Ideology. Nature here is the material base and it does renew itself in every moment. It brings about new forms and creations, in a similar way to the Darwinian evolution with the caveat that an organ does not struggle to adapt and survival but to impose its power on its environment. Meaning is the superstructure that can be deciphered to its material base which is the drives and instincts that rule in the thinker, artist or poet. The weak instincts and drives result in a meaning that needs to be overcome and the strong drives will result in a higher meaning.

What is important in all this is that we should take our views seriously, they should mean something for us, but also, we should take them as provisional meanings and statements that need to be revised in the light of better views. Life and nature renew themselves and we should respond in a creative way. The ego might get in the way and convince us to stick with old views, but that might need to change.

The Editor

Deconstruction: Heidegger & Derrida



Part 2 Derrida

DAVID SOLOMON

Part 1 of this article, which was published in the last issue, concentrated on the concept of *Deconstruction in the thoughts of Martin Heidegger*. The second part published below discusses the way *Derrida* developed Deconstruction from Heidegger's original formulation and the difference between the two thinkers:

2 **A**s with Heidegger, Derrida's practice of Deconstruction relates to his exploration of authentic Being. In Heidegger Being reveals itself (the term he uses is *Aletheia* – truth as unforgetting) at certain times or conceals itself. Heidegger held that in ancient Greek philosophy, particularly before Socrates and Plato, there was a primordial contact with truth that was reflected in language. Words like 'appearance', 'form', and 'truth' had a powerful, original meaning that we are inclined to brush over through over-use and the bad habits of misunderstanding. Succeeding philosophy has watered down and distorted this language and created an inflexible and formalised version of reality that has caused modern civilisation to

forget this original familiarity with Being and create unyielding artificial categories (the Subject – Object distinction, Truth as correspondence between ideas and the external world etc.) that have prepared the ground for our technologically based society. His Deconstruction was an attempt to get back to a primordial philosophical language where he could identify the essence of things (Beauty, Truth, Freedom etc.) freed of frivolity and diversions of what he called the *They* (*Das Man*), the mass culture of conformity. Heidegger looks backward to a past which he regards as more authentic; his project emphasises tradition and the danger of loss and degeneration.

Derrida's Deconstruction too is related to

a description of Being, but his description differs significantly from Heidegger's and therefore his practice of deconstruction differs. He developed his own vocabulary to describe his project, and the results and the emphasis are different from those of his predecessor. **Derrida was obsessed with the way that any term or concept presents itself as paired with its opposite.** So we have for example: Form – Matter, Being – Non-Being, Interior – Exterior, Male – Female etc. **But for each pair, the terms are not equal in importance or weight or value. One stands out, its truth appears obvious, it stands in the light, it seems to reflect how things are, it is the measure of everything, it is somehow alive, it is as he says 'present'. The other is excluded, external, excessive and supplementary relative to the other term and parasitic upon it. One presents itself as having Being, the other lacks Being.** Now Derrida wants to say more than that concepts come into the world as pairs and that one pole of a pair is prominent and the other is excessive / supplementary / subordinate. **What is important is that existence of the opposite subordinate pole undermines the claim of the dominant one to be obvious, self-evident and directly reflective of the truth. Deconstruction is the exploration of the way in which the claims of one pole of a pair is affected and undermined by the opposite.** The obviousness, the truth and the presence of one can be undermined, reversed by and coincide with what it is not.

Derrida brilliantly illustrates this in a 1981 work called *Plato's Pharmacy* where he analyses Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus*, which contains a famous myth about the origin of writing. According to the myth, the **Egyptian God Thoth** (the Egyptian prototype of **Hermes**) appears to the **King of Egypt Thalamus**

Différance.

- Différance plays on the fact that 'différer' in French means both to differ and to defer.
- Saussure stated that a sign is made meaningful by its location in a system of differences. Derrida took this a step further by saying that the meaning is also always deferred, and that it is both always present and absent.
- An example I've found of this is that if you look through the dictionary for the word 'letter', you get five meanings. If you pick one of these, such as 'message', you then get more meanings, so the meaning has been deferred. Because the meaning leads you to other meanings, there can be no ultimate meaning, as it is constantly being deferred.

Derrida's Quote

wanting to introduce to him the gift of writing. Thalamus rejects the gift on the grounds that it will corrupt humans' living power of memory and introduce a dead mechanical technique of remembering which resembles living speech but is not. **Memory on the other hand belongs to speech which is a spontaneous living capacity. Speech as discourse, it is a living facility, it is able to adapt to situations, address others in real dialogue (dialectic), it has vitality, it is a reflection and expression of a natural power. Writing on the other hand, is artificial, dead.** If someone writes a speech that is then memorised it has the appearance of something spontaneous, but it is not. It is fraudulent, a mask, a phantasm, what Plato calls 'sophistical' – Sophist like. **So according to the myth, what is interior to the truth is Speech, what is exterior, supplementary, parasitic is Writing.**

But in a brilliant series of reversals, Derrida undermines this hierarchical ordering of the authentic and inauthentic, of Speech and Writing. First of all, although Socrates, the main figure in the *Phaedrus* dialogue is the main speaker (and we know elsewhere that he never wrote down any of his philosophy), Plato on the other hand always wrote down the dialogues which were in the name of his predecessor. His condemnation of writing is expressed in writing. The word *Pharmacy* has a wealth of contrary associations: it can mean

‘medicine’, ‘narcotic’, ‘poison’, ‘colour’; it related to ‘sorcerer’, ‘magician’, ‘colour’. These can apply to speech as well as to writing. Furthermore, **although Writing appears to be rejected in favour of Speech, the latter can only be described in terms of the former.** Speech is said to be the *inscription* of truth. If we are describing Being, this description can be none other than a copy. **We do not have direct access to the truth. All description is inscription. Writing is not only different to Speech, Writing brings difference into the world, without which there can be no description at all and determination of Truth and Falsehood.** A copy that is identical with the thing copied is not a copy. An actual copy, **a description of what is true or false requires difference.**

Grammatical science is doubtless not in itself dialectics [=spoken dialogue]. Plato indeed explicitly subordinates the former to the latter (253b-c). And, to him, this distinction can be taken for granted; but what, in the final analysis, justifies it? Both are in a sense sciences of language. For dialectics is also the science that guides us “dia ton logon,” on the voyage through discourses or arguments (253b).The distinction between grammar and dialectics can thus only in all rigor be established at the point where truth is fully present and fills the logos. But what the parricide in the Sophist establishes is not only that any full, absolute presence of what is (of the being-present that most truly “is”: the good or the sun that can’t be looked in the face) is impossible; not only that any full intuition of truth, any truth-filled intuition, is impossible; but that the very condition of discourse--true or false-is the diacritical principle of the sumploki [= the way we emphasise the whole complex in different ways]. If truth is the presence of the eidos [=things as they appear], it must always, on pain of mortal blinding by the sun’s fires, come to terms with

relation, nonpresence, and thus nontruth. It then follows that the absolute precondition for a rigorous difference between grammar and dialectics (or ontology) cannot in principle be fulfilled. ... Which means, by the very necessity of logos. And that is the difference that prevents there being in fact any difference between grammar and ontology (Derrida Dissemination: Plato’s Pharmacy p.166).

There can be no direct presence of what is Real or True. Everything is a representation, Speech as well as Writing. Writing, the subordinate pole, reveals this to us.

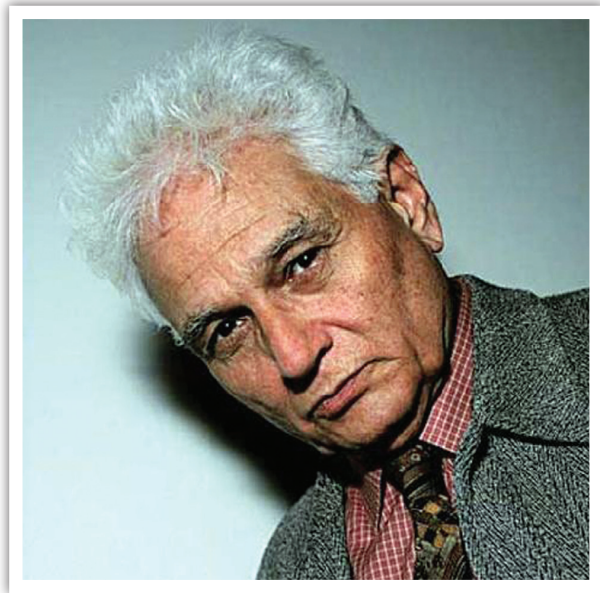
The breaking down of the text and its association with other words / texts is something that Plato may or not have been aware of, it might be ‘conscious’ or ‘unconscious’ of it. To Derrida this doesn’t matter. The process is ongoing and belongs to the text and the possibilities of the text itself. **What is important is that in the end, there is no distinction between Speech and Writing, and that the hierarchy is paradoxical. Differences not only in this paradigmatic instance, but all differences in any hierarchy e.g. between presence and absence, interior and exterior, Being and non-Being etc. are capable of being undermined, exposed, reversed.**

The idea of Difference has a special resonance in Derrida’s work. The standard French translation is ‘différence’, with the spelling ending with ‘-ence’. **Derrida coined a neologism where the word is ‘différance’ ending in ‘-ance’.** This word contains the idea of Difference in the English sense, but also suggests in addition to ‘differ’ also ‘defer’. Defer suggests something that is put off indefinitely to a point in the future. Also ‘Defer’ suggests deferring to something, that is respecting something. Something which differs, which is the opposite of the Same, has a relationship with the Same, a relationship

which must be explored in all its complex relations and associations. This practice is put off indefinitely to a non-specified point in the future, but the difference, the other must be respected, deferred to.

To take an example that I have already started to explore, Heidegger talks about the essence of Home, the region where human existence (Dasein) can most fully come into his / her being. This he contrasted with the rootlessness of modern life in general in a depiction of an extreme opposition. What has got left out are the instances of actual homelessness that we are in contact with in our everyday life: people living on the street, refugees, exile. All these would seem to require an ethical response, the obligation especially to welcome the stranger. Heidegger wants to pass over these every day occurrences and the obligations they might imply, as banal distractions from the point. . Following Derrida's approach on the other hand, we could say that this is what has been left out. The non-essential instances also belong to the idea of Home and Homelessness. **What we need to break down here is the difference between the essential and the contingent / empirical notion and understand how one can relate to the other.**

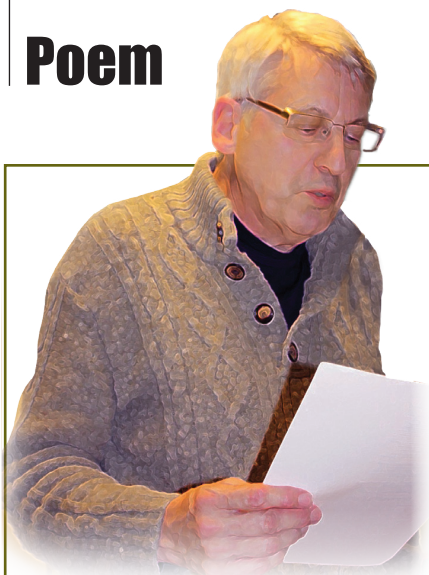
How then does Derrida's practice of deconstruction differ from Heidegger's? First of all, with Heidegger, there seems to be a stopping point. Being can reveal itself once and for all, uncover itself, or else withdraw, withhold itself. He thinks it possible especially for some poets or philosophers such as himself that the truth or essence of something – truth, freedom, beauty – can be uncovered or recovered, and stated in its entirety. Derrida's idea of Being on the other hand always contains what is other, excluded, left out, left behind. This excluded thing has a relationship with what is included, obvious, present.



Derrida

Deconstruction for him consists in critiquing and undermining the difference between these pairs of opposites, through describing the literary and philosophical associations that each contain, and showing the way that one can merge with the other.

What is the stopping point where we can arrive at what actually is? For Heidegger, Being consists of recovering something that has been lost or attenuated over time. Being shows itself totally or hides itself. For Derrida, there is no stopping point, or rather he places it at an unspecified point in the future. In a biographical film made about him, he talks about the two French words used to translate the English term for Future. One is *Futur*, an event we can place at a point in calendar time. The other is *Avenir*, which is translated as that which is to come. There is a messianic implication here. **The truth, the presence of a concept as its reality has not happened yet, we cannot even say if and when it will happen, but it is always about to occur. This suggests that the search for meaning and resolution is not finished yet, that it is part of a process that is not closed.**

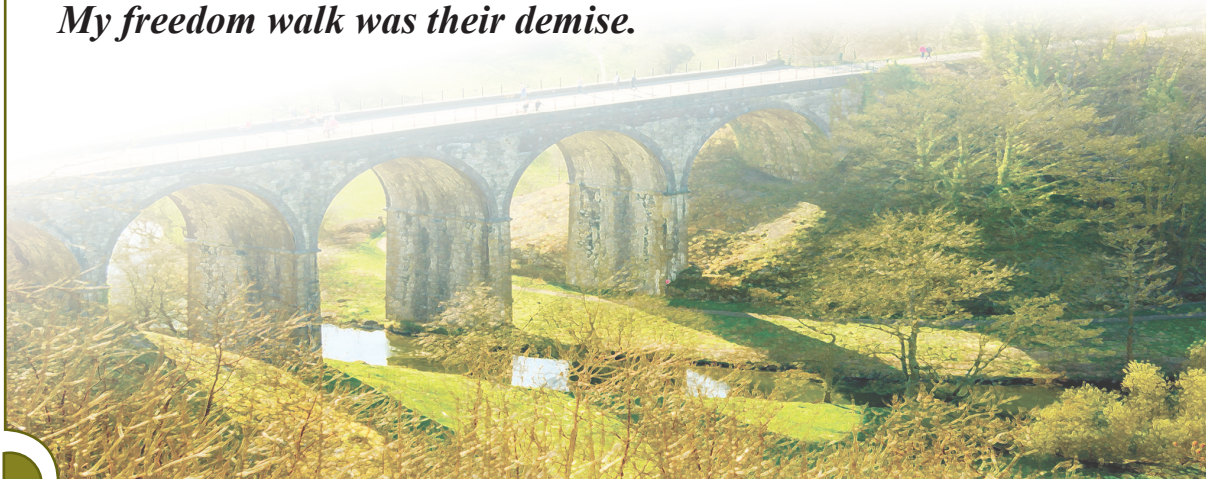


Steep Incline In The Peak District

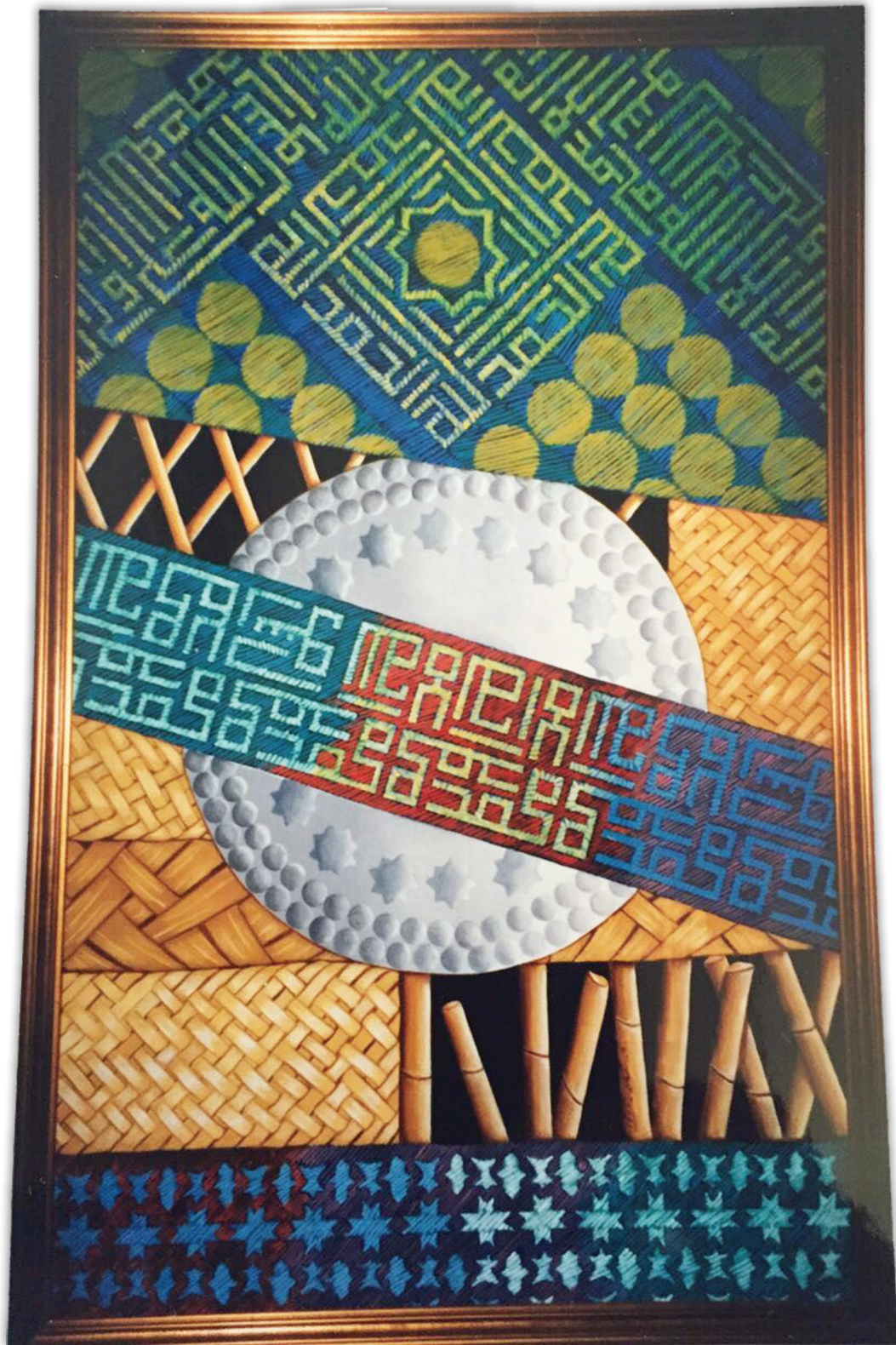
Poem by DAVID BURRIDGE

*One in eight - so cyclists dismount!
A healthy trudge on a warm day.
But remember those wagons,
when this was narrow-gauge track,
how horses and men defied gradient,
dragging limestone choke;
From here to the canal,
then off to be smooth marble
for mounting rich peoples' tombs.*

*Long tunnel stumble-steps us through darkness,
toward the small bright hole, and on to another pitched lean.
In one landscape sweep, perfect beauty
smuggles in wrecks of industrial torture.
How many slipped, tripped and died,
where I am striding?
My freedom walk was their demise.*



‘The Sheild of Faith’ by Mohamed Mustafa Kamal



Freedom & The Philosophers

From Berlin to Charles Taylor

The following article reviews the debate on Freedom in the light of Berlin's '*Two Concepts of Liberty*'. The distinction between positive and negative freedom has been explained and the debate about the distinction has also been updated to a more recent philosophers and commentators:

RANJINI GHOSH

8

Jean Paul Sartre believed that the chief characteristic of human condition is freedom of choice. Sartre rejected any external determinism on human choice or freedom. He wrote, "there is no determinism, man is free, man is freedom". Sartre rejected the idea of a pre-given meaning to life. He famously claimed "existence precedes essence" meaning that there is no pre-determined human nature, each person decides his or her own essence of what he or she will become. At every moment, human beings are making choices of what they decide to do. Even if we claim to be guided by religious precepts then also we are making a choice. Individuals unlike things do not have any fixed unchanging identity. Human beings have to choose themselves without any guidance from any external authority. He gives the example of a young boy who wants to fight for his country as a duty but also wants to remain with his widowed mother. The individual was faced with two kinds of ethics. An ethics of sympathy for his mother and a broader ethics of duty for his country. He had to choose between the two. There were no pre-established moral

criteria to guide this young man to make the right choice. Sartre says that man is always the same but the situation which confronts him varies. The universal human condition is that we must make choices. For Sartre, the human freedom is paradoxical since we do not have the freedom to refuse our freedom. The act of not choosing is itself a choice. Hence for Sartre everything we do in our lives is the result of our choices. Sartre also argued that when one chooses to act, the act also has an impact on others. Therefore, existentialism for him was "inter-subjectivity". If I have the freedom to choose and make decisions then so do others. He said "in wanting freedom we discover it depends entirely on the freedom of others".

Victor Frankl wrote in his book *Man's Search for Meaning* (1946) that the individual is primarily responsible for his attitude to the circumstances of his life and it is his responsibility to create meaning in every situation. From his experience in a Nazi concentration camp he concluded that those prisoners who had something to look forward to like being united with their family or

finishing some task had the greatest chance of surviving. As Nietzsche had said, **“He who has a *why* to live for can bear almost any *how*”**. We have the freedom to choose our attitude in even the most trying situations. Frankl says that **everything can be taken from a man but one thing, which is the freedom to choose one’s attitude in a given set of circumstances**. Human beings can create meanings for themselves in any situation. In this context, we may recall the Oscar winning film *Life is Beautiful*, where the father on his way to a Nazi concentration camp explains to his young son that it is actually a football match going on where they have to survive the opponent. The young boy continues to believe so till the end. Once the Indian philosopher **President S. Radhakrishnan** was visiting the United States of America. **President John F. Kennedy** had come to receive him at the airport. Kennedy apologized to the Indian President for the gloomy rainy day upon which Dr. Radhakrishnan told him that **one cannot change the weather but one can always change one’s attitude towards it**. It was on the contrary a beautiful day.

The Forced Choice Of Freedom

Contemporary East European philosopher **Slavoj Zizek** argues in his book *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (2008) that **freedom of choice is often an illusion and many of our free choices are forced upon us** (Kathleen O’Dwyer, *Philosophy Now*, March/April, 2013). He says that in our post-modern world there is a very subtle limitation on freedom. There is almost an unspoken injunction to enjoy or seek pleasure or instant gratification. He gives the example in his book of a young Yugoslav student who was called to regular military service. In Yugoslavia at the beginning of military service every new soldier must swear that he is willing to serve his country



Slavoj Zizek

and be ready to lose one’s life in the process. To this effect everyone must sign a document. The young soldier refused to sign saying that an oath depends upon free choice and that he did not want to sign. But he added that if any of the officers gave him a formal order to sign the oath then he would do so. The officers explained to him that they could not give him such an order because the oath depended upon his free decision. But if he refused to sign he would be prosecuted for refusing to do his duty and sent to jail.

The student did manage to get a decision from the military court of law ordering him to sign the oath. Zizek says that there is always a paradoxical case of forced choice. The community says to the person that he has freedom to choose but on the condition that he chooses the right thing. If he makes the wrong choice he loses the freedom of choice itself. Therefore, a person is never actually in a position to choose. He is treated as if he has already chosen. He points out that this paradox can be seen in Kant’s formulation of the choice of Evil as a *a priori* act. Wickedness is a part of nature. Evil is a part of free choice. **Only Man is capable of radical evil i.e. contemplating an act of evil for its own**



F. Fukuyama

sake. Animals do not do radical evil.

The Kantian Position

Kant argued that we are bound by the moral law. In the world of nature there is no freedom since we are all subject to the law of causality. We have a dual aspect of existence in that we are both part of the empirical world of nature governed by passions and non-rational motives but also we are the originators of action which stems from reason. He believed that these two selves could not be reconciled but only transcended. It is only in our transcendental self that we can understand the role of reason guiding our actions. In this self we stand, as if we were outside of nature and are guided by practical reason. Reason tells us not only what to do but also what we must do. This may be something which may go against our desires. Reason directs a categorical imperative. Practical reason also tells us that other human beings are to be treated as ends in themselves and who have also rights and freedom. Thus, there is a difference between a bodily movement and an action. The bodily movement is a natural process and is the result of some cause. Action on the other hand has reason as its basis.

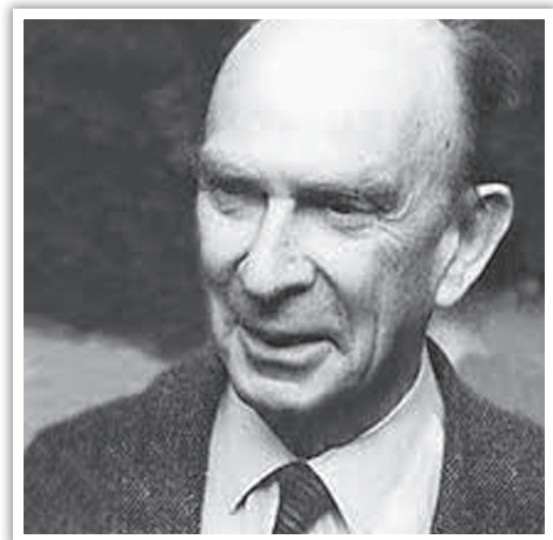
Freedom And Resentment

The traditional view among philosophers has been that the concept of freedom is not compatible with the idea of causation. But another school of thought known as **Compatibilism** believes that the idea of freedom is not in contradiction with the idea of determination. **Spinoza** had argued that everything happens in the world by necessity. Only those actions are “free” that originate in the agent himself and by this view only God is free.

There is also a distinction made by him between events we understand and those we do not. **We are free only to the extent that we have “adequate idea” of the causes of our actions.** **David Hume** believed that the idea of freedom does not deny determinism. Only when we assign a blame or praise someone for an action does the idea of freedom arise. This does not either affirm or deny determination. A distinction has been made by philosophers between moral beings and animals. We do not make moral judgement on animals. We are not resentful of a dog that bites a chicken. We do not punish animals or judge them due to their actions. We understand that what animals do, do so because of instinct and there is no mental element in their act.

We do not assign ideas of duties to animals. But this is not the case with human beings. **Strawson** in his famous paper “Freedom and Resentment” suggested that we adopt different attitudes towards human beings which he calls “objective” and “reactive”. We can relate to human beings in the same manner as we relate to natural objects where we assign the law of causality on them. But we can relate to human beings in a reactive manner when we feel resentment towards them because of some action of theirs. **The assumption underlying our feeling of resentment is that we consider**

a human being to be a rational being with certain rights and duties. When some person breaks into my chicken coop and harms the chicken we feel resentful towards that person. But if the situation does not improve even on my behavior towards him and he continues with his obsession then I start analyzing the situation by adopting a scientific approach of objectivity towards him. This objective view of mine towards him may lead me to think that he is mentally ill and is in need of treatment. What is happening is that this person now becomes for me just like any other thing that is to be scientifically analyzed. Strawson suggests that in this situation we can see a conflict between freedom and causality.



P. F. Strawson

The conflict does not lie in the situation per se but in the attitudes of the observer. When we respond to another person in terms of either praise or blame then we are responding through a web of personal relations and it is in this that we assign responsibilities and rights on others. But when we start analyzing others in an objective manner and not inter personally then we reduce the other person to a mere object and start rationalizing his behavior in terms of the law of causation. Therefore, Strawson says, the conflict is not between freedom and causality but between human attitudes that requires us either to overlook causality or accept causality.

Conclusion:

Plato divided the soul into three parts - reason, eros, and thymos (desire for recognition). The desire for recognition is basic to human beings and this is possible only where adequate autonomy of action or real freedom is available. **Francis Fukuyama** has argued in his book *The End of History and The Last Man*, that only capitalist liberal democracies offer real freedom to individuals to achieve thymos. In many authoritarian regimes, we have seen how the notion of liberty can be

illusory. When the State starts deciding what is good for its citizens and its own conception of positive freedom, then there is the kind of danger that Isaiah Berlin was prescient enough to observe. **Erica Warburton** in her illuminating essay on Isaiah Berlin (Oxford Philosophical Society Review 2007) has rightly observed that perhaps negative liberty is a safer understanding of freedom. In my opinion, one cannot always accept Sartre's view that we are always free to choose. In cases of extreme deprivation human beings may not have the necessary capabilities to achieve true freedom for themselves, as economist **Amartya Sen** has so forcefully argued time and again. But we must also accept that Sartre was talking on a more abstract philosophical level when he said that France was never more free than when it was under Nazi occupation. This was because people still had a choice to refuse. I would agree with the opinion of Charles Taylor that freedom should include self realisation and this notion is more or less akin to the Greek concept of thymos.

Ranjini Ghosh is in the senior year in High School. She loves cooking, learning new languages and believes in *Amor Fati*.

Notes on the Wednesday Meeting 16th of Aug 2017

Another productive meeting. Here is a summary of the discussions:

Synchronisms

Friendship as a philosophical problem was considered but not in details. **The link between friendship and Timing** was mentioned. **Jung** wrote a paper on Synchronicity of “an actual connecting principle” to which **Wolfgang Pauli** added a related study too. We will hopefully have a full article on this concept in the very near future by our Jungian scholar (wait and see!).

We are all united as one, in one sense. We all have basic human characteristics, but it was also argued that we are also individuals, different from others. Having friends excludes others, and difference and diversity are good.

Types of philosophers

Should we choose a philosopher whose writings chime with our own prejudices? Or should we try to be objective? With regard to **Nietzsche**, it was suggested that it is a weakness that he subscribed to a version of **the “Great Man” theory of history**, as did **Hegel**. The alternative, on some views, should be based on materialist foundations.

Nietzsche lived a very different life from what he ‘preached’. One view expressed the theory that psychologically his ‘**Superman**’ is a reflection of his own lack of self-esteem; perhaps what he wished to be.

For those who love philosophy, we all seem to connect to different philosophers, and have a particular favourite philosopher. This is obviously something to do with what they say which impresses us, but also our character connecting to their character in a psychological sense. But there are strange aspects to the

connection, as what a philosopher writes clearly comes from him or her, but it may in fact contradict their character – for instance it is not how they live. How do we differentiate between the philosophy and the man – an interesting case is **Heidegger**. It is Heidegger’s morals and ethics that are questionable, his philosophy of being is interesting. Similar to Nietzsche with his disdain for the ‘herd’.

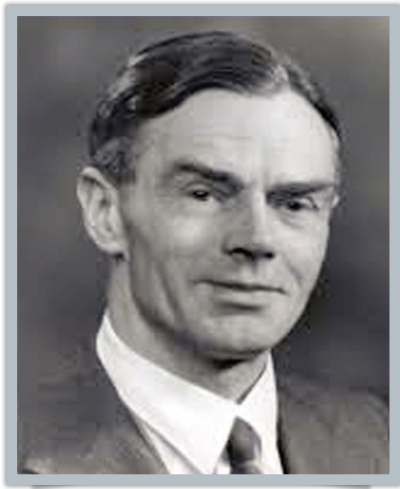
Some feel the need to stand up to Nietzsche! But one has also to consider his philosophy as a whole. Is he wrong or is **Naturalism**, as a view, wrong?

Nietzsche wrote that **Hafiz and Goethe** are all rounded figures, mixing thought with sensibility. He called this Style. For example, he thought French culture has a style, while the English are good with conceptual thinking and the Germans have an explosion of instincts, producing all that music. He thought the French somewhere in the middle, mixing the two attitudes perfectly and giving themselves a **Style**.

Owen Barfield

The question of the writing of Owen Barfield was discussed particularly his relation to poetry and philosophy. His neglect by the philosophy circles and historians of philosophy was noted. But also, his relationship to the **Inklings** group at Oxford. *The Inklings* was a discussion group of philosophers and creative fantasy writers, such as **C. S. Lewis, Tolkien** and others. They met at the **Eagle and Child** pub on St Giles, Oxford for two decades (30s and 40s). There are similarities between the Inklings and **The Wednesday** in that both are discussion groups in Oxford and resulted in creative writings.

Barfield was interested in Coleridge as a philosopher and a poet and he wrote on both aspects. He also had good knowledge of



Owen Barfield

German Idealist philosophy. Barfield wrote on the evolution of consciousness. For him, there is a bigger consciousness to which, over millennia, humanity is moving. Following Rudolf Steiner, he charts the development of consciousness in stages:

Firstly, there is a primitive sentient consciousness with no separation between 'the self' and nature. Then there follows the 'intellectual soul' where self's thinking dominates; dogmatic thoughts are 'centre stage' and 'I am right', 'you are wrong' rules. Then there is a 'non-identification' with thoughts and the self can tolerate difference as in various ways the consciousness soul develops. This is the stage we are in at present, and more will follow.

The evidence for these stages is linguistic: for example, in ancient Greek, the word for beard means 'the man is flowering', referring to a process. This then moves to an object rather than an activity.

In our thinking, we should not try to split human action into good and evil, a simple evaluation saying this is wrong, or this is right. We have to think of what holds everything together, including both good and evil. Everything from Being is good.

Moved on to lyrical poetry. Owen Barfield was captivated by poetry: it just spoke to him, resonated with him in a personal way. It was



Simon Image

this felt response to lyric poetry which led him to drop his former received materialist philosophy.

This links to friendship: we 'click' with a friend, the personal connection is special.

Revolution

A question has been asked whether revolutions are inevitably violent? This comes on the centenary of the **Russian Revolution**. But the point wasn't much discussed in this meeting.

Previous meeting on Wednesday the 9th of August 2017.

We discussed some architectural issues, such that the **Gothic Style** (pointed arch) succeeded the **Romanesque** (rounded arch) in England, sometime in the 12th century. The supreme example of the Romanesque in England is **Durham Cathedral**. We failed to discover the model for the tower/spire of the English parish church.

We were also joined by the distinguished director of plays and films and a public speaker, **Simon Image**. The topics of the discussion included **Blake** and his time and residence near Lambeth Palace, London, and **Pirandello** and his plays that became the subject of the film **Kaos**, by the **Taviani Brothers**.

Paul Cockburn

(with additional writing by Rahim and Ray)

In Goethe's House

PAUL COCKBURN

In December 2016 Dianne and I visited Frankfurt and Dresden with some friends. We toured the Christmas Markets, and in Frankfurt we visited the childhood home of Goethe. He lived there from 1750 to 1775. The building was not impressive. It has been almost completely renovated. But inside it looked very old and had genuine character. Much of the furniture had been in the original house, recovered from other houses. Paintings of Goethe's family members adorn the walls, as well as typical landscape paintings from the 18th century. The house shows the typical life of a well-to-do German family. The amazing clock shows many more things than just the time! And they had the original little stage Goethe used as a puppet theatre as a young child.

His father and private tutors gave Goethe an excellent education at home. He studied law at Leipzig but his studies did not progress well and he returned to Frankfurt in 1768. He was severely ill for over a year, and when he recovered he continued his studies at Strasbourg. Here he met Herder, who got him interested in Shakespeare. In 1772 Goethe held a 'Shakespeare day' in his home at Frankfurt!

He started a legal practice in Frankfurt but he was not successful, and his father helped him start his literary career (having previously not been keen). In



Statue of Goethe



The stage Goethe played with as a child



The Opera House

1774, he wrote the book '*The Sorrows of Young Werther*' and quickly became famous, and in 1775 he moved to Weimar at the request of the duke, Karl August, where he lived for the rest of his life.

In Dresden, we were most impressed by the **Frauenkirche**, completely rebuilt after it was destroyed in the Second World War. In February 1945 Bomber Command bombed Dresden intensively. Dresden was an important communications and transport center, and it may be the raids were carried out to slow down and to show the advancing Russian army what Bomber Command could do. The center of Dresden was destroyed, as well as the Frauenkirche, the **Semperoper Opera House** and the **Zwinger Palace** were destroyed. All three buildings and the main **Jewish synagogue** have been re-built, and Dresden is now a beautiful city again and a wonderful cultural center. At least 25,000 people were killed in the raids, though there are claims it was many more.



Dresden

The Wednesday



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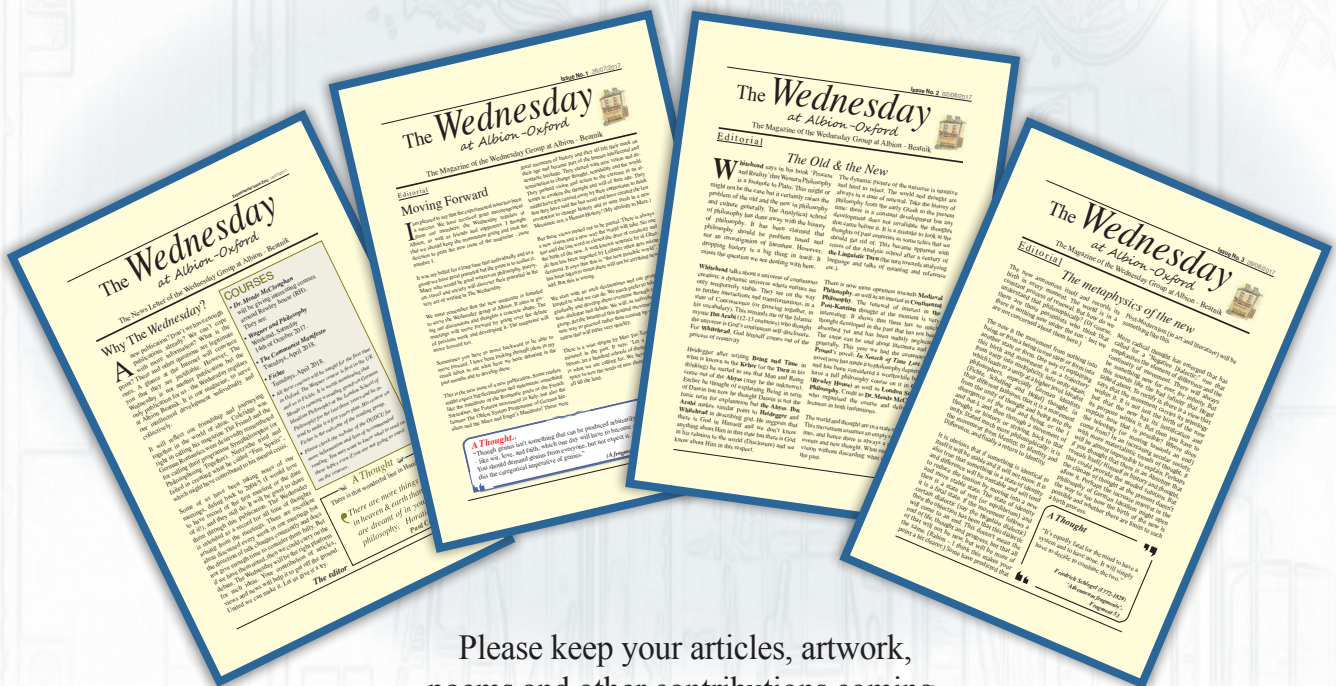
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