

The *Wednesday*



Weekly Magazine of the Wednesday Group at Albion Beatnik - Oxford

Editorial

The Resilience of the Ontological Need

It was Kant who had first opposed Metaphysics to Science. He was replying to Hume. Kant, in the Preface to the second edition of his major work critique of Pure Reason made the observation that science seems to continually advance while metaphysics is merely groping about in the dark. He was replying to Hume. He could see the challenge that is coming to threaten not only metaphysics but the ideas of Freedom, God and Immortality. He put limits on knowledge; restricting it to the realm of experience. The metaphysical ideas were given a moral, practical ground, and not a theoretical one. He thought he has solved the question of metaphysics. Of course, Kant saw that there is more to a human being than what science presents and this where his Critique of Judgment dealt with. This urge for more than the scientific worldview I will call the "Ontological Need," a term originally coined by Adorno.

Feuerbach and Marx thought that the ontological need was just an escape from an oppressive world and a projection into the beyond. This might or might not be the case but it didn't cancel out the Ontological Need. But a century after their writings the question stayed very urgent, which Adorno attributed to the disaster of the Second World War in Europe. But the Ontological Need survived the disaster and flourished in the time of peace. Adorno was replying to Heidegger. In a long chapter in his book "*Negative Dialectic*" he argued that the fascination with the question of Being in Heidegger's thought is

anti-historical and caters for a population that wishes to overcome the catastrophes of history. He also argues that there is a need for transcendence, but it is wrong move to solve this by a vacuous concept, such as Being, or some total Otherness. His answer is to get the concept rooted in this world, to make it substantial, but also to reserve its transcendence. At the end of his course of lectures published under the title "*Metaphysics: Concepts and Problems*," he identifies this transcendence with what is *not-yet*, as a worldly concept and a transcendent Other at the same time. Adorno says:

"This transcendence therefore *is*, and at the same time *is not* - and beyond that contradiction it is no doubt very difficult, and probably impossible, for thought to go."

This is a reasonable conclusion in so far as it admits that the question is not really settled by thought alone. It leaves the door open for such possibilities as art, poetry and religion to have their say and not to be dismissed from the start. However, all the philosophers say that the philosophising method is trying to open new routes. Philosophy goes on and new thought will be, no doubt, on the scene in the unending quest for the absolute, the meaning of life and what makes us humans and so the Ontological Need will be with us for a long time. It is, therefore, unreasonable to demand that one should drop this need or to abandon philosophy.

The Editor

Roger Scruton at Blackwell's

In Defence of Meaning and Understanding

Blackwell's bookshop invited Prof. Roger Scruton, on Saturday the 2nd of September, to one of its philosophical events and to publicise his new book (*On Human Nature*). He was interviewed by Nigel Warburton. The event was attended by a large number of people and good number of questions were asked. It was followed by book signing. Here is a report on the event by the team of The Wednesday who were present there:

Roger Scruton is a freelance philosopher and writer. He has written a long list of books on philosophy, history of ideas, art, music and politics. Some of these are controversial because of his conservatism. His latest is *On Human Nature*. In this book, he takes on Naturalism and the Scientific world view and opposes them to the *lebenswelt* (Lifeworld).

Scruton went to Cambridge to study natural sciences but soon he changed to studying philosophy there. He didn't like the way philosophy was taught at Cambridge because it lacked a good grounding in the history of philosophy. It contained a strong dose of analytical philosophy and most of this was still in the making in philosophical journals. Cambridge philosophy, as he said in the interview, did not go beyond the colleges walls. They were teaching Frege and Russell. But in his third year, Scruton specialised in Kant.

Later on, when he went to France, he found philosophy there has a close relationship with poetry and other disciplines and an interest in human nature; something that is absent from analytical philosophy. He, then, became interested in continental philosophy and wrote a book on Kant, Music and particularly on Wagner. Evolutionary biology tried to explain morals,

religion, art and other human activities and concerns. Scruton says that it is not a new fact that we belong to biology and nature but **Dawkins** tries through biology, a material concept, to reflect on life and morality which are not material.

Some argue that females are different from males in a biological sense, but how would that reflect on morality? Biology is invading life. It is a science but it doesn't give us the full picture. Philosophy does. It gives us the Lebenswelt.

The biologists tried to give us an evolutionary explanation of why we like landscape paintings. They say that nature was conducive to our survival and we still have that memory in us. But this does not explain our experience. We respond to painting critically. To evaluate art, we need to look at art history. In the paintings of Raphael, the Madonna is in the front of the painting, the landscape small and in the background. In later times, the Madonna disappeared and the landscape dominated. Human culture is part of our nature. We are cultured creatures. It is not nature against nurture.

The concept of Life world (Lebenswelt) was introduced by **Edmund Husserl** in his book *The Crisis of European Science*. It is the concept of a pre-given shared world (the self and others); a living world. This world is given to consciousness

and is not available to animals, according to Scruton. We share the *Lebenswelt*. Some of it belongs to the physical world but there are also the emotions which are not completely physical or biological.

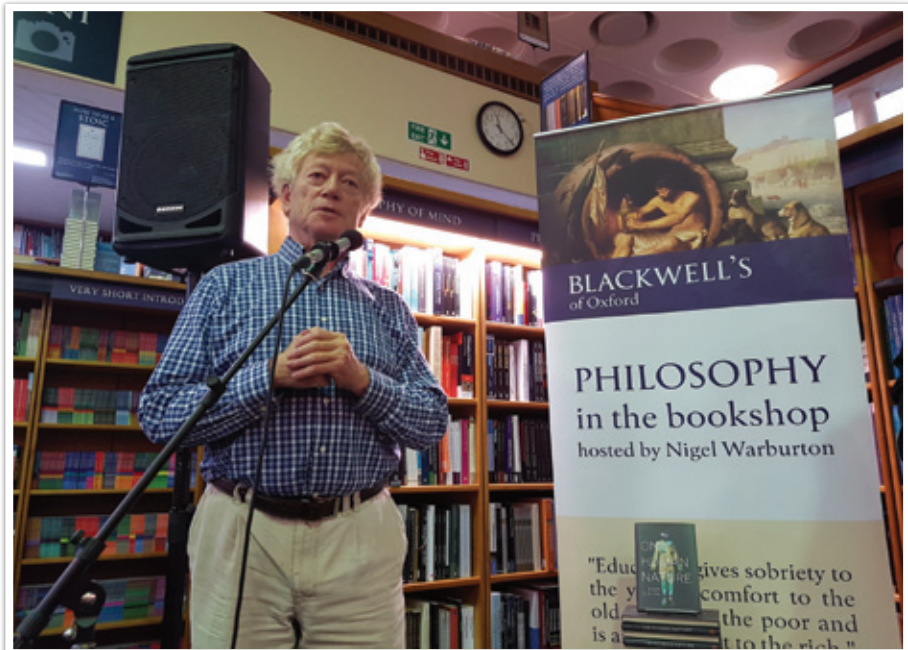
Husserl invented the science of phenomenology, a description of the world through consciousness. It was a first person description of consciousness by the one who is having experiencing. But later on in his life, he discovered that the world is not for the 'I' only but the 'we'. It is a shared world, leading to the *Lebenswelt*.

When it was suggested to Scruton that Husserl's method was descriptive and philosophy is all about arguments, he replied that this is not the whole of philosophy. There is a room for description. He referred to his experience of writing on Music. Description captures the experience but argument causes damage to the experience of music. You can describe a chord in music in analytical terms, but that leaves out the power of it, its beauty, what it 'does' to us.

Description is key, and we can describe our inner experience, without arguing about it. We should not disparage appearances – they are what we see. We don't see atoms for instance. Oscar Wilde who said: "It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances."

Scruton also attacked the Oxford philosophers, referring to **Parfitt and Singer** in particular, and then said that **Utilitarianism** misses the point of *Lebenswelt*. They argue, but they forget that it is the description, the *Lebenswelt*, that they are arguing about.

The '*I-We*' is crucial. We are united by shared references. But where does the 'we' stop? For Scruton, it appears to be at the borders of a nation – the further away people are the less obligation we have to them. Following **Hegel**, in his **Philosophy of Right**, we have major



Roger Scruton

obligations to our family, then our locality etc. Hegel based this on the idea of obligation to the family, then civil society, and finally the state, cumulatively expanding, leading to a connection with the wider world.

Scruton sees human beings as persons, in a similar way to **Macmurray**. It is a different ontological category from the organic and the material. The concept of a 'Person,' comes from the Romans. A person is the bearer of rights and duties. It is difficult to see how animals could fit in this picture and there is a debate in philosophy about the border between humans and animals. It is a question of philosophy and not biology.

When asked whether religion distinguishes between animals and human beings, Scruton answered that religion transcends the 'I' and 'Thou' relationship. The crucial point about God, he added, is the first person point of view. When God said to Moses: 'I am that I am' (or in the Quran's version: 'I am that I am God...'-RH), what he meant is that you'll not understand me but like you I have a first person's point of view. The free act of creation is not a natural happening. There is a distinction between things done (action) and things happening (events). Is the world just something that happened or

Events

should we admit that there are things done? We freely create.

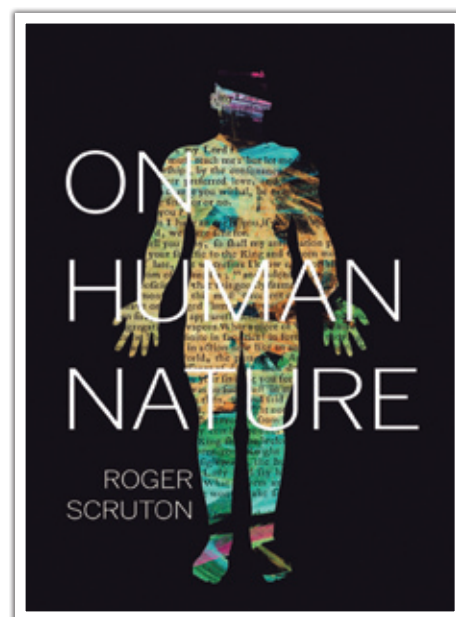
Let us assume we can give a scientific explanation of something (say an evolutionary explanation), that will be an explanation and not the same as understanding it. As in the example of music, something important has been left out by the scientific view. It leaves the *Lebenswelt*. After **Nigel Warburton** finished his questions to Roger Scruton, a number of questions were raised by the audience. One of them was about the possibility of a scientific explanation of morality.

Scruton replied that you may be able to give this, but could you explain why is incest repulsive? The scientific explanation leaves out the important thing about incest; the repulsiveness. There is a difference between explanation of an experience and its meaning. A machine could model a piece of music and reproduce it, and the operator of it will say, if asked about it, I don't know about music – I just produce it mechanically. The meaning and understanding are not there. Also, the feeling is left out – the appearance, the phenomenal aspect.

Are there differences between the brains of liberals and conservatives? Scruton seemed to think there might be. Also, when asked about the concept of race, he said that there are biological differences but we don't conceptualise the idea of a person (the personal, and the nature of accountability) in this way.

In a conservative note, answering one question, Scruton said that we have responsibility for the dead as well for the as yet unborn. He mentioned **Edmund Burke** and his critique of the French Revolution. Burke said that 'Society is a partnership of the dead, the living and the unborn.' **The French Revolution** was doing away with all that.

One questioner objected that the lifeworld is not as 'rigorous' as science. Science does deliver results. There is agreement in science but not in the lived world. Scruton replied that science does deliver but there is such a method as criticism that lead to consensus in the lived world. There is no



problem in finding and explaining our consensus in the arts. It is a shared intellectual world and not just scientific. To achieve consensus in the life world is much harder than in science but the critical method can lead to consensus.

Another questioner asked: What about psychology? The science of psychology is a 'half-way' house, short on results and short on its method. Scruton seemed to prefer neurology here. When asked whether psychology could be fixed, he agreed but commented that it does not solve all aspect of human life. Think of Altruism. There might be an evolutionary explanation but the motivation in the case of humans is different from that of animals. We need a full description of the phenomenon. Appearance is important. Meaning is what we find in our interpretation. The root of meaning is in the 'I/thou' relationship, what we find in the inter-personal, which animals do not have. Altruism cannot be biologically determined. We choose to lay down our lives for our friends. The human condition is what makes us different from animals; what separates us.

Finally, he lamented the loss of identity, particularly sexual identity, with religion and families not being the guiding force anymore.

(Reporting was done by **The Wednesday** team present at the event: **Paul Cockburn, Fred Cousins, Raymond Ellison and Rahim Hassan**).

“There is no God but He” by John Brass



*A hand-drawn copy done from an original calligraphy in Istanbul
in private possession.*

Making Sense of “Making Sense”

Reflection on the Philopoems of David Burridge

RAHIM HASSAN

This collection by David Burridge, which is ready for printing, is his second collection after “Pausing for breath along my way” which came out this year. Here is a preview of the unpublished collection. He is the master of what he calls “Philpoems”; poems that take their theme from philosophy and present a reflection on philosophy from the intellectual and experiential sides:

The collection of philosophical-poetry: “*Making Sense*” by David Burridge is interesting indeed. David calls his poems: “**Philopoems**”. The poems take their clues from various philosophical texts but go their own way in situating a philosophical question in the context of life and the experience of the poet. Some poems (or lines) hit you straight away as you look at them, others need time to sink in and be fully contemplated. A number of poems are of the first type. For example:

“Ideas stacked and rubbled in this nest of thinking.
A good one has flown-flapped up to a high ridge
Brief head-twist to eye-fix contention,
Considered a swoop to completion
But then soared off to horizon
Never to come back again.” (*Flight of Fancy*)

Some are pure philosophical thought expressed in a poetic form, such as a contemplation of the self in his reflection on Jasper’s Grenz-Situation. But even here the poetic comes to the fore with enlightening intensity:

“Just as dread locks me in, light pools around me,
And in this perfect splash I see the straight and narrow
Curving in a new direction; transcendence to a higher
step.” (*A path just taken*)

The whole philosophical task comes up in one sentence:

“Must I march through nettles?” (*A path...*)

In the Sufi tradition, there are those who ask of God no guidance as such but a wonder; a puzzlement: “Oh God increase me in perplexity” (Ibn al-Farid (Egyptian, d. 1234) said: “O God increase my perplexity by increasing my love to you.”)

The “One and only appearance” poem resounds the Nietzsche’s them in his *Twilight of the Idols* (“How the True World finally became a fable?”). It is the idea that the dualism of Real/Appearance should disappear with the disappearance of the *Thing-in-itself*:

“I am a temporary appearance stretched between
Dawn and dusk. Like the blackbird I have to sing
out loud.” (*One and only appearance*)

The beauty of these poems is when they show deep reflections on a philosophical text or when they take you from an ordinary experience to a point where you suspend the everyday standpoint and to look at the deep questions of life and philosophy. In his “Casting back” on the experience of Sugar

in childhood, together with Aristotle's reflections on Memory, we come to the conclusion that:

"..... Now in a late-life rummage it's picked out again,
perhaps
by *Being* in its search for closing sense."

Most great philosophers are present in the collection, not in the passive sense of being quoted or cited, but in the active sense of being reflected on or struggled with, as with writing an essay on Heidegger's *Being or Time*.

The experience of drowning in "Fathoming" is one were an incident, real or imagined, turns out to be a reflection on *Finitude* and a summary of *German Idealism* from Fichte to Hegel:

".....seek to negate my finitude-but I don't believe
In becoming infinite so I gulp up and catch a rope
dangling,
Hand over hand saved by experience." (*Fathoming*)

May be here is a voice of Schelling trying to get beyond the *Subjective Absolute* of Fichte, saved by the *Substance* of Spinoza!

Some lines are memorable for their individual beauty and significance:

"The high joy of creation smoked away.
.....
.....
All that exists is what dreams in my head
And all I can do is make sense of it-now." (**A melt of
bee-wax**)

His tribute to Kant is remarkable:
"He furnished the house for all to inhabit;
tenants from attic to cellar: those who stare out the
window-
those who wish to descend." (*Pure-ly Reason-able*)

The line that is worth mentioning in this

poem is when the poet's task has been described as:

"perhaps I am like a bee poking,
spreading pollen."

One of my favourite poems in the collection is the "**Story lines**," with its settle reflection on Facts, Parables and Myths. For some the world is disenchanted with all the discoveries of science and the materiality of life. But here the poetic voice breaks through to a higher ground that does not eschew Truth but has a wider conception of it:

"Parables and myths are packages to be pocketed,
For future chewing, unwrapped in a service.
A snack to deliver us from emptiness, or the pain
Of knee-grazing towards *The End*." (*Story lines*)

This image echoes in another poem (*In the light of acceleration*):

"Ever since..... I have known order is at best a crafted
song,
Whose tune might anytime stop."

This short and hasty look at the collection may not do justice to it but I hope it will encourage others to have a closer look and a better understanding and making sense of it all.

Finally, I am indebted for David Burrige for letting me have the manuscript of this collection before its publication. I do understand that he is writing more poems to add to the collection.

I hope that I have been objective in my assessment of it here and I wish our poet every success with this collection and his other philopoems.

Nietzsche and Naturalism

PAUL COCKBURN

Below is a comment on the editorial of Issue 5 by Paul Cockburn with a response by Rahim Hassan. The argument turns on the limits of naturalism: can we naturalise moral values and meaning?

I think the quote from Nietzsche in the editorial of Issue 5 of *The Wednesday* shows a **category mistake** between the organic and the personal.

The quote was:

“...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.”

It may be true in the organic world that there is such a struggle, but this is the world of animals and plants etc. They don't have interpretations in the way humans as persons have, as we mean ideas, concepts, inspired dreams, poetry etc. I don't think you can reduce such ideas or even experience such as sensual experience to a material basis, although of course the material is involved. I believe, as does Macmurray, that there is a material level, an organic level, and a personal level above the organic where we as human beings are self-conscious, and can choose our actions, set goals etc in an ethical or moral way. (It may be that some animals do act as persons in a way - my cat seems to sometimes!)

In science, a fresh interpretation should (and usually (always?)) does include more facts, so the explanation is at a higher level. The dialectic involves supersession, where the old knowledge is subsumed by the new knowledge. Are the 'interpretations' floating above us waiting to be instantiated in our heads? Or are we as persons involved in some way, in debate, relationships and creativity. I think for artistic ideas we must be, as art is a very human process. Even scientists can choose what theory they support, they don't have to follow their 'group'. They devise and do experimental work. They can decide what theories to explore. Of course, they might think they are rationally deciding but they could be 'inspired'!

There is a difference between the organic drives and the drive to know, the drive to love and to do good to others. The drives move from, say, hunger, to spiritual drives, and at the higher level we have self-consciousness and spirituality which can negate the lower drives. We also can choose, we have willpower to do so which is personal.

The editorial continues:

“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.”

In the quote above, Nietzsche again confuses the categories of the material, the organic and the personal. The drives are not material, they are organic – how can the movement of atoms ‘rule in the thinker, artist, or poet’? And he leaves out the higher category of the personal. Does Nietzsche mean that the strong drives that result in higher meaning are spiritual? As far as I can see in the *Genealogy* and other writings by Nietzsche, the answer is no. In fact, Nietzsche seems to believe in nature red in tooth and claw, where the strongest survive, and the weak go to the wall, and he applies this to human nature in a way that I think is immoral.

Rahim Hassan

Thanks Paul. I may not do justice to your deep objections to Nietzsche and by extension to my argument in this short space. I do agree with your last sentence. Nietzsche was a Naturalist and there is a big debate as to how much of a Naturalist he is or how to interpret his Naturalism. There was a conference at Southampton some 12 years ago on this subject. Brian Leiter, in his commentary on the *Genealogy*, thinks that he is a Naturalist in the strongest sense, while Ken Gemes and Chris Janaway think that there is room for value and consciousness (or maybe even spirituality in your sense!)

But Nietzsche’s basic point in the *Genealogy of Morals* was that Man is sick and his sickness is caused by thinking that he is above nature. Man puts a high value on *Consciousness* and devalues the body. Nietzsche argued for full Naturalization of Man. He thought, especially in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, that the body



Nietzsche

does the thinking. That is why he looked for drives and instincts for every philosophical or artistic endeavour (See his critique of the Romantics in the *Gay Science* and *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*).

From your argument (and mine, I hope) there is a possibility that Nietzsche’s Naturalism could be supplemented by a Schellingian argument to the effect that Nature, in Man, has got to a higher *potentiation*, with the rise of Consciousness, but without forgetting that at the deepest level the drives and instincts still rule, as in psychology (Say a Freudian conception or may be Jungian. (Peter Wood could throw some light on this point.)

The net effect, whether you agree with Nietzsche or not, is that the world renews itself in every moment and we need to develop our thoughts accordingly. This was the message of the editorial.

Current Political Syllogisms*

Campo Elías Flórez Pabón

Philosophy Department at Campinas University - Brazil



From antiquity, Aristotelian practical syllogism is the way we naturally reason, the path that the mind seeks to reach a conclusion in front of a certain action in men¹. This is in line with the following examples of situations and theories of our world policy to think a little further.



Meanwhile in Venezuela

All men are mortal.
Nicolás Maduro is a man.
Then Nicolás Maduro is mortal.

All men are political animals.
Nicolás Maduro is a man.
Then Nicolas Maduro is an animal... political.

All presidents are all «men»².
Nicolás Maduro is a president.
Then Nicolás Maduro is a man.

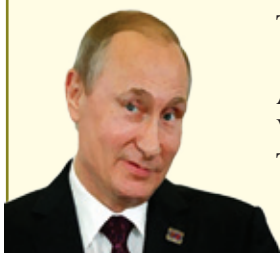
Every dictatorship is essentially a bad exercise of political power.
Nicolás Maduro is a dictator.
Then, Nicolás Maduro is essentially doing a bad exercise of political power.

Any constituent proposed by a dictator is to perpetuate himself in power.
Nicolás Maduro is a dictator.
Then, Nicolás Maduro wants to perpetuate himself in power.

In the meantime in Russia

All men go to the bathroom³.
Vladimir Putin is a man.
Then Vladimir Putin goes to the bathroom.

All men must be prudent and more so if they handle power.
Vladimir Putin is a man.
Then Vladimir Putin must be prudent, and more so if he wields power.



Now in Syria

All men are equal.
Bashar al-Ásad is a man.
Then Bashar al-Asad is equal to the others.

All war is poverty, pain, and despair for the people who live it.
Syria is a country at war.
Then Syria is a poor, hurting and desperate people.



In the United States

All men go to the bathroom.
Donal Trump is a man.
Then Donal Trump goes to the bathroom.

No climate change conference is telling the truth.
Trump claims to have the truth.
Then Trump doesn't have or tell the truth.



Now in North Korea

All men like power⁴.
Kim Jong-un is a man.
Then Kim Jong-un likes power.

No North Korean missile is dangerous to the world.
Kim Jong-un is a missile to the world.
Then Kim Jong-un is not dangerous to the world.

No God can die.
Kim Jong-un is God.
Then Kim Jong-un can't die.



Everyone

All men are equal, mortal, go to the bathroom and like power.
Kim Jong-un, Nicolás Maduro, Bashar al-Asad, Vladimir Putin and Donal Trump are men.
Then Kim Jong-un, Nicolás Maduro and Donal Trump are equal, mortal, go to the bathroom and like power.

* I make it clear that the syllogisms exposed here are intended to make us think more than look at their proposals and forms are appropriate to the different models of syllogistics. Nor do I intend that these should be used as an argument because they do not fully comply with their rules. However, I propose them as those thought processes that one can conclude by watching the news, about what is happening in the political world.

¹ Cf. SALGADO, M. La estructura del silogismo práctico en Aristóteles. Revista de Filosofía. Vol. 29 Núm. 1 (2004): 53-75. P. 55.

² When the meaning of "men" is used, I do not exclude the feminine gender from this reflection because I consider that in the classical expression men are also referred to women.

³ Women, too.

⁴ Women also.

Nantes - Takes The Biscuit

FRED COUSINS

I have had many visits to the fabulous city of Nantes. Nantes, with its population of 600,000, is the fourth biggest city in France. It was voted the most liveable city in Europe in 2004, and in 2013. It held the title for the green capital of Europe. Most of the city centre is pedestrianised allowing freedom to stroll and no pollution at all. It was the first city in France to have trams, and this works well along with regular hybrid buses. It really is a refreshing city centre.

Nantes lies on the delta of the Loire river, the longest river in France, such a wide river that dominates the city. On the banks of the river, the main focal point of the city is the Castle, named "The castle of the Dukes of Brittany". It stands with such high walls. Its moat and drawbridge and round turrets at the entrance and on the corners make it really a beautiful

castle. In 1941 Nantes separated from Brittany and the area is now known as the Pays de la Loire, which simply means, country of the Loire Valley.

A stone's throw from the castle is the equally impressive cathedral of St. Peter and St Paul of Nantes. Construction began in 1434 on the site of the Romanesque cathedral. 457 years later it was finished in 1891. Again, it is a fine example of French architecture at its Finest.

So, Nantes takes the biscuit. If you wondered about the title, well it is due to being one of the main sugar ports of Europe. In the 1700 and 1800s it produced Biscuits, and it still does. The brand LU is still made in Nantes. Nantes was a big part of slavery in the 1700 and 1800s. It did create the slave triangle.

The ships left Nantes, stopped off in Africa near Senegal, picked up slaves that were taken



From inside the Jules Verne museum



The Museum of Jules Verne



The Castle



The elephant of Nantes

The Cathedral

to the West Indies to work in the sugar cane fields. The ships then would return laden with sugar. In 1848, with the abolition of slavery, the slave trade was ended in Nantes. You can now visit the slave museum and the memorial to the abolition of slavery in Nantes.

From Nantes emerged one of the founding fathers of Science fiction. Jules Verne was born in the city. He is famous for his books which were turned into films, some of the earliest science fiction films ever. He paved the way for Spielberg and others with novels such as, *Around the world the 80 days*, *Journey to the centre of the earth*, and *20,000 leagues under the sea*.

So, I visited the Jules Verne museum which is situated high up on the banks of the Loire. This is the place where he lived, where he

drew inspiration, as he watched the sailing ships go by from his window. His imagination ran wild: where were they going? What would they encounter? Would they return? From this experience, all these famous stories were born. Verne was born in 1828, and lived a long and successful life. He passed away in 1905. He was a poet and a playwright too. A talented man with a fantastic imagination, fuelled by the port of Nantes.

Today, the city is still inspired by Verne and the main attraction is the Machine, a giant mechanical elephant that people ride on and a fair ground ride where all the figures and animals and forms of transport are from his books, which are now films.

A truly enchanting City that inspired Jules Verne to write such great science fiction.

Notes on the Wednesday Meeting 30th of Aug 2017

We talked about the subject/object split. The **Empiricists, and also Analytical Philosophy**, believe in objectivity: the object holds the key to knowledge; thus, knowledge originates in the external world. **Fichte, Schelling and Kant** believed that the human mind contributes to knowledge, our perception shapes our knowledge. If the subject is withdrawn from knowledge, all knowledge becomes disinterested. Science is the model for such knowledge. A scientific theory explains a number of facts, and seeks to explain more, until anomalies occur which the theory cannot explain. Explanatory power consists of uniting facts into a theory. Eventually a new theory is formed which explains all the old facts and the anomalous facts. So, science goes from diverse facts to a greater whole. Subjective knowledge seeks connections between disparate objects and a unity in an imaginative way. It tries to glimpse the whole all at once, perhaps intuitively or through intellectual intuition.

Analytical philosophy, like scientific knowledge, is about the 'nitty-gritty'. It is good because it works. But it is not the whole story. The Analytical philosophers sharpen their logical tools but they don't use them; there is no substantial content.

Language came up for discussion. It is figurative and literal. It provides a link between consciousness and the world. Poets name things in an 'open' way: scientism as in **Carnap** led to knowledge being seen as propositional calculus. Language gets reduced to false or true propositions. Poetic and imaginative language can hold contrary meanings. The meaning of a word is its reality

not the object. It is suggestive rather than being determined.

Hamann and Herder showed the dual nature of language, its literal and poetic forms. **Novalis** thought we don't understand language. **Freud** thought that language is contradictory and it reveals itself in dreams where the dreamer sees the same person or object metamorphosis into different, and sometime, contradictory characters.

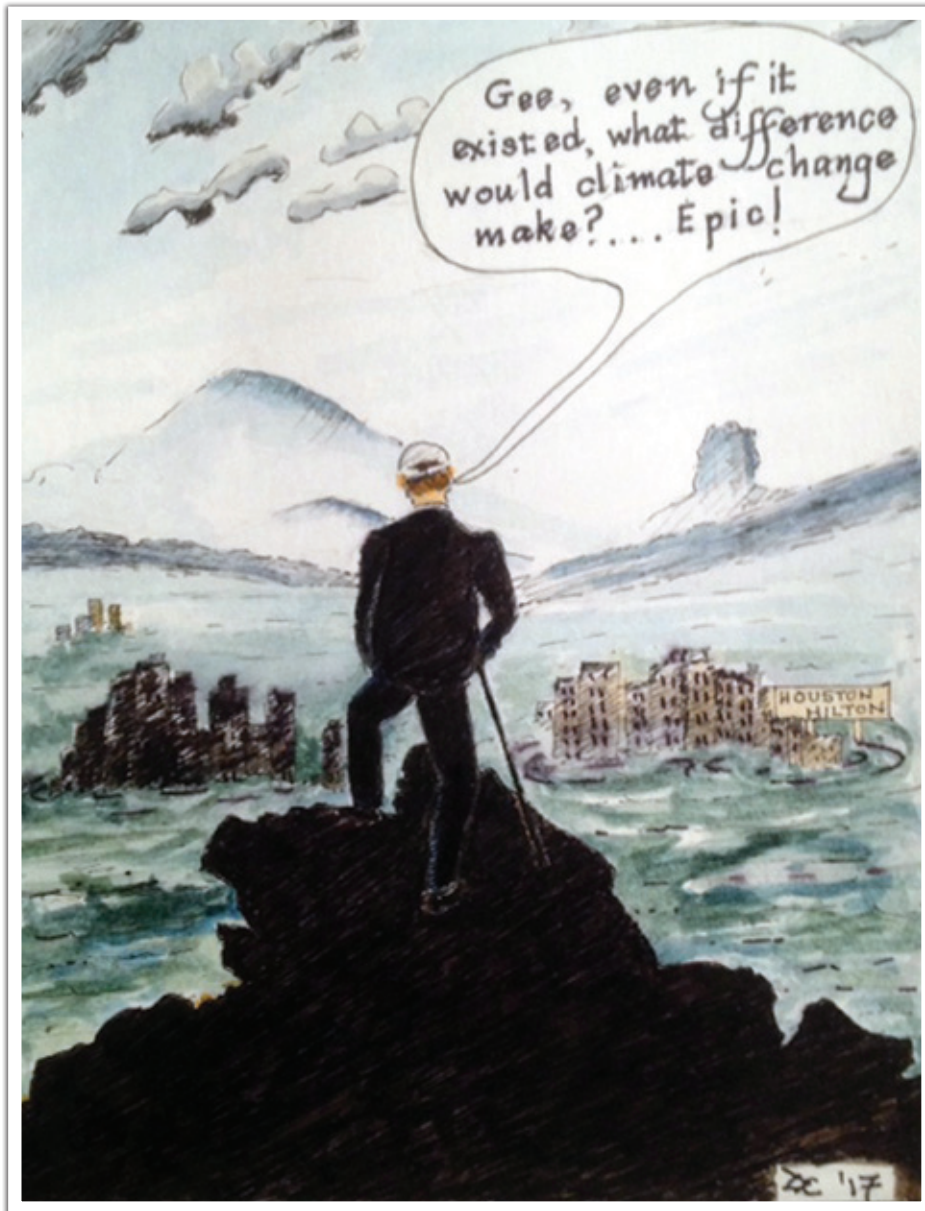
It has been mentioned in the meeting that **Owen Barfield** was the inspiration for the *Inklings*: he wrote *The Silver Trumpet* about 1924, a fable that inspired **C. S. Lewis and Tolkien** to write fantasy tales. He emphasized the power of the imagination, and postulated the evolution of human consciousness using etymology, studying how the meaning of words has changed over time. Humans originally had a close connection with nature, then through the emphasis on the rational and detached lost that connection. We need to re-connect to nature. Barfield was the close friend of C. S. Lewis, but he had to join his father's legal firm in London so could not continue his philosophical work until he was 60, and did not remain as an active member of the *Inklings*.

Other topics that came up but have not been discussed: **Feuerbach** and metaphysics as a social construction. **Goethe and Newton** on color. **Ludwig Wittgenstein** and his ubiquitous presence in American theology. **Scruton** and his conservative views: he believes in free will and beauty, but his writing on national identity is right-wing, though interesting.

Paul Cockburn

Artistic Cartoon

Dianne Cockburn has her own take on Casper David Friedrich's famous painting: The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog.



The Wednesday

Editor:

Dr. Rahim Hassan

Contributors:

Paul Cockburn

Chris Norris

Dianne Cockburn

Fred Cousins

Paolo Enock

Barbara Vellacott

Raymond Ellison

David Burrridge

Stephen Hirstenstein

Peter Wood

Ranjini Ghosh

Anona Greening

Campo Elías Flórez Pabón



Contact Us:

rahimhassan@hotmail.co.uk

Telephone: 077 5241 5923

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Website: Currently unavailable



Alice in Wonderland

PHILOSOPHY FESTIVAL

Saturday 23rd September
10.00AM-5.30PM



Five speakers present philosophical ideas somehow connected with Alice in Wonderland and invite you to contribute to the debate.

Topics include:

'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone,
'it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less.'

A Lacanian View of Reality through the Looking Glass

Six impossible things: Lewis Carroll in everyday life

Is faith 'believing six impossible things before breakfast'?

Reflections on Gigantic or Tiny Alice in her Underground Adventures
Through the Looking Glass

£38 for Philosophy Society Members; £45 for non-members.

Includes a 3-course themed lunch and refreshments.

Profits will be split between the charities Mind and GXCA.

Poetry and Pints evening
7.30PM ONWARDS



£8 on the door to include a pint or glass of wine/soft drink - £6 in advance
Those interested in reading please contact the office at the Memorial Centre

To book or for more information please contact Fauzia Rahman frphilosophy1@gmail.com.
Memorial Centre, 8 East Common, Gerrards Cross SL9 7AD

