

# The *Wednesday*

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Weekly Magazine of the Wednesday Group - Oxford

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## Editorial

### *Learning beyond a Career*

I have noticed that a great many people come to the study of poetry, philosophy and art after a long career in something else, or after retirement. But once they do that, their new interest takes over their lives and they will sacrifice a lot for it. I noticed that in our deceased friend Ray Ellison and I dedicate this editorial and last week's to his memory. Ray loved Oxford and spent his time at Rewley House library almost every day except for weekends and holidays. He would walk across to our Wednesday meeting nearby for the second hour of the debate and then go back to the same library.

I think we all find ourselves pushed in early life by family or circumstances to study for a purpose, mainly a career. We may also be searching for a need to understand something in science or the humanities and pursue it academically. But then one day we wake up to a call of a different kind. That is the time of reflection or a sudden enlightenment that our true need is somewhere else. It is as if we have been alienated from ourselves for so long that we want now to find our way home. It is a return to the self.

I believe that at the bottom of this feeling is a call for freedom, that is if you take the philosophical view that we are, in and for ourselves as Hegel would have it, free. The demands of a career or the selection of a wrong subject for study are limitations on this freedom. We could be doing well in the subjects we selected and the career we took, but still we feel a different need, a new path in life that takes us home to an original and necessary call.

recommend studying philosophy after maturing, say in your thirties. Mysticism also showed similar trends. Ibn Arabi said that he was sitting in the court of Seville when he heard a voice telling him 'Mohammad, it was not for this that you were created!' He promptly left the courtly life behind him and sought a new way of living. He was responding to his true calling.

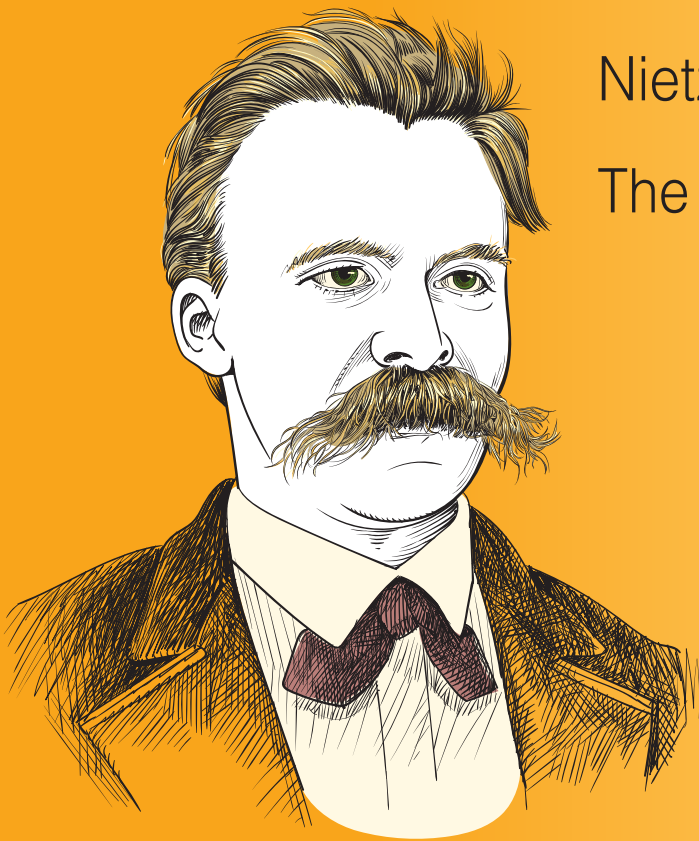
Herman Hesse in his novel *Siddhartha* tells the spiritual journey of the hero Siddhartha. He starts as a follower of Buddhist philosophy but then decides that he must find his way by himself. He wanders around and meets a woman who wants him to be rich and to gain employment with a local businessman. He does well at his work and the businessman wishes to turn him into a careerman, but Siddhartha despises wealth and feels a struggle within. He flees and goes back to a simple life where he gains enlightenment and becomes a philosopher, taking reality to be one, and time to be an illusion. Thoughts and language, for him, are binary sets of truth and falsity, but reality is all encompassing. Truth has many facets and cannot be captured by a partial belief.

Philosophy should enlighten us beyond the practical and the utilitarian. It should speak to our inner selves. In the old jargon of authenticity, it should direct us towards our true calling. But this is not a call to abandon all other occupations in life to become mystics and hermits. It is the more realistic call to review our commitments and search for our true happiness. Perhaps, that is why we opt to have second thoughts late in life and to start the search anew.

We can illustrate this from philosophy. Plato

*The Editor*

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# Nietzsche As A Philosopher: The Views Of Some Philosophers

Nietzsche had a long way to prominence. He was first treated as a literary figure but soon he was considered a philosopher with powerful ideas. The article below traces the reception of Nietzsche's ideas and discusses the different takes on his philosophy by his interpreters.

EDWARD GREENWOOD

## Part 1

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The question as to whether Nietzsche should be regarded as a philosopher was posed very early. The tendency to regard him as a 'man of letters' arose naturally because of the way he was dramatically taken up by poets, playwrights and novelists such as Hauptmann and D'Annunzio in the 1890s after being almost totally ignored till then. This was the period of those Ferdinand Tonnies (the sociologist who later made the distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*) called the Nietzsche-Narren or Nietzsche-Nitwits. But in 1899 Hans Vaihinger, a professor at the University of Berlin, and later author of *The Philosophy Of As If*, though well aware of his reputation as a litterateur, was already lecturing on him as a person to be taken seriously as a philosopher. Vaihinger published a book with the title *Nietzsche Als Philosoph* in Berlin in 1902.

Vaihinger began by setting aside three objections to considering Nietzsche as a philosopher. The first was that he was merely a modish fashionable writer. Vaihinger pointed out that the same objection had been made to Descartes by the Aristotelians in the

seventeenth century. The second was that he could not be a philosopher because he had no system. Vaihinger regarded this as a merely pedantic objection. The third objection was that Nietzsche was a sick man. Vaihinger had two replies: first, that Nietzsche's work was done before his sickness was so severe as to lead to breakdown and secondly, that sickness in itself did not preclude achievement. After adverting to the great merits of Nietzsche as a literary stylist, he then says he will concentrate on the content of Nietzsche's philosophy. He then speaks of seven main tendencies in Nietzsche's work: first, he sees previous morality as anti-natural. Second, anti-socialism. He puts the emphasis on the individual rather than society. Third, anti-statism, anti-politics and anti-democracy. With the Greeks no doubt in mind, he sees aristocracies as having been formed through selection by competition. The distrust of democracy he, of course shares with his arch-rival Plato. Fourth, anti-feminism. This may seem counter to his critique of contemporary conventional morality, but it also arises out of his desire to go against the grain of the times, to be *unzeitgemass*. He sees



Hans Vaihinger



Simmel

the current intellectualist feminism as part of modern decadence. Fifth, anti-intellectualism. I think Vaihinger includes this because he perceives Nietzsche sometimes allows for the necessity of illusion to human beings. I don't think he means to deny that Nietzsche thinks that intellectual honesty is the prime virtue. It is just a recognition that this virtue can cause problems. Sixth, anti-pessimism. We must affirm life not in spite of suffering, but because of it. The doctrine of eternal recurrence is adopted because he cannot countenance the late Classical and Christian desire of repose. The wheel of life turns eternally. Seventh, anti-Christianity. Christians use the expression 'the world' as a term of reproach as in "I have overcome the world." But the world is all there is. Christianity emphasises pity and the pitifulness of things because it turns away from certain ancient virtues. In effect it destroyed those virtues.

Vaihinger then goes on to ask if there are historical precedents for Nietzsche's views. He finds them in the Sophists such as Callicles and Gorgias, the Renaissance humanists who wanted to revive the ancient virtues, some elements of Rousseau and the *Stürmer und Dränger*, and in Friedrich Schlegel and Max Stirner. Nevertheless, he sees Nietzsche as a highly original figure whose distinctive project began with the turning of Schopenhauer inside out, so to speak. With *Human All Too Human* Nietzsche rejects the Romantic cult of art and Wagnerianism. Central now is the importance

of the historical sense and a rejection of Schopenhauer's depreciation of history. Nietzsche puts history (including historical philology) and natural science on a level as the two great achievements of the nineteenth century. Both are the indispensable dissolvers of empirical falsity and illusion.

Another philosopher, Georg Simmel, was also at the University of Berlin, but antisemitism seems to have prevented him from getting a full lectureship, so he had to depend on student fees as a Privatdozent. His lectures were inspiring and attracted many students, amongst them Gyorgy Lukacs and the American philosopher George Santayana. Santayana expressed astonishment in a letter to his own teacher William James at the sheer virtuosity of his interpretations of Kant's *Critique Of Pure Reason*. Simmel certainly took Nietzsche seriously as a philosopher and in 1907 published *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche: ein Vortragzyklus*. It was published in an English translation *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche* by the University of Massachusetts in 1961 and reprinted by the University of Illinois press in 1991. Simmel, a pioneer of Sociology, opens by emphasising the complexity of means (the mediation of middlemen) required to reach a given end (say getting food to the table) in modern metropolitan society and postulates that this generates a strong-felt need for a single overarching and unifying goal. This desire he sees as a heritage from Christianity. He sees both philosophers as preoccupied with the problem. Nietzsche, having rejected

Christianity, attempts “to remove the meaning-giving goal of life from its illusory position out of life and to put that goal back into life itself.” As for Schopenhauer, no moments in life have any import in themselves, so he ends as a eudaemonist who, because life’s pains vastly outweigh its pleasures, becomes an absolute pessimist. Simmel (unwarrantedly it seems to me) sees Schopenhauer as the greater philosopher because he attacks metaphysical questions rather than moral ones. Yet, paradoxically since metaphysicians are usually arch-irrationalists trapped in what Kant had exposed as the illusions of pure reason, Schopenhauer is the supreme irrationalist. He is a free spirit in his way, but overpowered by the need for system.

It seems to me that in treating Nietzsche solely as a moralist, and belittling him on the metaphysical front, Simmel has fallen into a great error. For surely Nietzsche’s achievement in philosophy, Heidegger notwithstanding, is to have overcome metaphysics, both in its Platonic and in its Kantian revisionary form. For Nietzsche metaphysics is the offspring of religion, not its generator, and the reason he emphasises ‘physics’ so strongly in *Human All Too Human* is that physics deals with nature (*phusis* = nature) and not the *Hinterwelt* of a dreamed up supernature.

When it comes to Nietzsche on moral evaluation, however, Simmel interestingly interprets the parable of the rich young man asked to give up all his goods to the poor, not as a proto-socialist exercise in the altruistic redistribution of wealth (as he thinks Nietzsche probably saw it), not as primarily concerned with the poor, but rather as giving the young man the goal of individual perfectionism: an aim, in fact not too far from Nietzsche’s own concern with the individual. Simmel writes: “Jesus is not concerned with those who will receive or with those for whom life is sacrificed, but with the giver and with the one who sacrifices his life.” This leads him to the somewhat exaggerated claim that Nietzsche “completely misinterprets Christianity.”

When a philosopher takes history seriously

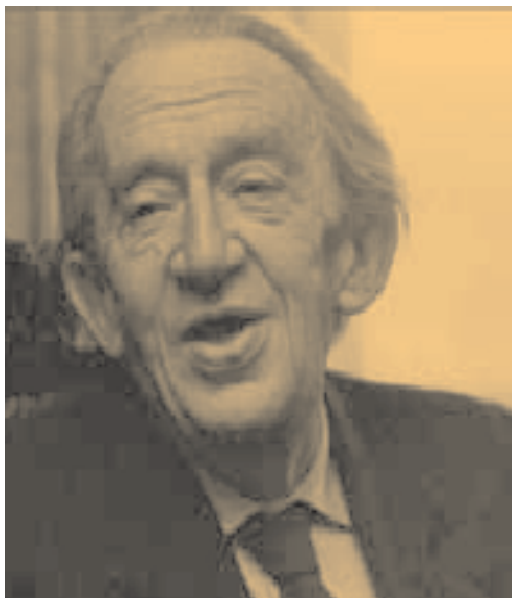
(as most have not) it is important that the philosopher gets the history right. Nietzsche does better by the history of Christianity than Simmel recognises. As anyone who has read Diarmid McCulloch’s *History Of Christianity* can testify, the noun ‘Christianity’ does not designate a unity, but a set of family resemblances. Nietzsche is well aware of this. He differentiates Jesus from Paul and the Paul-founded church and, of course Protestant Christianity from Catholic Christianity, showing how Protestantism has transformed itself from a world-renouncing religion to a religion of worldly success. Simmel points out that some of the early Christians embraced a kind of community of goods, not because they were like modern socialists and communists, interested in property, but rather because they had no interest in it because of their sense of the imminent end of the world. Nietzsche is well aware that the early Christians were not communists or democrats, but rightly does not think that this invalidates his contention that they had a genealogical influence on those modern movements. As the English put it, their socialism owed more to Methodism than to Marxism, and Shaw seemed to see socialism as a Christianity that had not been tried in practice in the modern world. The somewhat saccharine sermon at the end of the Hollywood kitschy film *Spartacus* bears this out.

Simmel grows over-mystical about Nietzsche’s strikingly provocative syllogism from ‘On The Blissful Islands’ in Part Two of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*: “If there were gods how could I bear not to be a god! Therefore, there are no gods.” He aligns it with the idea of theomorphosis found in some Christian mystics, for example Angelus Silesius with his lines: “To find my goal along with my origin I must find myself; and I win God in myself this way and transform myself into what he is.” He could well have cited:

Im Gott wird nichts erkannt: er ist ein einig  
ein,  
Was man in ihm erkannt, das must man  
selber sein.

(In God nothing will be known, he is a singular one, and what man knows in him man himself must be.)





Gyorgy Lukacs



George Santayana

We have here the neo-Platonic and German Idealist thesis that the knower must be identical with the known, an anticipation of Hegel and of the Hegelian Christianity of the elder Verkhovensky in Dostoevsky's *The Devils*: "Our teacher believes in God; 'I don't understand,' he used to say sometimes, 'why everybody thinks I am an atheist. I believe in God, *mais distingueons*, I believe in him as a Being who is conscious of himself in me only.' " Verkhovensky does go on to recognise, however, that this does not make him a real Christian and provokes the nationalist Shatov into exclaiming passionately that you can only come to the true Christian God through the Russian people. Only they have kept the true faith.

Simmel completely misinterprets Nietzsche's remark, inverting it and claiming that it shows that Nietzsche cannot bear not to be God. He writes of both Spinoza and Nietzsche that, "they cannot bear it not to be God." But for Spinoza it is Nature and not Spinoza that is God and for Nietzsche God and all gods are dead. Nietzsche does not present, as Simmel claims, "a transcending meaning and goal structure of existence." Anything transcendent is totally absent from Nietzsche's entirely immanent world, and existence *per se* does not have a goal structure. For Nietzsche, as for Goethe:

Der Zweck des Lebens ist das Leben selbst.  
(The purpose of life is life itself.)

As a protosociologist, Simmel had interesting things to say about the relation of the individual to society in Nietzsche's philosophy. He writes:

"Rather than taking sides in the quarrel between socialism and individualist liberalism, Nietzsche takes a stand beyond their opposition. He is concerned neither with society as such nor with individuals qua individuals. He wishes to accentuate the individual neither as an element of society nor as a bare individual who is the same as all the others. He treats exclusively of individuals through whose values and qualities the specific human type can progress to higher levels than were previously occupied." The Christian assumption that everyone should cultivate the same virtues of humility, obedience, surrender and selflessness is false, for there is a rank ordering among individuals, and human life finds its justification not in any social progress, but in the achievements of the gifted. Social ethics is eudaemonistic and hedonistic. It demands an ever-widening improvement of satisfaction and happiness. Nietzsche is axiomatically opposed to this. He is totally anti-hedonist. It is not that he exalts suffering in itself, but only suffering through which great things are achieved in life or art. It is misleading to say that Nietzsche's hatred of Christianity and its God is fundamentally a hatred of the idea of equality under God, as Simmel claims. Though it is true that Nietzsche rejects the idea that all souls are equal, his rejection of God does not arise from his ethical objections to that idea, but rather from the premium he puts on intellectual honesty. He sees the term 'God' as, like the term 'Being', one of the emptiest of concepts, and the concept of God, unlike the concept of Being, which is confined to the philosophers, is one of the easiest to resort to by everyone. There

## Philosophy



Riehl



Brentano

is no place for God or gods or metaphysics in Nietzsche's naturalistic ontology. But when it comes to ethics, Nietzsche does not limit himself to "codifying operative moralities or... prevailing moral beliefs", but wants to legislate a new table of values.

Another philosopher at the University of Berlin, the neo-Kantian Alois Riehl, also took Nietzsche seriously as a philosopher, while regarding him as an artist as well, as the title of his book *Friedrich Nietzsche Der Künstler und Denker* indicates. Riehl thinks that all great achievements, including those in philosophy, come from the heart and passions. Riehl spends 10 pages on Nietzsche the artist and 112 pages on Nietzsche the thinker. He begins with an account of Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's initiator into philosophy and shows how he emancipated himself from his teacher as a good pupil should. The chief issue which he took from Schopenhauer was the central question of whether existence has any worth. His answer was, of course, to be the reverse of Schopenhauer's. Out of sickness came his affirmation of life. Riehl sees Nietzsche as primarily the philosopher of culture and of values. He sees him as going beyond the Enlightenment as not just destroying religion, but as trying to construct something which would satisfy the appetites religion had satisfied previously. He sees him as a vindicator of nature, but not in the sentimental idyllic

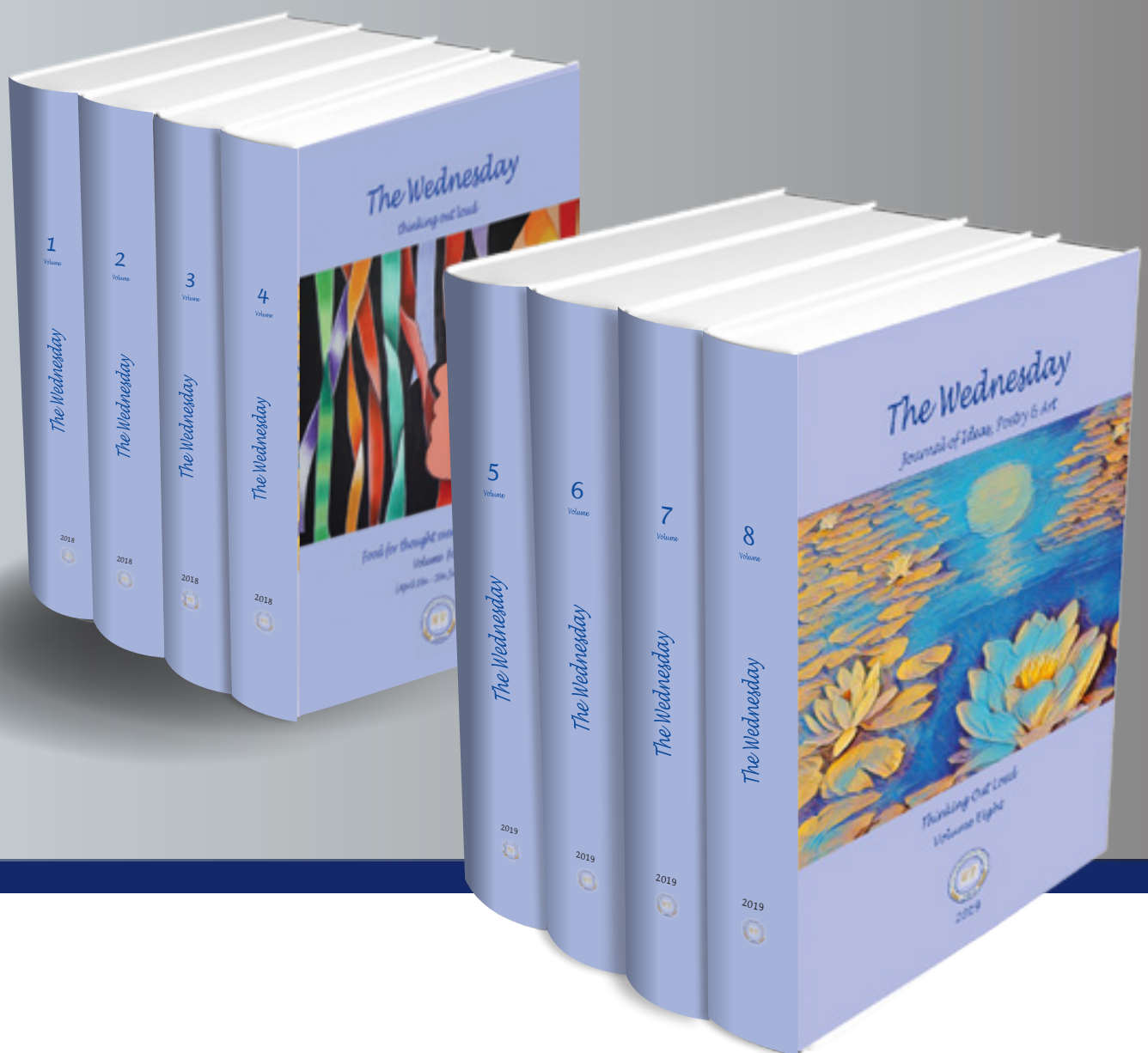
way of Rousseau, whose egalitarianism he totally rejected. He replaced altruism and pity as the cornerstone of morality, pressing his exaltation of strength even to the gruesome at times. As a neo-Kantian Riehl wants to defend Kant's categorical imperative and he claims the etymologies used by Nietzsche to bolster *The Genealogy of Morals* are uncertain. He sees the later Nietzsche as too depreciatory of reason and prefers the human morality of *Human All Too Human* to Nietzsche's later views. Naturally he rejects Nietzsche's notion of a higher breeding of men which requires the merciless extermination of the ill-constituted. He rejects the doctrine of the eternal return. As a good neo-Kantian Riehl maintains that there are no old values and no new values, just values, fixed as Kant's starry heavens.

The view of Nietzsche put forward by the acute Austrian philosopher and founder of phenomenology Franz Brentano in his short essay 'Nietzsche Als Nachahmer Jesu' is worth a mention. After seeing Nietzsche as trying to supersede Jesus he ends with the ironical quotation: "By their fruits ye shall know them." But this observation does not necessarily produce the effect the Catholic Brentano assumed it would. After all, we can select from a bewildering variety of fruit just what makes for our case.  
(To be continued).

Complete Your Set of

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### In Between

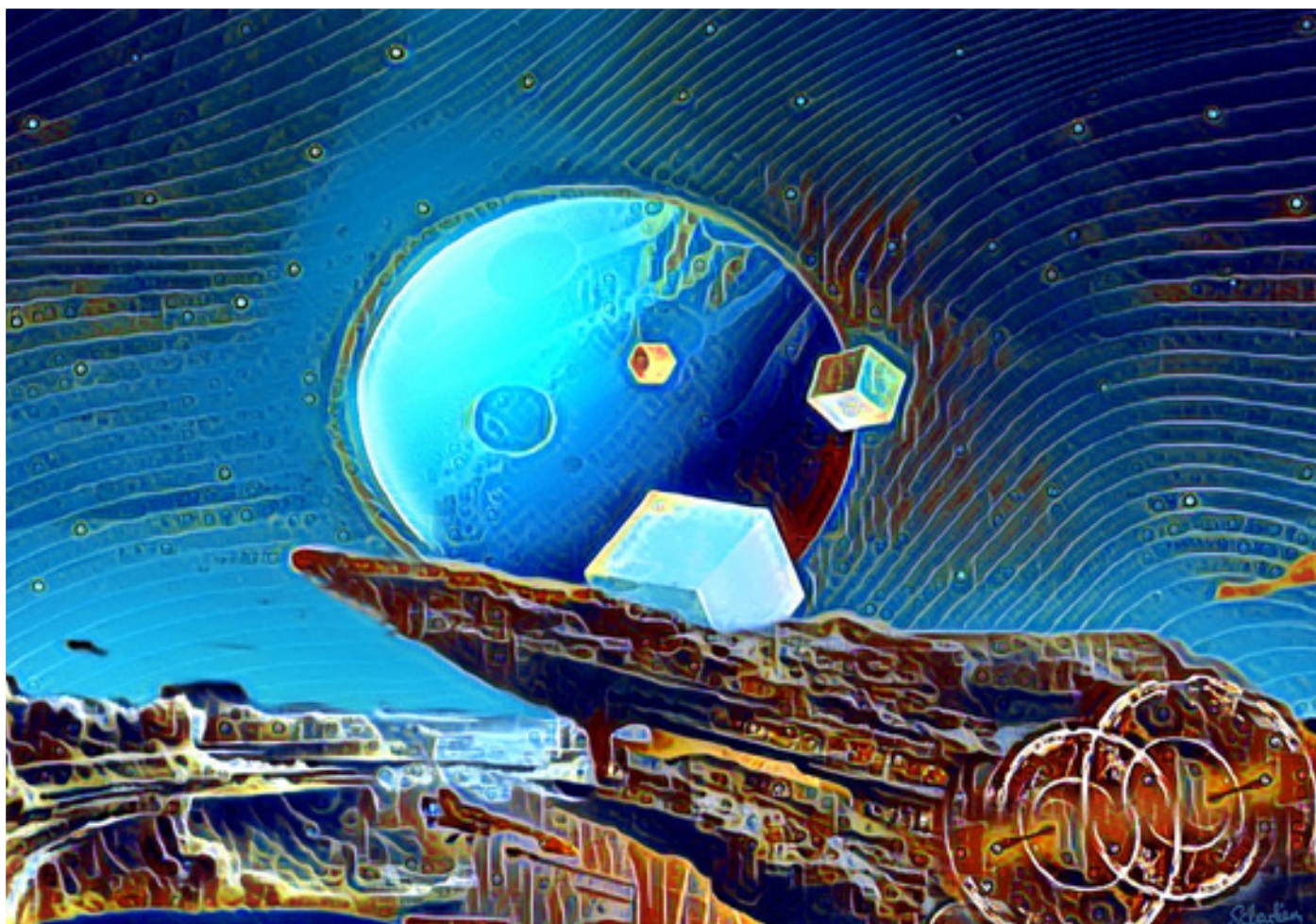
I stand within time zones  
the one with its technical data  
and virtual intelligence,  
its movements silent clatter in isolation,  
separated by invisible borders.

Another, unaltered over centuries,  
only changed by the forces of nature,  
wind, rain and sun challenge  
to unite in togetherness,  
invite reflection, meditation and wonder.

Inner voices whisper and argue, allow thoughts  
to delve and penetrate soaked grounds,  
layer upon layer of ancient script now unreadable,  
only to be deciphered in fragments,  
still pleading with messages to be heard.

Go beyond these bare rocks, these tawny soils,  
those lands of concave valleys and convex mountains,  
the silver lining of horizons,  
collected in childhood days with skies  
still unblemished by current men-made clouds.





I know about space now,  
higher than the toppled towers of Babylon,  
filled with metallic birds that fly near planets  
boasting AI power while relentlessly reciting pride  
in ever increasing knowledge to conquer the stars.

*Poem and Artwork by Scharlie Meeuws*

## Diversity and its Limits

### *Notes on the Wednesday Meeting Held on 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2019*

**PAUL COCKBURN**

**W**e held a short silence to remember Ray, a member of our group who died recently. We then shared some dates to eat – Ray always brought dates to the meeting for us to eat, and we also shared our personal memories of Ray and his character and life. We shall miss him.

The topic for discussion was diversity, and how society holds together in the face of this diversity. How does a society cope with increasing levels of immigration? What enables social cohesion in the face of diversity? We need co-operation and unity, but how do we accept ‘the other’ who lives among us? There is always a tension between individual liberty and social responsibility. We are social creatures who are complex.

For immigrants, identity is a key issue: is their social identity that of their new adopted country, or of the country they come from? In terms of the country as a whole, our unity depends on the respect we give to diversity. This is true irrespective of any issues concerning immigration. Individuals form groups, and there is increasing diversity in society in terms of a number of identity issues and ‘dimensions’. These cover gender, race, special needs, politics, wealth, economics, finance, sport, football team, food, nationality, even music. Any of these issues can bring people together in groups or be divisive, but it is difficult to bring people together when there are so many social dimensions. We may share a common bond with someone because we both like music, but we may not like their political opinions. We should agree to disagree, and

celebrate diversity, but this may be difficult in terms of group psychology.

The geographical environment is also key to our social identity. In some countries you need help to survive, the physical environment is tough and you are practically duty-bound to help your neighbor and to co-operate with others because of this.

In America this topic of diversity and social cohesion will be discussed at a conference in California in February 2020. We discussed the American foundational myths: in very general terms, ‘you get what you build as an individual’ in the USA. You can enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But what about inequality and social justice? As in most societies, there is a left-wing/ right-wing split in America. This was perhaps crudely illustrated by the example of a wall you might find in an open field. Left-wing instinct says: let’s knock the wall down - use the land gained as a field for growing crops, say. The right-wing instinct is to ask - what is the wall there for? Why was it built? We should not bulldoze tradition out of the way.

How does religion fare in terms of diversity? It is often seen as divisive, in that adherents of a particular religion believe strongly theirs is the right way, and they are not tolerant of other religions. But this is not always true.

One ‘society’ in nature which is interesting is that of the bees, the hive. Bees are programmed to do specific tasks to protect the queen and feed the hive. You could take a bee-hive to





**Aldous Huxley**

be an analogy for a society. In the bee-hive there are about ten different types of worker bees, then drones and then the queen. Worker bees perform tasks in the hive such as feeding the queen and cleaning the hive, guarding it, getting pollen. In order to keep the bee-hive going they need to perform their differing functions. Ants and termites work in a similar way. There is no freedom for a bee to decide to do something different, a bee's behaviour and interaction with other bees and even the environment is probably controlled chemically. And the hive is all centred on the queen, one key top individual. The hive is a magnificent example of a working unified society in nature. It has similarities to the dystopian vision of society portrayed in Aldous Huxley's book *Brave New World*, published in 1932.

But human beings are different, we have historically evolved in a different way to the bees in hives. However if you look at social life only a few hundred years ago, or even a hundred years ago, most individuals, like the bees, had little freedom. A major factor was the threat of war, and society had to be ordered to protect the nation. Tribal factors dominated your identity and your life, and social rules were much more strict. People often look back to the past nostalgically, perhaps because social unity seemed greater in the past, but in fact the material and social conditions that



**Ray Ellison**

most people lived under were far worse than those in the present.

In terms of war, we discussed the concept of the 'political general' in the army in peace time, someone who climbs to the top but is never tested in battle. This idea can be extended to political leaders who cannot deal with a crisis. Populist politics are modeled on the tribe and the family, when in fact the issues are now global. Economically the rise of China as an economic power has created approximately one billion extra workers, and this cheap labour has created economic global growth. But it may not be possible to achieve growth in the future by doing something similar in Africa, say, as you need political stability.

It could be the complexity of the global situation in the future will just be too challenging for us. As the world becomes more complex, we need increased ingenuity to solve the problems. Technology in terms of the internet and the social groups on it seems to be a two-edged sword as it allows greater diversity while increasing the availability of information, but does the information come from a trustworthy source, is it manipulating people and creating problems with psychological tricks, and causing division? And is it all just based on what makes a profit for the software companies?

### A Wild Analysis

Unable to knit at the end of her life because her hands shook, Anna [Freud] mocked herself . . . for the good sublimation behaviour she had demanded of them when she was young.

Freud called her, in one of his more daunting pieces of mythologizing, ‘his Antigone’. It is one thing to be Antigone to one’s father, but to be Antigone to his Movement may have been a distraction for Anna as well as a destiny. Oedipus, after all, did not start a new profession.

Anna always hated her name, thinking of it as common and plain, while ‘Sophie’ [her sister’s] was ‘lovely and sophisticated’.

It sounds . . . as if she was more an object of devotion than desire, and this became one of the stories of her life.

**Adam Phillips, ‘Anna Freud’, in *On Flirtation***

I’ll leave my knitting, give these hands a rest.  
So taxing now, the task that once supplied  
A moment’s respite from the need to be  
About my father’s business night and day.

No doubt you analysts have second-guessed  
My thought: psychosomatic, hard to hide,  
That tell-tale evidence of all that he,  
My father, deemed the body’s price to pay

For dreams, desires or instincts long repressed,  
As in the case of those perforce denied,  
Like me, a life beyond the strict decree  
That said ‘loyal daughter’ was my role to play.

It’s Anna, born to serve, whom he’ll invest  
With that high charge: to keep them all onside,  
His squabbling heirs, yet too late come to see  
What costs it brought, what wishes sent astray,

What psychic torment fierce though unconfessed,  
And – worst of all – how cruelly it belied  
Our faith that this, the talking cure, would free  
Life’s victims to seek out some better way.



**CHRIS NORRIS**





Anna Freud

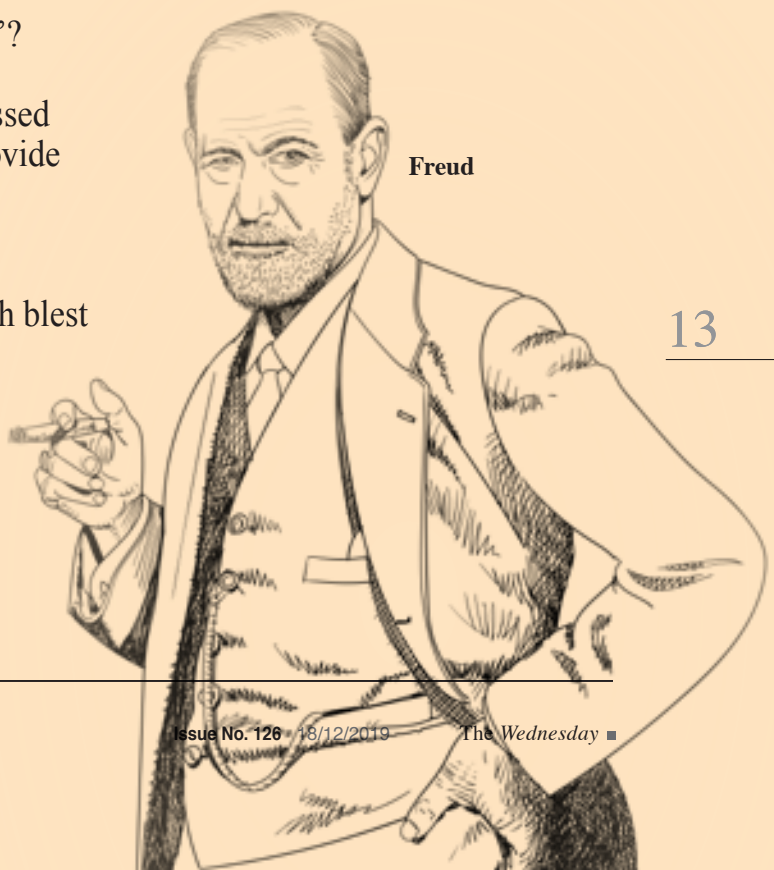
Always I knew he loved my sister best,  
Our Sophie, his and Mama's secret pride  
When, on those rare occasions, he'd agree  
To let us join the social cabaret.

Yet why should I repine, why thus protest  
When mine alone's the very role that I'd  
Still choose if fortune offered me the key  
To lives marked 'toil' or 'glitter and be gay'?

For that's the choice he, Moses-like, impressed  
On me far back: how knowledge would provide  
For us no pleasure-quotient such as we,  
Its thankless bringers, struggled to convey.

'Your name's a palindrome!' he said, though blest  
If I know how that compensates the bride  
Meant not-to-be, one tutored at his knee  
And quietly noting everything he'd say.

A dream long fled, that baby at my breast,  
Like Sophie's Ernst, its passing classified  
Amongst the lengthy list of absentee  
Life-haunters logged in Father's dossier.



Freud

I've kept my life on hold at his behest,  
 Seen feuds enough to keep me occupied,  
 Fought the good fight, subdued the 'hateful me',  
 As Pascal said, and held that doubt at bay,

That heretic suspicion that my zest  
 For battling heresy declares they've died,  
 Those last hopes of a new world whose debris,  
 My whole world now, I sift through as I may.

\* \* \* \*

Dear Anna: patient, selfless, always there  
 When needed, quiet, attentive, all that I,  
 Her father, might expect of her and yet  
 At times sunk in some far-off world of thought.

It's psyche's dark domain, the world we share,  
 Whose outer bounds I'll map before I die  
 If, with her aid, my explorations get  
 Beyond a first-time traveller's report.

Strange intimacy, something deep and rare,  
 I tell her constantly, though one that my  
 Case-histories show to hold a deeper threat:  
 By each Antigone the lesson's taught.

Some lives, I know, start out beyond repair  
 In certain ways, yet court redemption by  
 A life-choice made precisely to offset  
 Whatever ill conjunction sold them short.



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What's in a name? they ask me, those who bear  
 A name they're easy with, that doesn't tie  
 Their destiny to hopes and needs unmet,  
 Like hers, in lifers left to hold the fort.

'Your name's a palindrome!' – I sought to spare  
 Her yet more anguish, but my feeble try  
 At consolation merely drew the net  
 In further as Ananke's threads grew taut.





Anna and Sigmund Freud

‘Same back and front’, she likely thought; ‘compare  
My sister Sophie, apple of his eye,  
With “Anna dear”, his favoured epithet  
For me, life-loser now turned life-support’.

I had no training: when you ask ‘how dare  
You analyse your daughter?’, I reply,  
Quite simply, that our improvised duet  
Obeyed no score, set protocols at naught.

Yet turn the clock back and I’d then beware  
My self-appointed privilege to pry  
Into her private fantasies and let  
A kinder voice prevail in that harsh court.

They call it ‘wild analysis’, no care  
For any conscience-clause or question why  
Conduct that more-than-awkward tête-à-tête  
Between two lives close-knit yet stitched athwart.

‘No faith but faith’s undoing’, we’d declare,  
We two sworn infidels; yet then you’d fly,  
My faithful Anna, to the parapet  
Of truth and rail against the next onslaught.

I misspeak even when I say despair  
Won’t conquer you, for who’s to testify  
That it’s not sheer despair but mere regret  
You feel for childhood wrongs by adults wrought?

Another wrong, this botched attempt to square  
Antigone’s just cause with Psyche’s cry  
Of grief for every would-be father’s pet  
Whose substitute vocation’s dearly bought.

## *The Wednesday*

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