# The *Wednesday*

www.thewednesdayoxford.com

## Magazine of the Wednesday Group - Oxford

## Editorial

# *On the Hard Road of Thinking*

I am proud to announce that with the publication of this issue of *The Wednesday*, the magazine completes four years of its life. I feel that we are still at the first mile of a long road and there is more to be done. I also feel committed to the continuation of the magazine. May I add that in these four years *The Wednesday* meetings went through a remarkable transformation and have gained more strength. They became more structured, with more speakers and participants (within manageable limits), from Oxford and outside it, helped by Zoom technology. Of course, these meetings existed before the issuing of the magazine, but they became more developed with the support of *The Wednesday* magazine, and the quality of the debate increased exponentially.

I wrote in issue zero of the magazine that it does not have a manifesto and does not make big claims. It was meant to be a friendly platform and an outlet for the weekly meetings. The idea of friendship was important and the idea of symphilosophie (or philosophising together) was considered a guiding thought. Friedrich Schlegel wrote in his magazine *Athenaeum*: 'Perhaps there would be a birth of a whole new era of the sciences and arts if symphilosophy and sympoetry became so universal and heartfelt that it would no longer be anything extraordinary for several complementary minds to create communal works of art.'

But I am aware that this idea, generated by the German Romantics, had its limits and was criticised by some. Philosophy was considered by these critics as an independent adventure and that thoughts were not developed in a cooperative fashion. Deleuze and Guattari, in their book *What is Philosophy?*, maintained that the enemy of philosophy is opinion or discussion. For them, a conversation around a dinner table, or in a café, is just an exchange of opinions. Philosophy is born somewhere else, they said- 'Discussion is fine for roundtable talks, but philosophy throws its numbered dice on another table'.

But are Deleuze and Guattari right about this? Deleuze in particular seems to hold the equivalent of what Collingwood in his book *The Principles of Art* calls, 'expressionism'. But while Deleuze makes thoughts (or concepts) beings in their own right, independent of the subject, or subjectivity in general, Collingwood insisted on the communal aspect. Comparing the modern dinner party to the magic rituals of primitive societies, he makes an interesting observation: 'The ceremonial of a dinner-party is intended to create or renew a bond, not of understanding or interest and policy, but simply of emotion among the diners, and more particularly between the host and each of the guests. It consolidates and crystalizes a sentiment of friendship, at best making each feel what a charming person the other is, and at worst, that he is not such a bad fellow after all.'

I find this emotional dimension complementary to the idea of the solitary birth of a thought. A thought may have its birth in its own realm, on its own terms and conditions, pure and not corrupted by opinions, but it benefits from the emotional energy of the group. It is this spirit of friendship to which *The Wednesday* magazine and its meetings have aspired. The weekly meeting is a 'dinner party', with food for thought, or 'thinking aloud' in a friendly atmosphere. It is a platform for testing ideas or exchanging views. These are not threats to the creativity of the individual members. The creative activity takes place in a realm beyond the social sphere. But sometimes there is a need for certain limits to avoid the 'excess' of thought that could be harmful to the individual. They also provide stimuli for further thoughts by posing questions that need more thinking through.

*The Editor*

# R.G. Collingwood's Philosophy Revisited

**Collingwood was an important British Philosopher in the first half of the twentieth century but was neglected afterwards. He lived during the birth of analytical philosophy and his opposition to this philosophy could explain this neglect. The article below highlights some aspects of his philosophy.**

## EDWARD GREENWOOD

The frame of mind of modernity Collingwood's whole work is designed to combat is well captured in a remark of the servant Matchett on p.84 of Elizabeth Bowen's novel *The Death of the Heart* 'They'd rather no past, not have the past, that is to say. No wonder they don't rightly know what they're doing. Those without memories don't know what is what.' Collingwood came to see his life task as emphasising to what an immense extent we are the products of our history. Even the natural sciences have a built-in historical element. If we are aware of this it will, as Jacob Burckhardt had already claimed in his *Historical Reflections*, make us wiser for the future.

I have already considered Collingwood's view of metaphysics in *The Wednesday* number 56, so in this essay I propose to concentrate on two works, one written at the beginning of his career, namely *Speculum Mentis* (1924) and one at the end *The New Leviathan,* a sort of reprise of Thomas Hobbes, whom Collingwood considers as the greatest political philosopher. *Speculum Mentis*, or *The Mirror of the Mind*, begins by praising the Middle Ages and deprecating the Renaissance. This is not surprising in one who was the son of W.G. Collingwood, Ruskin's secretary, who wrote a study of Ruskin's work. Collingwood emphasizes what he calls the unifying effect of 'medieval institutionalism' which was manifested in the Guild system, a system Ruskin had praised (p.24). Collingwood claims that the medieval period was filled with 'the harmony of a celestial music' (p.25). Art was in the service of that harmony, and this was something greater than the modern 'art for art's sake'. The Gothic style unified church and castle (p.26). Modern society, on the contrary, is fragmented. In *The Principles of Art* (1938) Collingwood was to see this fragmentation reflected in T.S. Eliot's poem 'The Waste Land'.

Collingwood acknowledges that we cannot live in the past. The modern world must solve the 'problems of the spirit' in its own way (p.36) to which he will contribute. He sees his task in *Speculum Mentis* as the construction of a map of knowledge. He divides knowledge into five provinces: art, religion, natural science, history and philosophy (p.36) and devotes a chapter of the work to each. Each of these provinces has its own kind of truth: art, for example, the truth of beauty (p.47).

Collingwood, like Hegel before him, repudiates the polytheism of pre-Christian antiquity and regards Christianity with its assumption of 'the absolute worth of every individual' as the one true religion. This seems to me both false and provincial when one considers the multifariousness of religions past and present. Collingwood makes two egregious blunders in claiming on (p.256) that atheism does not trouble itself with the question why religion exists, but it was in giving such explanations that both Lucretius and Nietzsche undermined religion! Earlier he had made the astonishing claim that, for the Christian, religion dominates the whole of life and that this is not true in the case of the pagan (p.37). But many Christians surely manage to confine their religion to a separate compartment in their lives, whereas in the pagan world religious ritual enters all, whether warfare or the theatre.

Collingwood speaks of two current conceptions of philosophy. The first is the notion of thought turned back upon itself from the object, in short thought become reflexive and self conscious. In this philosophy is not adding to information and knowledge, but putting into order the information and knowledge we already have. Wittgenstein was to adopt this conception. The second is the liberation from uncriticised assumptions, the

attempt to believe nothing except on good grounds (p.247). That he could say this makes all the more astonishing his tender mindedness toward religion. He sees the first as concerned with the object of philosophy, the second as concerned with the method of philosophy. He is, indeed, too kind in seeing error as never wholly error and truth as never wholly true. Philosophical error can be interesting, even fascinating, but to say that it is never wholly error is simply untrue and the sort of dogmatic statement into which Collingwood falls far too often.

Two of several excellent studies of Collingwood's work are Alan Donagan's *The Late Philosophy of R.G. Collingwood*, Oxford, 1962 and Lionel Rubinoff's *Collingwood and the Reform of Metaphysics: a Study in the Philosophy of Mind*, University of Toronto Press, 1970. Rubinoff attacks T.M. Knox's idea that there is a radical conversion from idealism to historicism in Collingwood's work after 1936. On the contrary Rubinoff maintains that there is a radical continuity throughout the whole of Collingwood's work. I find this controversy hard to pronounce upon, but what I hope to end this essay by doing is to consider one of Collingwood's last works, *The New Leviathan* which was written just after the German air onslaught on Britain and the consequent Battle of Britain in 1941 and published in 1942.

## The New Leviathan

By this time Collingwood was suffering from low blood pressure and had had some slight strokes. His intellect was basically unimpaired, but this led to a certain intemperance of tone in the writing. A regrettable anti-German feeling pervades many remarks which is only partially excusable by the date. A philosopher, as Nietzsche had emphasized, should rise above temporal provinciality. The very historical sense Collingwood himself prized so highly should help him to do so.

Collingwood seems mistakenly to have regarded Hobbes himself as justifying tyranny. This view is regrettably quite common, but a travesty. Hobbes was justifying the traditional constitution and the role of the monarch in it. As with Hobbes's book, Collingwood begins with an account of man, or, better of human nature. Like Hobbes Collingwood

**Collingwood**

puts a great premium on language, seeing language as the source of reason (p.45). He sees a feeling as attached to an appetite such as hunger, (pp.47 and 51), and regards love as a wish to be attached and so avoid loneliness (p.54). He has a tendency to make Hobbes more of a narrow rationalist than he really is. Hobbes's account of fear is, for example, much better than Collingwood's. Hobbes rightly places a big emphasis on the role of what he calls diffidence (we would call it distrust) in human life. Why do we lock our doors at night he pointedly asks? It is not because we think the

3

majority of human beings are evil, it is because we are ignorant of who is malevolent and who is not. Perhaps the most important sentence in the whole book is Collingwood's claim: 'It is in the world of history, not in the world of Nature, that man finds the central problems he has to solve.' (p.129). Hobbes would have agreed, for he saw nature as governed by laws that we did not make and which are hard to discover, while human life is governed by norms that we create.

In part two Collingwood deals with society as Hobbes in part two of *Leviathan* had dealt with what he called the commonwealth. He divides society into classes. He follows Whitehead in considering a class as consisting of 'members related by *resemblance',* whereas a society is 'one related by participation.' (p.134). A society consists of free agents who enter into contracts with each other. Marx is criticized for not seeing nineteenth century England as such a society



**Collingwood**

(p.137). A society designates an authority for defence against external enemies and internal malefactors (p.141). It is a 'we will' as opposed to an 'I will' (p.148). But we have only particular societies, not a universal society, which is why the League of Nations was a failure (pp.150-151). As Hobbes saw an authority also needs a coercive power to keep the peace. Collingwood sees the family as a sort of mini society (p165).

Collingwood is too optimistic in claiming that a people can only be ruled 'in the way which they will let themselves be ruled' (p190). He departs from Hobbes in seeming to incline to the view that the sovereign power is subject to the law (p.197). This is much nearer to Locke who wants to defend the right of resistance and rebellion. Hobbes makes the sovereign power the origin of the law, not subject to it, but he still advocates the rule of law, not, as Collingwood thinks, tyranny.

Collingwood makes an interesting distinction between 'eristic' dispute which argues for victory and 'dialectical' dispute which moves towards agreement (P.226). *The Wednesday* tries to encourage the latter.

The great difference between Hobbes and Collingwood as political theorists is that Hobbes had much more practical experience of contemporary politics because he was a friend of important actors on the political scene, including monarchs, statesmen and generals. Collingwood is too much an armchair theorist.

He concludes *The New Leviathan* by listing what he sees as four barbaric onslaughts on civilization, to each of which he devotes a chapter. The first enemy consists of the Saracens. This is totally provincial and unfair, for it ignores the culture and civilization of Al-Andalus which was in fact destroyed by the barbaric medieval Christianity he venerates. Then we have the Albigensians. Here again perhaps the civilization of some of the troubadours of the Languedoc, or southern France, is overlooked. The last two he reserved for the Turks and the Germans.

**(This is the text of a talk delivered to The Wednesday meeting 21st July 2021.)**

4
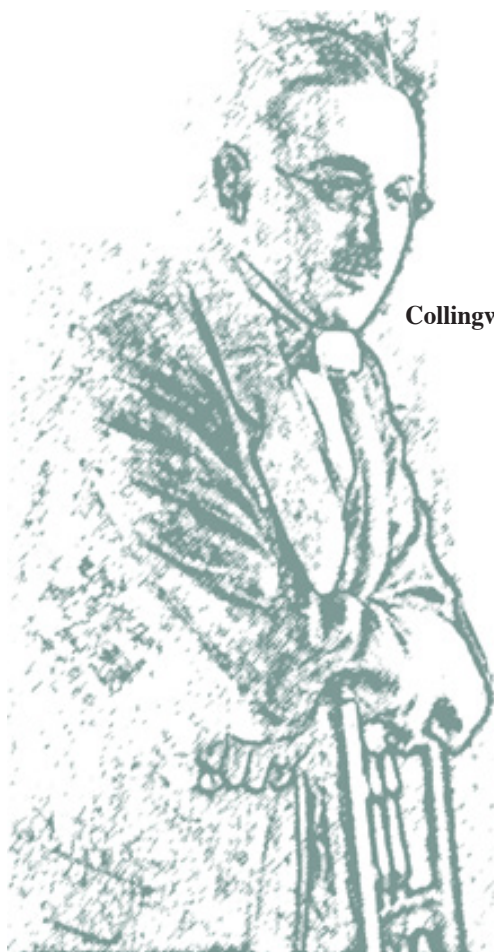
## *Reports of The Wednesday Meetings Held During July 2021*

**Written by** RAHIM **HASSAN**

# Solitary Existence

## *Notes of The Wednesday Meeting Held on 7ᵗʰ July.*

Ontology asks: What is there? What does exist? What is the structure of being? What is reality? We are accustomed to ready-made answers. What is out there beyond us is taken to be reality and existence and formed of a plurality of things and creatures. But is this picture correct or the only one available? Ruud Schuurman gave a different answer which appeared at first counter-intuitive. It also leads to solipsism. But what is solipsism and what is wrong with it? That was the question he tried to answer in his talk to *The Wednesday* meeting.

The title of Ruud's talk is: 'What is wrong with Solipsism?' He hoped to show that there is nothing wrong with it. But he did not just assert this conclusion. He argued for it in detail. He started by explaining that 'Solipsism' comes from Latin *solus*, 'alone', and *ipse*, 'self'. Thus, he took it to be the theory that: The self alone is,/in other words, that:/I alone am.

This conclusion is startling, not least because we normally approach Solipsism from the everyday point of view. The regular objection is that solipsism is counter-intuitive and so it doesn't fit with common sense. But is common sense a good guide to ontology? Take for example the conception of the self as a unitary



**Ruud Schuurman**

entity. A bit of philosophical analysis will show that it is neither unity (Nietzsche) nor entity (Kant). So why dismiss solipsism?

Some of the typical objections to solipsism, which Ruud enumerated and replied to, are that it is nonsense (i.e., without sense, without meaning), or it is known to be false (i.e., contradictory or incoherent) or it is at odds with lived experience. More serious is the belief that solipsism invalidates everything. But Ruud asked: Does it invalidate everything? Does it invalidate science or morality? Would it result in an existential loneliness?

It became clear during the discussion that solipsism was rejected for some or all of the reasons that Ruud was aware of and tried to pre-empt. I am pleased to say that despite the strong views expressed by some members, many members said they are prepared to listen to further arguments and clarification in another meeting.

But I wish to make two comments here. One is that what seems counter-intuitive in philosophy is not a peculiarity of the mind of the philosopher, but it shows the lack of justification in what people habitually take the case to be. Take for example Dr. Johnson's refutation of Berkeley's idealism by kicking a stone. It is not that Berkeley denies the existence of a stone but that there is no a priori or a posteriori justification for the stone's existence. The same could be said of Hume's denial of causality.

The other point is that Ruud's talk reminded me of Leibniz's idea of the Monads existing on their own. But Leibniz's view is pluralistic, there are many monads. Also, Leibniz's view is explicitly supported by the idea of God. Thirdly Leibniz established many principles, such as sufficient reason, the best possible world and pre-established harmony. These principles guarantee the plurality of the monads and inter-subjectivity. However, Leibniz seems to agree with Ruud in dismissing the reality of the world. For Leibniz, the world is just the internal perceptions of the monads. For Ruud, the world of common sense is just appearances. What the appearances appear to is the self. More to come when Ruud delivers the second or third part of his talk.

# Understanding Persons and the Communal Spirit

*Notes of The Wednesday Meeting Held on 14<sup>th</sup> July.*

If the talk on solipsism in last week's meeting gave the impression that we are all on a lonely road, this week's meeting presented a different picture. Jeanne Warren gave an interesting talk on the philosophy of John Macmurray through his book *Persons in Relation*. The title of the talk was 'Moving Philosophy Forward: Understanding Persons as Embodied Doers rather than Isolated Thinkers'.

Jeanne referred to the crises in philosophy in terms of the continuous concern with epistemology, but philosophy should start from action and not from theoretical knowledge. Macmurray built his philosophy on the primacy of acting in the world, (the 'I do'), rather than the theoretical stand, (the 'I think'). His philosophy culminated in what he called the Form of the Personal. As Jeanne said, Macmurray understood persons 'not as isolated thinkers, in the traditional view, but as "embedded doers", that is, as agents who act in the world as members of a community of agents.' But acting implies the Other. It is a kind of communication in which language is important, but it could be also an unconscious communication.

Personhood is a relation of communication. Part of the story of how we become persons can be deduced from the model of a child's development. The child communicates with his mother. If his wishes are met by the mother, he will interpret this as a feeling of love. But if his wishes are frustrated, he feels a sense of fear. These two feelings determine a range of other feelings and attitudes and reflect themselves in the child's development into adulthood. You can generalise this picture to societies and even states. It could explain why societies get themselves into hate and fear relationships with other nations that may lead to war. But is this account philosophical or psychological? It was suggested in the discussion that it is a kind of phenomenological explanation and hence is philosophical.

Personal development proceeds via what Macmurray calls 'the rhythm of withdrawal and return'. The return is the positive phase. It requires the overcoming of fear. The positive mode Macmurray calls 'communal'; it is characterised by concern for the Other. Lacking this attitude, one might fall into one of two negative modes that are motivated by fearful concern for the self. The first is to withdraw from the world and become a spectator. The second is to subdue others to the



**Jeanne Warren**

individual's will, and so society becomes a competition for power, regulated by law. These three modes were named dispositions by Macmurray. He calls these three dispositions, consecutively: the communal, the contemplative, and the pragmatic.

It is interesting that Macmurray makes a distinction between community and society. The sense of direct communication is a feature of the communal, but society, including the economy and the political realm, is governed by indirect relationships, which are necessary but impersonal. 'The members of a community are in communion with one another, and their association is a fellowship. And since such an association exhibits the form of the personal in its fully positive personal character, it will necessarily contain within it and be constituted by its own negative, which is society. Every community is then a society; but not every society is a community'. What secures freedom for Macmurray is the knowledge we have of one another. This could come through the education system.

There is also a need to re-think the relationship to nature. For Macmurray, human beings are part of the natural world and they should not be mere observers. The world is itself personal because we are part of the world. This is a global vision in which persons communicate with each other and with nature on the basis of understanding and friendship, together with a spirit of community.

# Getting Logic Right

## *Notes of The Wednesday Meeting Held on 28th July.*

## RUUD **SCHUURMAN**

I was invited to write a short note on Chris Seddon's talk on logic that he gave to *The Wednesday* meeting. Chris and I corresponded a lot. Here are some comments on the talk.

Chris invited us to discuss his system and logic in general. One of the questions that kept popping up was what the point of it was. Both of his system and of logic in general. Chris did not have one answer but several. One that made sense to me was that his system helps structure and analyse propositions. For example, detecting the true arity*: how many parameters (often presupposed and left implicit) a concept really has or requires. It seems the overall point of his system is to provide clarity. Nevertheless, his own explanations tend to be rather unclear to me. This session was certainly one of the clearer ones. He managed to avoid a lot of the technical jargon. Thanks Chris. But, then again, this session was more general, discussing the pros and especially cons of formal, informal, and non-formal logical systems. We thus hoped to identify the problem his system solves. Unfortunately, I think we did not yet manage to identify the problem. Sure, Chris said



**Chris Seddon**

that formal systems are incomplete, in Gödel's sense and in expressing meaning in general. They rely on axioms, assumptions that are widely considered to be indemonstrable truths. But non-formal systems rely on definitions, Chris said, which also seem to be assumptions that are widely considered to be true, or at least need to be acceptable to all who participate in a particular discourse. And is Chris's own system formal or non-formal, or different from both? We did not get that far.

What is confusing to me, is also the big picture. It seems to me that Chris is not really concerned with logic *per se*. He is concerned with language, syntax (grammar) and semantics (meaning), and even what makes something true or meaningful or useful to begin with. Thus, his system goes well beyond what I take logic to be, which is more along the lines of analysing and defining patterns of reasoning ('inferences'), deciding if they are valid or not, regardless of the meaning the variables are given (the 'interpretation'). Logic in that sense is not concerned with the truth of the premises, but analyses if the conclusion follows from the premises, necessarily, in the case of deductive arguments, or probably, in case of inductive, abductive, and other types of argument. Chris's logic seems to blur into what we consider to be epistemology, semantics, language, and even metaphysics: with what makes a proposition true or false, meaningful and useful.

I was again struck by how often he uses the words 'useful' and 'useful in practice' and phrases like 'depending on how concepts can be used, combined, in sentences', 'how well they can express an idea or proposition', all of which reminds me of Peirce and James and pragmatism. I mean that in a good way. Not pragmatism as in short-sighted opportunism, but a deep search for usefulness in practice. Such a search, just like any other fearless search, is bound to result in wisdom, the wisdom that we are said to love. Which is what I wish Chris: love and wisdom.

(*Arity is the number of arguments or operands taken by a function or operation in logic, mathematics, and computer science. In logic and philosophy, it is also called adicity and degree. In linguistics, it is usually named valency. (<u>Arity - Wikipedia</u>))

# The Wednesday

*Journal of Ideas, Poetry & Art*



*Thinking Out Loud*
*Volume Ten*

2020

Volume Ten is Out Now

# Impaired

in your absence I welcome
pale thoughts of your body
lying on dewy grass
grasping the pleasure of earth
with both hands
you smeared the sweetness of soil
across your lips,
ripped the flowers
shedding seeds of new life
all over you.

I notice your joy in evading your body
ignore its weakness
keeping your mind upright
in the absence of words
you never learned to speak
despite an innate knowledge
of what it means to live
in ignorance of normality
getting up from the ground
going out into the gentle night
to breathe in the scent of spring

10

I hear your uncontrolled screams
invocations of your mind
to break out of the unchanging day
destroy what they say about you:
*incurable* useless  in the desolation
of an inarticulate mind

I think in your absence
about the delusion of pain
burning candles at the end
of your journey into the shadows
towards the ultimate certainty

**Poem and Artwork by *Scharlie Meeuws***

## Baffin Bay: a ballad

A traditional game [in Greenland] to predict the future: drops of molten tin are tossed into the snow, and as they suddenly cool they take on a new form . . . . A wave shape means that changes are on the way; an anchor means stability.

Nancy Campbell, 'My Voyage through a World of Language in Just One Word: Snow', *The Guardian*, Jan 22nd, 2021.

(This poem is a rather sinister fictive take on what sounds a perfectly innocent and cheerful game.)

1

We anchored there, Upernavik,
Way up near Baffin Bay,
Where snow lay deep and the ice was thick,
And home was far away.

We kayaked the archipelago
Through the groaning packs of ice,
And what loomed up through the mist and snow
Don't ask for I didn't look twice.

'Let's pitch camp now, get the tent up quick
As night treads close on day,
For there's many a mind-bewildering trick
These arctic weathers play.'

All night we heard the hoar-frost blow
Like a cast of demon-dice,
For the sound it made was a sound I know,
And that knowledge had its price.

'O love, my soul's turned mortal sick:
Why should we longer stay?
For the wind's a howling lunatic
With fearful things to say.'

We'll press on, love, though my records show
The food can scarce suffice,
For there's one must pay the debt they owe
Now the reckoning stands precise.

Best raise your eyes from the writhing slick,
Best raise your eyes and pray,
Lest the Mariner's vile sea-beasts stick
In your mind's eye night and day.

'What brings that strange, that eerie glow,
What devilish device?'
Look inward, love: let conscience show
How kindred powers entice.

For there's times when fate's arithmetic
Takes over come what may,
When the dice rolls home with one last click,
And the Devil's the croupier.



## CHRIS NORRIS

2

Just North of here the games begin,
The games that now must wait
Till one or other party's sin
No grace can compensate.

It's our cleft futures we shall see
By that device foretold,
Our hissing fissile destiny
Spelled out in heat and cold.

Let each now toss the molten tin
On snow till love and hate,
Like cooling scraps, take shapes akin
To this our change of state.

The bonds dissolve, set atoms free,
Make naught of love's long hold,
As fire performs its alchemy
And fear distorts the mould.

Throw harder, give a different spin,
See how they skim and skate,
Yet still the count says wave-forms win
And anchors scarcely rate.

It's life and death for you and me,
Since you, if truth be told,
Threw one that skewed the augury,
Turned anchor as it rolled.

It's you must call diviners in,
Bid them haruspicate;
My task to check the firing-pin
And leave no more to fate.

For there's runes that augur what-may-be,
That leave us life-paroled,
And there's runes that hold the certainty
Of last hours unconsoled.

It's guilt that crawls across your skin,
So sailors' tales narrate,
Like water-snakes each with its twin
Black vice of yours as bait.

For take a look at the tin-debris,
Those portents new or old;
There's some are truth's own master-key
While some false tales unfold.

I heard that voice in the Arctic din,
No sound so desolate,
And read the runes till, deep within,
Your curve-shot told me straight.

13

# Collapsing Reality

Dr ALAN **XUEREB**



**"*COLLAPSING REALITY*"**
**(2016)**
**(acrylic on canvas**
**50x70 cm)**

This painting is definitely not my style. It is weird, it has no harmony in the traditional sense, even for an abstract non-representational work, it is totally jumbled up. So what is the significance of having a work of art that gives you a headache? Well, the answer to that question depends mostly on what one has in mind at the time of the creation of such a work. What one wants to convey through it - I guess. The concept of 'reality' intrigues me and baffles me. It has always done so.

But what is reality? Are there different realities? Could this reality branch out into many realities? Are there parallel realities? Could the past and the future change? Would we know if they did? These are very hard questions for all fields of knowledge. From physics to philosophy the fabric of reality is intangible and elusive. Some say that reality depends on our perception of it. In this sense, our consciousness would somehow impinge on objective reality. Sounds like science fiction or pseudoscience.

Quantum mechanics is the best theory we

have for describing the world at the basic level of atoms and subatomic particles. Perhaps the most renowned of its mysteries is the fact that the outcome of a quantum experiment can change depending on whether or not we choose to measure some property of the particles involved. When this 'observer effect' was first noticed by the early architects of quantum theory, they were deeply distressed. This new theory seemed to destabilise the basic assumption behind all science: that there is an objective reality out there, irrespective of us. If the way reality behaves depends on how – or if – we look at it, what can 'reality' really mean?

In 1995 philosopher David Chalmers dubbed the state-of-affairs leading to this lack of *objectivity* as 'the hard problem' of consciousness. The hard problem of consciousness is the problem of explaining the relationship between physical phenomena, such as brain processes, and experience (i.e., phenomenal consciousness, or mental states/events with phenomenal qualities or qualia).

The problematic of consciousness, Chalmers argues, is really two problems: the easy problem and the hard problem. The easy problems may include how sensory systems work, how such data is processed in the brain, how that data influences behaviour or verbal reports, the neural basis of thought and emotion, and so on. The hard problem is the problem of why and how are those processes accompanied by experience? What's more, why are these processes accompanied by that particular experience rather than another experience?

But then, what if we are in a simulation and that is exactly why the speed of light is the internal speed limit of the universe? Perhaps that is also why we interfere when we observe quantum phenomena or when we are about to observe like in John Wheeler's 'delayed choice' experiment. It is as if nature 'knows' not just if we are looking, but if we are planning to look.

So, you see, this is where physics, philosophy and art converge to create a liminal cognitive space. This is where I live.

Now, again, imagine all that collapsing on itself! Hence, the weird painting.

# In Memory Of My Late Wife Barbara

'En sum quod digitis quinque levatur onus'

'See I am a burden five fingers can raise'

Propertius *Elegia* Book 4, no 9. In this elegy Cornelia the late wife of
L. Aemilius Paulus speaks to her husband by way of consolation.

A burden that one hand can hold

So wrote Propertius long ago,

But those who loved your being know,

That urn contains pure gold.


And in that urn a hand can fold

Is love that exceeds all I knew,

A love beneficent and true

A warmth death has made cold.

In such small space such riches packed,

Such memories within that store,

Such honour, love and trust.


These your remains, but life alone is lacked,

If only things were as before

And it transformed that dust.

*Edward Greenwood*