

The Wednesday

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Magazine of the Wednesday Group - Oxford



Editorial

Philosophical Styles

Philosophy may reflect on itself, its methods and its problems. It can be radical about these to the extent of doubting its problems and calling them pseudo-problems. But it hardly ever reflects on its style of writing or the language used. But once these come into question, many assumptions become clear and the style of writing and the concepts used matter more than what has been seen thus far.

Philosophy in the contemporary English-speaking world seems to have a familiar way of writing. It is written in an objective, impersonal way, starting from well-known problems. Such problems are more or less academic ones. This philosophy takes the essay form that has a unity and structure and a set of arguments. It does not question the status quo and tends towards a conservative outlook. It uses a standard technical mode of writing, in a self-effacing manner which reads much like a technical manual. Reading Martinich's *Philosophical Writing* very much bears out this judgment. It is a manual that teaches students, and researchers writing papers, how to organise their work and how to write in a clear manner. But what of the style and the aims of philosophy? What if philosophy turned towards the individual, the philosopher as him or herself, to ask what philosophy means for the life of the philosopher or how it is related to that philosopher? How about the possibility that the philosopher rebels against the established order in the content of his philosophy or style?

Analytical philosophy is problem-based. Being so, it does not pay attention to questions about the psychology of the individual or history. But this objectivist, manual style of writing is not the only way of writing philosophy. Socrates expressed his social attitudes by philosophising in the market place, and Plato wrote in a dramatic style which preserved social tradition. But Plato was writing in the academy and soon his successors, especially Aristotle, adopted a more rigorous technical style and vocabulary. Although this trend became a standard for later philosophers, the history of philosophy records a number of philosophers who departed from this style to write on matters of wisdom and the improvement of life.

This was done in the Greek, Roman and Renaissance traditions. Such a style was taken further by Kierkegaard and revolutionaries such as Nietzsche. Philosophy became the confession of the philosopher.

Nietzsche made me question the style of writing philosophy. But it could be objected that Nietzsche is the exception. My reply is 'yes and no'. Yes, he seems to personalise philosophy and speaks to a minority whom he called 'free-spirits'. But his style harks back to the fragment writings of the German Romantics and projects forward to the writings of critical philosophers, such as Adorno and most of what comes under the name of post-modernism. I will call these writings 'minoritarian writings'. These writings are radical, mutually supportive and seem to depart from the concerns of 'majoritarian' philosophy. I am thinking here of Deleuze in particular and his extensive references to marginal or forgotten philosophers, linguists, psychologists, and philosophers of science. Most of these are not widely known in the English-speaking world.

It was Deleuze and Guattari who suggested that there are two ways of using language, the minoritarian and the majoritarian (see their book: *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*). But they applied it to literature written by a social or ethnic minority. However, their analysis could be applied to philosophy as well, philosophy as a minor literature. It will turn out from this analysis that philosophy could give voices to issues that have generally been excluded, such as feminism, minority concerns, non-Western and non-white issues, the disabled and many other concerns. Minoritarian philosophy could be seen as critical, subversive, and understandably, excluded from academic, majoritarian philosophy.

But can minoritarian philosophy be sustained? Will it eventually be coerced into majoritarian philosophy? Will revolutionary thought become quietist and academia? These questions need further discussion.

The Editor

Believing is Seeing

Is our way of seeing *the* way we see our way?

Richard Tarnas's tour-de-force on the history of Western philosophy (*The Passion of the Western Mind*, 1991) includes the idea that *the world's truth realizes itself through the human mind*. This is obvious in one sense but easily overlooked. In Tarnas's view truth realizing itself through the mind is particularly evident in 'the participatory epistemology developed in different ways by Goethe, Hegel, Steiner, and others.' This inevitably raises the question of 'truth'.

WILLIAM BISHOP

In the West we live at present within the mood of postmodernism, which is characterized by multiple viewpoints and the climate of relativity where no single point of view is valued above another. But at the same time modernism insists on the universal claim of the scientific viewpoint. But can there be truth about the world that is universally accepted?

Leaving absolute truth aside for the moment there is a negative and positive side to pluralism. It is positive that people can express their freedom in constructing their own epistemology but the negative side is that individuals can then effectively live in different worlds; and if they do not take interest in and listen to each other then differing views can lead to conflict, which we experience very much today as ideologies clash with the forces of egoism in a type of 'war of all against all'. Here the 'truth of the world' becomes a casualty of subjectivity.

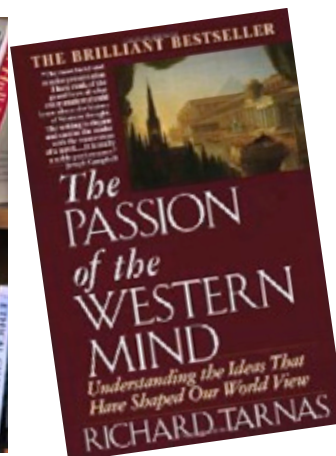
Particularly in the past individuals within communities have been subject to 'group-think', an officially sanctioned view of the world, and this helped to

maintain social cohesion. Individuals who expressed contrary views were regarded as heretics and severely censured since the official view was backed by institutional power. This is still the case to some extent with the scientific worldview even though its view is based on presuppositions that bias its own 'truth of the world'. Such presuppositions include the idea that nature conforms to reason and is predictable in terms of mathematics. In this respect nature is seen as machine-like. The point that Richard Tarnas makes concerning *participation* of the mind in the process of the world is that here nature is regarded as reactive (alive) in contrast to modernism's view of a dead universe.

Tarnas points to the 'plasticity of reality' and how much the mental frame of reference that a person brings with them affects the cognition of what is perceived. Immanuel Kant was well aware of this situation, recognizing that the mind's *a priori* categories filtered and structured what was perceived. That is why he argued that all that could be known was the mental image of appearances and not the thing in its reality. Thinking along these lines an epistemological attitude



Richard Tarnas



(worldview) becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy because the world is interpreted in the way it is seen; then seeing is believing.

Common sense and naïve presumption lead us to believe in an external world separate from our means of cognition (our mind). This duality of the observer and the observed was emphasized in the *modern period* beginning with the distinction Descartes made between mind and body. The scientific conception accepts this distinction to the extent of conceptualizing a soulless external world of things that can be exploited for human benefit. Yet arguably this mechanistic conception of a world devoid of morality has moved the general mood of humanity towards nihilism and loss of meaning. But the postmodern mindset, with its plurality of views and relativism, fractures the centralized dogma characteristic of modernism, but in itself this shattering of an apparently previously firm epistemological foundation reveals the need for a form of resolution or productive synthesis. Indeed, apart from the mind's cognition of an external world we might ask whether or not the mind and the world are in fact separate from each other? And is there a real world that exists independent of the mind?

On the surface, apart from the link between percept and concept, mind and world seem separate. However, in the long term, effects of epistemological frameworks on the world become observable. World conceptions are not neutral in relation to the 'reality' they confront. The tendency for the plasticity of 'reality' is to conform to the vision brought towards it. At the quantum level the well-known effect of the observer on the observed is evident in real time, yet this is but one instance of a general affective relationship.

The modern world with its nation states, centralized administrations and power structures is the consequence of a particular epistemology and associated conflicts and wars also relate back to the underlying epistemology. And possibly the final flourish of the masculinity of the modern patriarchal paradigm is best characterized by elite groups intent on 'Great Resets' for the purpose of a centralized power of domination through control of such things as economics, media, information technology and all means of life support. Add to this the prospect of transhumanism then the human eventually becomes a soulless part of a vast machine: an ultimate nihilism



A Rube Goldberg Machine

with the human annihilated. This is not necessarily a universally desired prospect.

Alternatively, an incoming integral or holistic epistemology could subsume the one-sided scientific paradigm that is based on reason to the exclusion of quality and the human element. Given this, the current patriarchal dominance of the male spirit can be superseded by one arising from the feminine sensibility of the nurturing mother, with eventual marriage between the male and female - perhaps resulting in harmony between the two hemispheres of the brain. What is meant here is that instead of human thought being irrelevant to 'reality' it forms an integral part of the 'world process' in which it participates. The mind does not create reality but its *a priori categories* and epistemology become the means with which to interpret the world around us. Of course, the mind can create virtual reality worlds but here we must distinguish (in Coleridge's terms) between the faculty of *Fantasy* and *Imagination*; one associated with fabrication and the other with cognition.

Worldviews make sense within their historical time and place, and the arrival of postmodernism makes it possible to view the prospect and feel the need for a shift in paradigm. According to Richard Tarnas a new paradigm emerges and is recognized as superior and valid when it resonates with the current state of the evolving collective psyche. An emerging paradigm may be delayed by hindrances but eventually the driving force of the collective psyche is irresistible. Instances of paradigm changes in the past include the turn from the classical pagan world to the medieval Christian culture then into the Renaissance and then into the modern



Humans and nature: Cooperation, not domination

era governed essentially by a scientific epistemology. At the present time the plurality of viewpoints and the relativism of postmodernism undermine the once stable dogmatism of the modernist scientific paradigm. Surely this indicates the need for a shift towards a potentially maternal and nurturing gestalt that incorporates, while moderating, the force of masculinity. Such a marriage of complimentary oppositions would surely engender creative productivity. Such a realistic expectation throws a glimmer of hope into our world.

Widespread adoption of a 'participatory epistemology' would represent a paradigm shift from the dualism of a mind alienated from nature within a mechanistic world to the holism of participation in a living universe. When cognition recognizes *life* in appearances it in turn receives living feedback, but when cognition conceives of a dead universe then a deadening effect resounds.

But what exactly is this 'participatory epistemology' referred to by Richard Tarnas? Here a channel of communication between the 'thing' and the mind gives the 'thing in itself' a 'voice'. The mind reaches through appearances to the archetypal form. Both parties participate in the communication achieving a type of union, but a union of concept and (living) archetypal image rather than mind and thing. Here 'essence' and logos become relevant as all-pervading cosmic intelligence. The mind then participates in this alive consciousness with its multiple levels of engagement.

In contrast to modern *spectator consciousness* where a mental framework is imposed on phenomena, in the

participatory epistemology (or cognition) the mind is open in listening mode. A receptive attitude to knowledge replaces one of assertion. This receptiveness creates a channel of communication that enables phenomena to impinge on perception and be amplified by the faculty of Imagination, which is the faculty that creates images in response to an external or internal stimulus. This involves empathy and genuine interest in the other. The social consequences of such a participatory attitude should produce harmony and cooperation and an individual sense of *belonging* within a living universe. These consequences contrast starkly with a previous sense of alienation in a world of impersonal brute force and menace. Morality and will are called into action in the process of a participatory epistemology and so the human being – eliminated in the scientific paradigm – is fully restored to a world where the 'truth of the world' realizes itself through the human mind. As the poet John Donne intimated after reflecting for whom the bell tolled: 'No man is an island, entire to itself, every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the maine,' likewise the mind is not its own creature but is 'part of the maine'.

Consequences follow from different conceptions such as: *Man made in the image of God*, or *Man made in the image of an Animal*. Believing is seeing. Meanwhile the relationship between the reality in these images (the earthly human being as the Godly within the Animal) can be seen in the Centaur and the control of the animal in the Minoan bull leaper. This is a human situation that makes for interesting times.

ProblematISING Rawls's Original Position

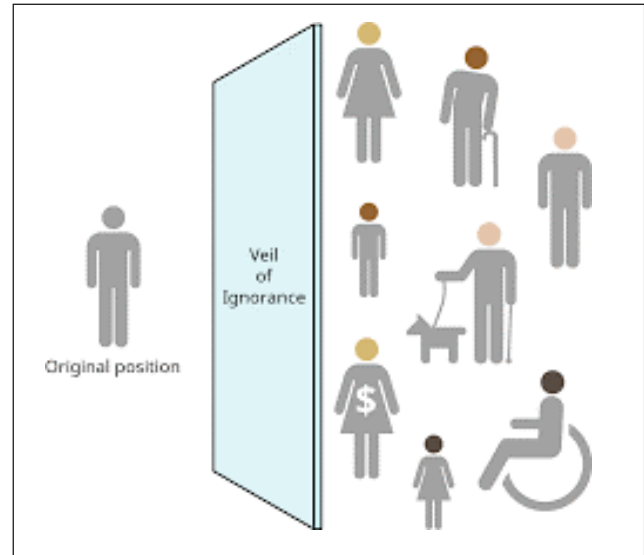
URSULA MARY BLYTHE

John Rawls's (1921-2002) *social contract* theory is a plausible alternative to 'utilitarianism' (i.e., the greatest good for the greatest number of people), as he recognised that the latter was problematic. An illustration of negative utilitarianism is that slavery benefited many landowners, businesses, and general folk, but their economic interests came at the expense of other's equality and freedom.

In *A Theory of Justice* (1971), Rawls made a significant contribution to political philosophy, especially his claim to "justice as fairness". By presenting his thought experiment known as the Original Position, Rawls helped scholars perceive a choosing situation that is designed to be fair to all within a pluralist society. One of the fundamental elements of Rawls's Original Position is the Veil of Ignorance (VoI). This 'device of representation' is envisaged to prevent individual bias and promote a consensus with rational and competent participants who create a fair and equitable society. The VoI assumes *impartiality of judgment* (Freeman, 2019), so Rawls can address the problem of distributive justice by focusing on equal opportunity and what is known as the *difference principle*.

This principle refers to the just distribution of goods, wealth and income should at the very minimum benefit the "least advantaged" in society. However, this clearly ignores disability justice, as argued by Martha Nussbaum in *Frontiers of Justice* (2006). For me, what emerges is a moral dichotomy concerning Rawls's idea of "justice as fairness" and the inclusion of a pluralist population. On the one hand, Rawls's liberalism recognises basic human rights and equal opportunity, while accepting an element of inequality, if it yields the maximum benefit to the "least advantaged" members of society. However, his project is highly theoretical and methodological, bearing no resemblance to sociopolitical reality. When one first approaches Rawls's theory of justice, it may appear to be systematic common sense, yet as you read further and analyse it, the flaws start to emerge from the Original Position.

On reflection, there are various inherent strengths within this political philosophy. Firstly, the theory



attempts to align the ideas of liberty and equality, rather than viewing them as being divergent from one another. One must also concede that Rawls's philosophical theory is analytical, comprehensive, and systematic. On the other hand, his methodology and conclusions are somewhat abstract. Indeed, Rawls's theory of justice has never been adopted or put into political practice. It remains a disputed high-level review of social institutions in a chiefly capitalist society, recommending the redistribution of wealth to non-skilled workers which excludes the voices of disabled persons.

Furthermore, it is argued that Rawls's theory is underpinned by an irreducibly religious doctrine developed through his undergraduate thesis, yet he claimed to have lost his faith after WWII. Essentially, the Original Position and principles of justice is an exercise in 'ideal theory' based on moral and rational choices. Hence, Rawls uses Kant to argue his case for the type of society that we should aim for based on human nature and social institutions. In doing so, he became one of the most influential moral, legal and political philosophers of the twentieth century, and is remembered for reviving *social contract* theory. However, the Original Position does not model a choosing situation that is fair to all, as it assumes a normalised starting point which excludes claims of 'DIS' justice for all.

Reports of The Wednesday Meetings Held During September 2022

Written by RAHIM HASSAN

Macmurray: *Is The Personal Irrational?*

Notes of The Wednesday Meeting Held on 14th September.

Jeanne Warren has a life-long engagement with the thought of John Macmurray (1891-1976). She had presented his views to *The Wednesday* meeting on several occasions but always from a new angle. This time, she presented what Macmurray calls the 'form of the personal' and its relation to rational thought. The aim is to show that the person is not only Reason but emotion as well and that emotions are not irrational, although both thoughts and feelings could be appropriate or inappropriate to the object thought or felt about. It is the inappropriate thoughts or feelings that are irrational. Jeanne used a long list of quotes from Macmurray's 1957 book *The Self as Agent* 'to explain why it is both rational and necessary to include personal (meaning 'to do with persons', not 'private to one individual') aspects of reality in any comprehensive philosophy, and to show one way in which it can be done'.

Macmurray contextualised his thought within the history of Western philosophy. He reviews the history of philosophy from its early days to show that, at least in the last five hundred years, philosophy departed from the original aim of wisdom - to connect philosophy with the whole personality and with actions. It became more theoretical. He blames Descartes for this. The question of philosophy shifted from 'What should we do?' to 'How can we know?' In other words, shifted from ethics and wisdom to epistemology. He was critical of empiricism, phenomenology and Existentialism. He finds empiricism and phenomenology useful tools and methods, but they seem to miss the point of philosophy. Existentialism on the other hand does not go far enough, in his opinion, and lacks logical rigour.

Macmurray admired Kant for several reasons.

He thought all philosophy subsequent to Kant was built on his philosophy by accepting parts and rejecting others. But most significant for him is the achievement of Kant's philosophy in its conclusion, that Reason is primarily practical. Macmurray summarises this view of Reason by saying 'It is not a faculty of cognition, but a faculty of rules. If it has a secondary, theoretical function that is because thinking is something that we do; so that Reason is necessary to provide the rules that guide our search for knowledge'.

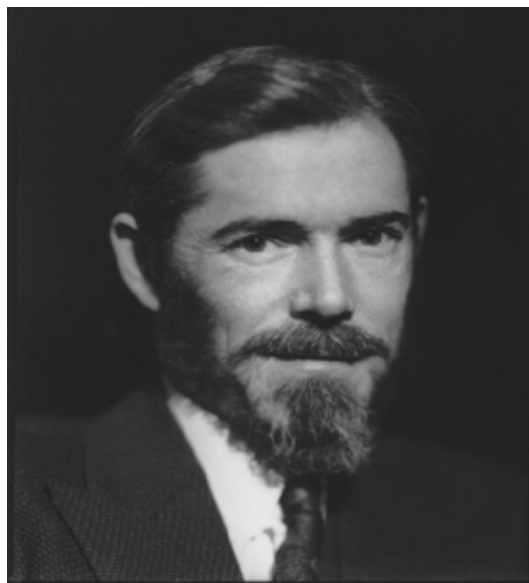
What does all this imply for the conception of the self and the individual? Macmurray thinks that the shift from theoretical to practical Reason means that the self is not the subject of knowledge but the agent of actions. It also shifts the focus from the isolated individual self to 'the mutuality of personal relationship'. What this means is that 'We must introduce the second person as the necessary correlative of the first, and do our thinking not from the standpoint of the 'I' alone, but of the 'you and I''. It also means that the Cartesian *Cogito* should be abandoned and that thinking should be done from the standpoint of the practical, contrary to the Western philosophical tradition since Descartes. This involves substituting the 'I do' for the 'I think' and to do thinking from the standpoint of action.

Macmurray recognises the difficulties of such a change of attitude. But as Jeanne explained 'When we start to think from the standpoint of the practical rather than the theoretical, we expand the range of our thought. In particular, the practical involves action. Action includes thinking but thinking does not include action. A philosophy which starts from action can think about both action and thought. A philosophy which starts from thinking only thinks about

thought, with perhaps a nod to action as a subsidiary issue. Action immediately introduces the experience of choice and responsibility, which then require to be considered in any theoretical form which we devise’.

Jeanne pointed out that an adequate philosophical conception of a Person requires discussing the relation of Reason to action as well as to thinking. Macmurray defines Reason in *Reason and Emotion* as: ‘Reason is the capacity to behave in terms of the nature of the object, that is to say, to behave objectively’. (p.19). But here is the subtle thought that Persons have a capacity for Reason, but Reason is not just thinking. As Jeanne explained ‘Reason still gives us rules for how to think well, but it also applies to action, and since both thinking and feeling are constituents of action, reason also applies to feeling. Feeling is what provides the motives for action and informs our choice of goals. Goals are what we want to reach, things to be sought rather than shunned. We assess the value of goals with our feelings, but sometimes we feel something is valuable which turns out not to be when we attain it. That is an example of irrational feeling. Irrational feeling ascribes value to what is in fact valueless, or fails to value what is valuable’.

Philosophy was a search for wisdom and the attempt to answer the question ‘how to live?’, but Jeanne observed that the theoretical bias of



Macmurray

philosophy made it increasingly easy to leave the Person behind and concentrate on the impersonal aspects of the world. She said that this helped the rise of a scientific, impersonal understanding of the world, which was applied to the person, whereas the whole person is wider than that. The arts continued to explore the whole person, but science did not. As Jeanne wisely said ‘When we consider a person in this way, we lose the reality of the object (the person) and substitute for it a de-personalised entity. Somehow, we have to figure out a way to “think” the whole person, while not giving up any of the intellectual rigour which centuries of thought have developed’.

Nietzsche's Twilight of the Idols: Philosophising with a Hammer

Notes of The Wednesday Meeting Held on 21st September.

Edward Greenwood has a great interest in Nietzsche's writings. Over the last three years, he gave the group a number of talks, and has still some more to come. On this occasion, he presented his reflections on Nietzsche's small but very interesting book *The Twilight of the Idols*. He is interested in the critique of morality

and metaphysics, but the book presents much more. It is one of Nietzsche's later books. Written in the summer of 1888, it is a distillation of his previous works and a promise of coming works. The very title of it is suggestive of anti-metaphysics, but also of the errors of reason and philosophy. There are sections about reinstating

the body into philosophy and a critique of the traditional conception of the self. Nietzsche also takes issues with other philosophers and writers since the Greeks, and discusses culture, especially German culture, critically.

The reference to Idols in the title suggests mistaken worship, or concepts taken for granted, reminiscent of Frances Bacon's Idols of the Cave. But a similar title was used by his contemporary, Richard Wagner, in his opera Twilight of the Gods. But the work has the subtitle 'How to Philosophize with a Hammer'. Edward explained that 'the hammer here is not for metal bashing, but as Nietzsche himself says in the Preface, is a tuning fork to eliminate false notes. In the same Preface he refers to the work as proving its strength by a 'revaluation of values' which is his final project. The metaphor refers to testing the idols to see if they give out a hollow ring when tapped'.

Edward covered most of its eleven chapters. They are amazingly short but intense and they offer ample opportunities for reflection. The first section 'Arrows and Epigrams' is a collection of aphorisms, such as the often quoted 'What does not kill me makes me stronger'. But the part of

the book that interests academic in particular is chapter four 'How The "True World" Finally Became A Fable'. In this the briefest of the chapters of the book Nietzsche criticises the history of metaphysics. Edward rightly commented that 'Here all Idealism is repudiated, all dualism of appearance and reality. Nietzsche acknowledges that all we see are appearances but that these are appearances of the realities to which they give us access. It is the Kantian unbridgeable duality between the two realms which in itself creates the illusion. The Platonic dualism of shadows and inaccessible realities (inaccessible except to the philosopher who leaves the cave) is also repudiated'. However, Nietzsche takes issue with these philosophers in chronological order to see how the error of conceiving the world has risen in philosophy.

In the chapter entitled 'Morality As Anti-Nature', most moral and religious views come under Nietzsche's hammer because of a trend towards condemning life instincts and the body. In the next chapter 'The Four Great Errors', causality is subjected to a clever discussion to show typical mistakes in reasoning, according to Nietzsche. These include confusing cause and effect, the error of false causality, such as mental causes, or that all doing is an effect of a will, the error of imaginary causes. The book carries on with a long section under the title 'Reconnaissance Raids of an Untimely Man' which offers short engagements with a long list of philosophers, historians and artists, such as Carlyle, Emerson, George Sand, George Eliot, Sainte-Beuve, Darwin and Goethe. There were discussions of art, freedom and morality. This chapter could have been expanded into a short book but I surmise Nietzsche's health stood in the way of doing so. The book ends up with the recommendation '*Only the noblest is completely hard. Oh my brothers, I place this new tablet over you: become hard!*' _

(Peter Stibrany gave the last talk in September. He took issues with Heidegger, Deleuze and Guattari on 'Thinking'. His talk will be published in full in the next issue.)



Nietzsche

Pale, Pale Fire

Botekins burned to explore the sea.
The sea beyond sight and beneath, that he
In a self-made boat would light and see.

No borrowed boat but his own design and true,
Only the sleekest, swishest one would do.
And for that he needed premises, not necessarily new.

These he found without looking, that is to say,
They found him one morning as he whiled away
An hour with a paper at The Seaside Inn.
Easy for transit, cheap to rent, from the pictures a shed, not a grand venue,
but with decent space, well positioned, and good reviews.

He'd also need time, which found him too.
Anticipatory proud, he built mirrors first, carefully canted to see in the round,
All the coming boat's comely lines compounded.

But before even he laid the keel, before he properly began
He found a fatal, unpromising flaw to confound his cunning plan
when the sea swept in.

A rioting wave, rare on that shore,
Lifted his shed of mirrors and tore it out.
The shed floated, albeit low, perversely if temporarily tight.
He unwillingly sailed the unforeseen tide in this unplanned boat and unasked for storm,
With his startled cries and hoping shouts unheard, forlorn.

When, in night the storming eased, the rising moon made
his mirrored aspects scary strange
and he became afraid. You see,

Paint thinner fumes, his very tools, deluded him and presently did worse.
He struck a match for better sight and couldn't even curse
Before the wretched shed took flame and blew.

Squinting through their windows, toward the distant, shocked and searing screams,
his neighbours saw, far on the water, a pale, pale fire.

And so did burning Botekins explore an unseen sea, and even beneath,
In an unmade boat that briefly, in the cracked and heat-bent sinking mirrors, lit what was hidden.

Peter Stibrany

Come Out of the Shadows

**Come out of the shadows and dance
your colourful body in trance
lit by the flames of your heart**

**Dance to its beat and enhance
the starry sky's colour chart
with the sky-born beacon of art**



All Down the Line



CHRIS NORRIS

An arrow-shower . . . somewhere becoming rain?
Pure Larkin till, with that last phrase,
It's suddenly for you,
The reader, to work out some ways
The metaphor might do
What, yet again, it does: amaze
You with a sense of things you can't explain
Yet want to, since it still conveys
This thought: if you but knew
How the old misery-guts could raise
The tone, bring off a coup
Like that, then you'd live out your days
Of bliss first-hand, not glimpsed from a through-train.

Each wedding must have been another view
Of what he'd missed, or what he'd gain
If he could just erase
That seaside-postcard, ball-and-chain
Mock-tribute satire pays
To wedlock, telling you the pain
Exceeds the little joys that get you through,
And having him – fat chance! – attain
The long-awaited phase
Of adult manhood when that strain
Of juvenile malaise,
Those gibes about the marriage-bane,
Wears off and he can start his life anew.

And yet, and yet – the arrow-shower obeys
No earthbound sense of reckoning due,
No heading for the plane
Of well-contented husbands who
Must all pretend in vain
That they've the best of it, the shoo-
In sex, the meals, home-comforts, and the praise
For dumping Kingsley and his crew
And settling down with plain
Old Mrs Everyday. That slew
Of arrows shuns mundane
Attachments, thrills to none but blue-
Sky vistas, other-world communiqués.

12

We slowed again,
And as the tightened brakes took hold, there
swelled
A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower
Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain.

Philip Larkin, 'The Whitsun Weddings'

He feared Cemetery Road, yet Memory Lane
 Held equal terrors; things that stayed
 Around for years and drew
 Him back across each lapsed decade,
 The *temps* he'd wish *perdu*
 Yet have us cherish, lest it fade,
 In the stuffed annals of our home domain,
 The photo-albums, videos played
 At every festive cue,
 And each bad choice we made
 Preserved so they accrue
 Like leafless clovers in the shade
 Of some malignant growth on harsh terrain.

It's dream-crossed land the fallen arrows strew,
 New earth more fitted to sustain
 The wish their flight betrays;
 To wipe the steamed-up window-pane,
 Peer out, see what it says,
 The station-sign, and think again
 Of all that went so terribly askew
 With life and love when both could drain
 High hopes like yesterday's
 Good news. Few poets more profane
 Than him, more apt to faze
 The faithful, yet none whose refrain
 So lifts the heartened bow: count long-shots too!

His thought, perhaps: should just one arrow graze
La vie quotidienne, imbue
 The everyday-inane
 With some new joy, some old taboo
 Struck down, why then restrain
 The metaphors, why not pursue
 Each focal point that draws your gaze
 Beyond those metonyms that hew
 To the prosaic grain
 Of Larkin-land and try a few
 More stunners, like the train-
 Ride that transformed a wedding-zoo
 Into the most sublime of getaways.



Larkin

Art and Reflections

**'Being In Time' –
Mixed media sculptures
(2016)**



Being In Time

Dr. ALAN **XUEREB**

The title of these short reflections should not be confused with Martin Heidegger's *magnum opus*. I have to admit the heading was intended as a *jeu de mots*. It is also the name of the sculpture itself. I chose this title for my little sculpture because as I have written here and elsewhere, I am truly fascinated by the notion of time. This anthropomorphic sculpture depicts a time traveller. The first question that arises is whether time travel is at all possible. I have always believed that amongst the functions of philosophy there is that of expanding possibilities or scenarios to the limits of knowledge. Not all knowledge can be ontologically or ontically proven. The ontological refers to the Being of a particular being, while the ontic refers to what a particular being can or does do.

I ask you to humour me here. Let us assume that sometime in the future Professor Ronald Mallett or one of his followers manages to open a portal to that unexplored dimension of time. According to the theory of relativity as developed by Albert Einstein, going at very high speeds - close or at the speed of light - slows the passage of time. This is not to be understood as some illusion. Time slows down in relation to speed and gravity.

There are some philosophical implications in all this. The first one with time dilation. The voyager and the person who stays on Earth are existing in two distinct reference frames. The famous twin paradox comes up. In brief, the twin paradox is a thought experiment in special relativity involving identical twins, one of whom makes a



Colonel Everett Young from Stargate Universe
(played by Louis Ferreira)

journey into space in a high-speed rocket and returns home to find that the twin who remained on Earth has aged more. Consequently, the space twin would have travelled into the future of the Earth twin.

The other is the grandfather paradox. A common example given is travelling to the past and intervening with the conception of one's ancestors (such as causing the death of the parent beforehand), thus affecting the conception of oneself. If the time traveller were not born, then it would not be possible for them to undertake such an act in the first place.

Therefore, you see there are philosophical implications to these problems in physics. They indeed deal with the issue of 'Being in time'. I do not have enough space to deal with all the implications arising from time travel here. Nevertheless, my little sculpture represents all this. The bust also bears some unintentional resemblance to Colonel Everett Young, the commander of the Ancient Starship 'Destiny' in the science fiction series Stargate Universe. Time travelling is interestingly dealt with in this series.

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The Poet Turned Philosopher

‘The poet turned philosopher’ can it be
Asked the philosopher, amazed,
Can what the mind imagined turn out true
For are not poets crazed?

But then philosophers are poets too,
There’s lava under the crust,
With to their probing minds revealed
Bright diamonds in the dust.

Yes, metaphysics has its poetry
To those who can reveal its core,
By labouring hard the intellect discerns
In rocks the shining ore.

The ore which reflects the seeker’s mind
Once it is polished and shines bright,
It then becomes the mirror that reveals
Its maker to our sight.

Edward Greenwood



Hölderlin

The *Wednesday* – Magazine of the Wednesday group.

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