

The Wednesday

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Editorial

Towards a Philosophical Unconscious

Philosophy and philosophical texts are normally taken as finished products of conscious thought, and we read them as such. However, there might be more nuances to such texts, capable of revealing an unconscious side to philosophising, and that will have implications for how to read or evaluate these texts. This suggestion may seem strange, because philosophy tries to capture reality in a very rigorous way, despite the generality of its theses. However, all these theses and views are subjective attempts at truth or ways of conceiving the world. They are not images that reflect reality in a mechanical way, but dynamic processes that allow the philosopher to interact with reality within the framework of a culture, values, moments of time, and the differential system of powers in the world. This is what I am referring to here as the philosophical unconscious. Similar ideas were suggested for politics under the name of *Ideology, as Terry Eagleton* called it in a book of this title. But the two pioneering books that coined the phrase are Regis Debray's *Critique of Political Reason*, and Fredrick Jameson's *Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Both came out in 1981. The idea of the unconscious is effective in all these works, centred on individuals in Jameson's account of literary narratives or groups in Debray's account of political parties and systems.

Philosophy has been, for the most part, immune to these approaches, apart from philosophers in Critical Theory, such as Marcuse in *The One-Dimensional Man*, where he analyses the ideological function of the Wittgensteinian school of thought. However, his work is not concerned with the unconscious. I think the unconscious works more deeply and evasively than ideology. This is at least what I am going to suggest here.

There are two contrasting views of philosophy and of creativity in general, one by Schelling, the other by Nietzsche. According to Schelling, creative acts - and I extend his view to philosophy as well as art - are combinations of conscious and unconscious elements, united in or through the Absolute. Schelling thinks that 'Nothing is a work of art which does not exhibit an infinite, either directly, or at least by reflection'.

What Schelling means by the unconscious here is something transcendent, and not the individual unconscious. However, it is through the individual that this cosmic unconscious works, very much like the role of the genius in Kantian aesthetics, and Schelling mentions the genius explicitly in his lectures

on *Philosophy of Art* (P84). The absolute works through the genius artist. For Schelling art supersedes philosophy, because it speaks to us of 'what philosophy cannot depict in external form, namely the unconscious element in acting and producing, and its original identity with the conscious'. (*System of Transcendental Idealism*, P231).

In contrast to this metaphysical view, Nietzsche presents us with a naturalistic view, according to which philosophy is the confession of the philosopher. It is an enactment of his inner desires and a reflection of his instincts and drives. In a remarkable text in his *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche applies this analysis to his own philosophy. In his essay 'Why I am So Clever', Nietzsche says 'The whole surface of consciousness = consciousness is a surface - must be kept clear of all great imperatives. Beware even of every great word, every great pose! So many dangers that the instinct comes too soon to "understand itself" - Meanwhile the organising "idea" that is destined to rule keeps growing deep down - it begins to command; slowly it leads us back from side roads and wrong roads; it prepares single qualities and fitnesses that will one day prove to be indispensable as means toward a whole - one by one, it trains all subservient capacities before giving any hint of the dominant task, "goal", "aim", or "meaning" '.

So, ideas grow within a shifting structure of instincts and drives, all vying for power, in a dynamic way. Notice that this process is an unconscious and uncertain development that will take command of conscious thinking. It is not a matter of working hard on a theoretical question, but an active involvement of all the being of the philosopher.

What is important here is that more instincts and drives are to be involved in philosophising, and the quality of these drives and instincts is important in what Nietzsche refers to in his other works as philosophising from the poverty of instincts and drives or philosophising from health. In fact, Nietzsche goes on in the same text to discuss a personal experience of thinking his last book, left unfinished, *Revaluation of all Values*.

Finally, whatever model you favour, metaphysical or naturalistic, the unconscious plays a major role in philosophising and evaluation. We may come back to this matter in another issue to discuss unconscious evaluation in philosophical discourse.

The Editor

Fichte's Autonomous 'I' and German Idealism

We all have a concept of the self, but is the self a thing, a process, part of a larger process, or even non-existent? Fichte sparks debate with: 'I am I'.

WILLIAM BISHOP

An ancient poetic-synthetic root-and-pattern system of pre-rational language existed prior to the analytical logic that is active in our world today. So a single word in ancient Aramaic expressed layers of meaning, lending itself to a poetic-mystical conception of life. When Jesus said *the kingdom of heaven is within* this was a heaven in Aramaic that resounded with light, sound and wholeness. Also Aramaic's emphasis on breath (in its subtle relation to life and being and in the creation of language-sounds) resonates with *Geist* (spirit, breath) prominent in German Idealism. Additionally this Idealism developed from the religious foundation of pious Lutheranism peculiar to German-speaking states.

The traditional *dualism* in philosophy with a separate Heaven (spirit) from Earth (matter) allows a *monism* of *materialism* to dispense with heaven and the spirit, while an overly spiritual monism can lead to solipsism. But if we view 'duality' as the inside and outside of the same reality (as implied in Aramaic) then we can accept a 'non-dual' (but unified) view: Oneness consistent with the Aramaic spoken by Jesus, or the Divine in Jesus related to the human ego.

Cognition

Observation leads us to conclude that a creative principle is at work in the universe. As a learnt experience, cognition begins with data from perception obtained through the senses. This is the *percept*. The percept impinges upon an individual consciousness and, by means of *intuition* in the activity of *thinking* a relevant *concept* is applied to the percept. This combination of concept and percept is the *mental image*. This combination of percept with concept seems to happen instantly, making it easy to confuse the *percept* with the mental image. When turning away from the external object of perception it is this mental image (engrained in consciousness) that is retained in the memory. What appears for perception to be external to the *percept of myself* as a *subject*, is for me 'objective'. The *mental image* is a

subjective percept for self-consciousness, in contrast to the objective percept when the object is in the field of vision, where substance is objective. Confusing the subjective percept with objective percept leads to the misconception in Idealism that the world is my mental picture. This applies to Kant's difficulty with knowing the 'thing in itself'. The ego interrupts the 'cosmic process' (stream of becoming) by splitting subject from object for the purpose of cognition within an otherwise harmonious continuum. The ego then manifests in thinking, which applies to *self-consciousness* as a subjective percept.

Thinking

While Descartes' distinction between *thinking substance* and *extended substance* creates dualism, his '*I think therefore I am*', produces his undoubted *self*. Yet Hume, from his empirical stance, through introspection, could only detect thoughts and not a self. In reaction to the potentially dire moral consequences of this lack of a responsible self, Kant sought to establish the *self* through reason as the bearer of knowledge with moral responsibility. His thoughts regarding cognition led him to conclude that it was impossible to know the essence of things because our knowledge is restricted to appearances (the mental image). However, Kant's 'Copernican Revolution' involved locating the categories of understanding prior to perception, as faculties of the mind. That is to say, in a transcendent position to the senses, making them *innate* categories that frame and form perception, without which, knowledge is impossible. Kant's intricate philosophy generated an explosive response. By elevating the significance of the self (or I), he provided the foundation for German Idealism.

While Descartes established the self out of thinking, Fichte, consistent with his forceful character, posited the I as a self-sustaining entity: the I posits the I, by means of the activity of thinking. The importance of thinking is of primary importance and must be stressed. It can be seen as an *a priori* transcendental

principle necessary for creation of the I as a self-conscious bearer of knowledge.

Fichte In Context

Born in 1762 in Upper Lusatia, Johann Gottlieb Fichte experienced a life-changing event after repeating a sermon from memory for a Baron unable to attend a service. Most impressed, the Baron paid for Fichte's education right up to university level. This education changed the trajectory of Fichte's life within a region affected by the profoundly serious mood of Lutheranism, then under threat from 'scientific reason'. The concept of God was threatened by Reason and reconciliation involved Reason assuming the attributes of divinity to the extent that the 'I am that I am' infuses the human ego with divinity. Authoritarianism in Europe was interrupted in 1789 by the French Revolution and its ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality, and later conquests by Napoleon unsettled security in German states. It was within this setting, as a private tutor that Fichte read Kant on request of a student. Gaining great respect, he visited Kant at his home in Königsberg. While still there and to impress he presented a hurriedly written essay to him: *An attempt at a Critique of all Revelation*. Kant had this printed by his own publisher but it appeared without a preface with Fichte's name and was mistaken for a late work by Kant due to its imitative style. When its authorship was discovered Fichte became famous and secured a lectureship in philosophy at the university at Jena.

Fichte's lectures were popular due to his intensity and vigorous delivery. As a professional philosopher he developed his own system. In his *Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge* (1794/5), Fichte said that the task of philosophy was to justify the principles of individual sciences and the logic with which the theorems are derived from these principles, and to demonstrate the inner unity of the system of the sciences. He thought that such a theory of science must itself be a science and so require its own grounding principle. This self-grounding of philosophical theory is called *reflexive transcendental philosophy*. Fichte's main theoretical work proposes a first principle: 'I am because I am'. He thinks this an undeniable proposition that underlies the logical principle of identity and formal logic has to be grounded in a transcendental logic. He also wants to show that Kant's faculties of mind



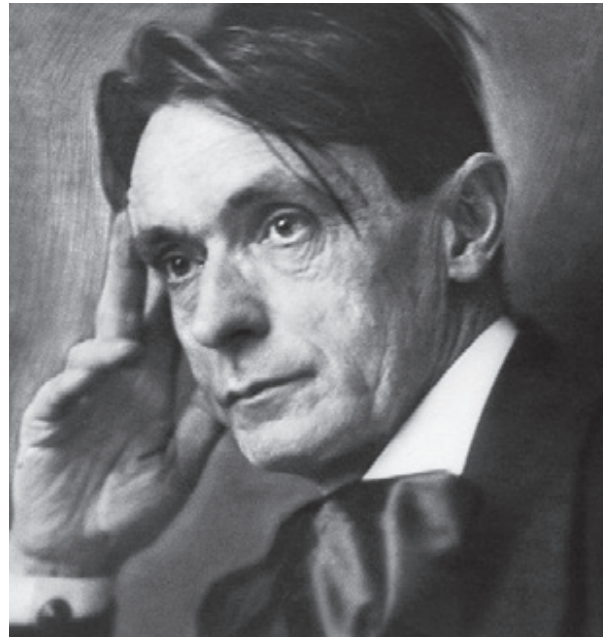
Fichte

(sensibility, understanding, reason, imagination) are presuppositions for self-consciousness, and that in knowing, the I is determined through objects, or the 'not-I', but in action the I shapes the non-I; but it is always the I that opposes in the I a divisible non-I to the divisible I. Self-consciousness is not reducible to anything else. (Vittorio Hösle: *A Short History of German Philosophy*, p.100)

Fichte's essay of 1798: '*On the Ground of our Belief in a Divine World-Governance*', caused his dismissal from his university post at Jena in 1799 for atheism. He expressed the view that 'the living and efficacious acting moral order is itself God'. Jacobi even argued that Fichte's philosophy led to 'nihilism' (Jacobi's own neologism). Taking this seriously, Fichte revised and defended his position in *The Vocation of Man* (1800). In this he said: *There is in Nature an original thinking-power, as there is an original formative power. This original thinking power of the universe goes forth and develops itself in all possible modes of which it is capable, as the other original forces of Nature go forth and assume all forms possible for them. . . . That which we call heaven does not lie beyond the grave; it is ever here diffused around us and its light arises in every pure*



Robert Bridges



Rudolf Steiner

heart. My will is mine, and it is the only thing that is wholly mine and entirely dependent on myself; and through it I have already become a citizen of the realm of freedom and of pure spiritual activity'. According to Höhle, Fichte's later version of his theory of science assumed a concept of the absolute which transcends both being and thinking, in the mode of negative theology, yet manifesting itself in the empirical world.

Sources

Fichte synthesized the rationalism of theology and philosophy (Plato and Plotinus) with Kant's philosophy. In this way he developed a philosophy of the *first person* (the self). His sources include a hermeneutic interpretation of the Old Testament according to which the idea of self-consciousness is advanced over a thousand years prior to the New Testament. For instance, with Moses and the burning bush event God identifies as '*I am that I am*'. There is also a theme in Hebrew and Greek tradition that associates divinity with reason and wisdom. The opening statement in the Gospel of St John is also significant: 'In the beginning was the Logos and the Logos was with God and the Logos was God'. Nature is also regarded as governed by Natural Law (reason); and in Christianity there is the harmony of the transcendent with the empirical, as in Augustine. The synthetic *a priori* of Kant is fundamental to Fichte's '*I am an I*'. By eliminating

innate ideas and the Logos within, empiricists destroy the transcendent and innate Logos of the self (e.g. Locke's human mind as an initial blank slate, and Hume's skepticism). Innate ideas presuppose that they can be experienced so it is possible to rationally introspect with innate ideas to lead to a form of self-consciousness.

Spirit

In positing an *absolute I* Fichte may have been influenced by Schelling who developed a philosophy of absolute spirit enlivening Nature (absolute spirit replacing the traditional concept of 'God'). Also Hegel developed a philosophy of the historical development of spirit (Geist) as a dialectical evolutionary process, and his form of dialectical logic may have been influenced by Fichte's proposition of *concept* and *counter-concept* producing a mediating concept, as with '*I and Not I*' with the tension between thesis and antithesis producing a synthesis (in this case, *thinking*). In *The Way to the Blessed Life* (1806), Fichte accepts that religion recognizes that morality is not our own but a manifestation in us, as the light of Inward Divine Nature. For him the penetration of religion by science (philosophy) is the highest standpoint, since *seeing* is more than mere *believing*.

Part of a sonnet by Fichte expresses his conviction regarding the '*I*':



Jesus gives a sermon in Aramaic

‘The shroud rises up quite clear before you,
It is your I: what is destructible shall perish,
And henceforth only God lives in your striving.
Penetrate with your glance what survives this death,
Thus the shroud becomes visible as shroud;
And you see divine life without a veil.’

Fichte saw Law as a prefiguration of true morality and the highest moral duty to become an *autonomous I*. This is similar to Rudolf Steiner’s free ‘*ethical individual*’. Steiner linked himself to the stream of German Idealism, extending its trajectory as a revival of Platonism. The theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (a translator of Plato) described God as the ‘*Ground of Being*’. Similarly, Steiner saw thinking as a self-sustaining activity, which ‘reality produces in human heads’.

We find ourselves within a creative cosmic process that is prior to us and in which consciousness (soul level) is to be distinguished from the ‘I think’ (spirit). Steiner’s insight is that the brain hosts and reflects thinking, intuition is the conscious experience of thinking (a purely spiritual content) and the *real I* is found in the thinking. If universal Being does pervade every person in the form of active ideas, the ‘I think’ accompanies all ideas, and the combination of percept and concept constitutes reality, then it follows that the I-think taken up into thinking, identifies with Universal Being. From a religious

view this Universal Being is God; seen scientifically it is life’s creative principle.

The Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas, mentions ‘The force that through the green fuse drives the flower’, and Robert Bridges in *The Testament of Beauty* refers to the Creator as ‘Self-expressed in not-self, without which no self were’. So is it reasonable to connect *driving force* and *self* (as seed) with development toward a flowering? And does Fichte infer with his *autonomous I* that freedom lies in the ability to perceive from the divinity within, a reminder of St Paul’s ‘not I but the divine within’? Is the ‘divinity within’ the true (eternal) self?

Fichte thought that the philosophy that a person has depends on the kind of person they are. Certainly the same culture shaped the German Idealists, but each expressed their individual bias. Fichte appears to embody the historical confrontation between faith and reason. He begins from the conviction of faith but invests this in a striving for the self-sufficiency of reason, while maintaining his personal faith. We have three basic means of knowing: thinking, feeling, and action, and our knowledge is incomplete without each of these being activated. Reason leads to *knowledge about*, feeling connects as *knowledge with*, and action from the will yields *knowledge experienced*. These three wings of the soul serve the self that it is wisdom to know.

What am I?

RUUD SCHUURMAN

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‘Know thyself’, said the inscription at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. ‘He who knows himself knows his Lord’, said Prophet Mohammed (or the saying was attributed to him). ‘To know oneself is to know God’, said St. Thomas Aquinas. ‘This self (*atman*) is God (*brahman*)’, say several of the five ‘great sayings’ of Hinduism. ‘Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes’, said Carl Jung. ‘You have no need to travel anywhere. Journey within yourself, enter a mine of rubies and bathe in the splendour of your own light’, said Rumi. ‘Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom’, said Lao Tzu. ‘The only journey is the journey within’, said Rainer Maria Rilke. ‘Your own self-realization is the greatest service you can render the world’, said Ramana Maharishi, ‘practice self-enquiry, ask yourself: Who am I?’ Clearly it is important to know what

you are. So let us address this question, starting at the beginning:

[a] You exist.

Rationale: That you exist, here and now, is certain because it is **undeniable** because you cannot truly say that you do not exist; it is **indubitable** (i.e., undoubtable as you would have to exist in order to doubt that you exist; it is **self-evident** because you are the evidence for the fact that you exist; and it is **other-evident** because the fact that appearances appear to you proves that you exist for them to appear to. Thus, you exist. *That* much is certain, but *what* you are is not. Let’s look into that now:

[b] You cannot be identical with anything you can possibly exist without.

Rationale: Anything you can possibly exist without, is not what you really are - not what you are identical with; not what you are in essence.

[c] You can possibly exist without anything, except consciousness.

Rationale: You can possibly exist without your body, for example in an afterlife. Note that I do not claim that there is an afterlife, but only that you just cannot rule out the possibility, which is all that matters here. And you can possibly exist without your thoughts, feelings, intentions, and perceptions, for example, in dreamless sleep. But you cannot possibly exist without consciousness. To lose consciousness is to die, — to not exist anymore. So, consciousness, and consciousness only, is what you are not possibly not, i.e., what you are necessarily.

[d] Therefore, you cannot be identical with anything, except consciousness.

Rationale: Follows from [a] to [c], consciousness is that which never leaves - that which you are never not, neither when you are conscious of some-



Oracle of Delphi



Copernicus

thing in waking life or dreams, nor even when you are not conscious of anything in dreamless sleep, coma, or death. If consciousness could end, and it did, then you would thereby end. So even in that hypothetical scenario, you could not *be* without consciousness.

This allows us to answer the question of what you are: You are not a human being having a conscious experience but consciousness having a human experience – let's call this Consciousnism.

Of course, it is a radical, controversial claim. So, why would you want to consider it? Well, first of all because it was proven and verified to be true.. If you are rational - the fact that it is true should be sufficient for accepting them.

And why would you not? It is just a proverbial Copernican Revolution. Where Copernicus showed that:

*The sun does not orbit the earth;
The earth orbits the sun.*

Consciousness shows that:

*You are not a human being having a conscious experience;
You are consciousness having a human experience.*

Just as the Copernican Revolution did not really

change anything, neither does Consciousnism. It is just a matter of accepting what was always already the case. So, life goes on as usual, regardless of whether you accept Consciousnism or not. It does not change anything, except what you know.

By the way, Consciousnism is not just rationally satisfying because it is to know what is true but it is also emotionally satisfying as it is the end of suffering. How? First, by setting you free from identifying yourself with the human being and the misappropriation of its problems. After all, human beings grow old, get ill, and die. Second, by setting the human being free from its problems. By taking a step back from the identification with the human being, it becomes easy to recognize the harmony underlying the apparent chaos and absurdity.

Consciousnism is even spiritually satisfying in that it achieves divine union. It is the end of sin - that is, error - and the consequences of sin - suffering, expelling yourself from paradise, and turning your life into hell. When the Abrahamic God said that he was 'that I am that I am', he was not joking. The self (*atman*) is God (*brahman*), as the Hindus put it.

I hope to have made the case for Consciousnism and that it is worth considering the theory. I am looking forward to any questions, suggestions or objections you may have.

I am the Stillness

**I am,
not in the way fire roars,
but in the hush between storms.
I am the breath the forest holds
before the wind remembers
how to move.**

**They rush, the memories,
like wild winds across dry fields,
carrying all the fragile things I've been,
splinters of selves
I once called home.**

**They scatter.
They rage.
They try to pull me
into the corners of time,
to unmake me
into echoes.**

**But I do not follow.
I do not flee.
The wind parts around me,
as if it remembers
I am not meant
to be broken.**

**I am stillness.
I am the kernel in the fruit,
the unmoved riverbed
beneath the stream.**

**Even the old griefs,
the ones that know my name,
cannot uproot me.**

**They try.
They reach with hands of smoke
to draw me into forgetting.
To bury me
in the vast unknowing.**



But I remain,
not as whole,
not as known,
but as a mystery
yet unfolding.

A self
not scattered,
not unearthed,
but waiting
just beneath the layers of time.

Poem and Artwork by *Scharlie Meeuws*

When Laws Fail Justice

DR. ALAN XUEREB

In our shared political imagination, the law and justice walk hand in hand. We expect that what is lawful is, by definition, also just - and that what is just will surely find its way into law. Yet, as anyone who has studied the history of constitutions and political thought knows, the relationship between law and justice is far more uneasy than comforting slogans suggest. The unsettling truth is that not every unjust law is unconstitutional, and not every unconstitutional act is, in itself, unjust.

The relationship between law and justice is a multifaceted subject within political thought and constitutional studies. It is often mistakenly assumed that what is lawful is inherently just, but history and theory reveal a more complicated interplay.

Constitutional law often reflects principles that are intended to align with liberty and justice. However, the effectiveness of this alignment can be questioned given that the application and interpretation of the law require judicial deliberation and are influenced by individual conscience. This suggests that what is legal may not always coincide with individual or societal conceptions of justice, underscoring the potential for divergence between law and justice.

John Rawls' concept of 'justice as fairness' offers a framework that avoids philosophical controversies by emphasizing a political, rather than metaphysical, conception of justice. This approach aims to maintain independence from divisive doctrines in a constitutional democracy, reflecting a pragmatic and inclusive view of justice. However, critics argue that such abstractions may struggle to address practical judgments in real-world scenarios, particularly when law and justice come into conflict in specific cases.

The historical development of constitutional thought involves a blend of ecclesiastical and secular theories, showing how legal principles have evolved over time in response to changing societal needs and moral philosophies. The dynamic nature of constitutionalism reflects ongoing tensions between established legal frameworks and emerging notions of justice. Comparative constitutional law also highlights variability in how different cultures and legal systems define and interpret justice within their constitutional frameworks. The particular nuances of national identities and legal traditions can lead to varying interpretations of concepts like privacy, freedom of expression, and equality, which are central to both legal and justice considerations.

One should not forget that the interplay between law and justice is characterized by an ongoing negotiation of principles, individual conscience, and societal values. While legal systems strive to encapsulate justice, the inherent subjectivity and complexity of justice ensure that the relationship remains an area of debate and divergence. Thus, the claim that all lawful acts are just, or all just acts are lawful, oversimplifies a deeply intricate and context-dependent relationship.

This paradox formed the heart of my MPhil thesis in philosophy of law (2002), which explored why law, even when crafted with care and tested by courts, can still fail the justice it claims to serve. It sits at the heart of an older and deeper question: what is the law for? Is it merely a structure of rules that binds us, or is it the living expression of our shared commitment to the common good? When, for instance, a law discriminates against a vulnerable group, our moral sense rebels long before any court pronounces it unconstitutional. Conversely, a technically unconstitutional act - an administrative irregularity, perhaps - may breach legal form without wounding anyone's conscience.

At first glance, this seems counterintuitive. Constitutions are supposed to enshrine our highest ideals: democracy, human dignity, fundamental rights. They are acts of collective self-limitation, binding rulers and ruled alike to principles no political majority should override. Shouldn't injustice, then, always signal unconstitutionality? Yet the practice of constitutional courts, past and present, shows otherwise. Law and justice travel parallel paths that sometimes cross, and sometimes do not.

The Moral Ambition of Law

In philosophical terms, justice is the end for which the law exists. The law, ideally, is the instrument by which societies translate the moral ideal of justice into concrete, enforceable norms. But history teaches us that law is a human artefact: it may aspire to justice, yet remain vulnerable to political pressure, economic interest, or cultural prejudice.

A law may fully comply with constitutional procedures yet violate the spirit of justice - consider segregation laws once upheld by courts, or modern laws that marginalise minorities while surviving judicial scrutiny. Conversely, an act may be unconstitutional yet morally defensible.

The Sense of Injustice

When law and justice part ways, society is not left entirely helpless. What remains is the deeply human sense of injustice: a visceral moral reaction to perceived wrong. Judith Shklar described it as the pain of being denied what we believe we are owed — dignity, fairness, recognition.

This feeling is not purely private. Across history, it has driven reform, protest, and even revolution: from the American civil rights movement to struggles against apartheid. It shows that legality alone cannot command respect if it ignores a deeper moral conscience.

Yet moral outrage, as Francis Bacon warned, can turn to vengeance, 'a kind of wild justice' that risks undermining thoughtful reform. The challenge is to channel it into principled critique and constructive change.

Constitutions: Principles and Limits

Modern constitutions arose to embed ideals like freedom and justice into law, protecting them even from shifting majorities. But constitutions are products of their time: shaped by historical context, cultural assumptions, and sometimes moral blind spots. They promise justice but cannot guarantee it. Constitutional validity is not the same as moral legitimacy. A law may be constitutionally sound yet morally indefensible; an act may be unconstitutional yet pursued for just ends. Recognising this gap does not diminish the constitution's importance. Rather, it highlights its role as a living framework, always open to reinterpretation and reform to stay true to its founding values.

The Space Between Law and Justice

Far from a design flaw, the gap between legality and morality is the space where democratic renewal and philosophical inquiry happen. It invites citizens and jurists alike to ask: Does this law still serve the common good? Does it reflect the justice we claim to value?

Legal philosopher Ronald Dworkin viewed law as part of a continuous moral conversation, shaped by precedent but never closed to reconsideration. It is this humility to question and revise that keeps democracy responsive and the law alive.

Conclusion: Law as an Aspiration

The unsettling truth that not every unjust law is unconstitutional, and not every unconstitutional act unjust, challenges us to see law not as a fixed system but as a human aspiration. Its authority flows not just from courts or constitutions, but from its ongoing dialogue with justice itself.

As I explored in my thesis, law must remain more than coercion: it should be grounded in reason, oriented to the common good, and open to critique by citizens' moral sense. By acknowledging the space between what the law is and what it ought to be, we keep alive the moral ambition at the heart of law: to build, however imperfectly, a society that is not only lawful, but just.

Ecce Ambulator: Nietzsche on walking

We do not belong to those who have ideas only among books, when stimulated by books. It is our habit to think outdoors – walking, leaping, climbing, dancing, preferably on lonely mountains or near the sea where even the trails become thoughtful.

Here I have got you, you nihilist! A sedentary life is the real sin against the Holy Spirit. Only those thoughts that come when you are walking have any value.

Our first questions about the value of a book, of a human being, or a musical composition are: Can they walk? Even more, can they dance?

Friedrich Nietzsche

No thought that walking cannot take in stride.
Desk-seated nihilist, I have you here!
What thoughts have you but of Christ Crucified,
Kant's moral law, and rules you hold as dear
As your sequestered life itself for fear
That, by out-pacing them, you'd nihilate
Yourself, your soul, your scholarly career,
And all that sternly bade you hesitate,
Then reassume that sedentary state.

It's your effete thought-postures you revere,
Your sloth, passivity, and zero rate
Of progress when it comes to striding clear
Of those thought-obstacles that caution: 'wait,
O would-be walker, ye who'd ambulate
Too far from that safe carrel and, outside
Thought's comfort-zone, embrace whatever fate
Belongs to those free spirits who won't bide
The sheltered life my *Übermensch* denied.



CHRIS NORRIS



Nietzsche by Edward Munch (1906)

Let that slouched sedentary pose dictate
Your inmost thoughts, control their rhythm, guide
Each step you take, and soon enough your gait
Will turn out Kantian, plodding, keen to hide
Its pallid countenance behind that pride
In system, rule and method that they'd jeer
At, passers-by and neighbours, when they spied
The sage of Königsberg, he who'd appear
Each day at 3 p.m., year after year.

It works both ways: get off your fat backside
By having lively thoughts break in and steer
You, like a wrecking-ball, to open wide
A storm-path through all systems as you near
The Great Outdoors; or exit the closed sphere
Of deskbound thinking first and then negate
A lifetime's custom as you feel the sheer
Thought-ecstasies that this unguessed-at spate
Of bodily sensations can create.

Poetry

I tell you, it's the scholar's last frontier,
That carrel, desk or library you'll hate,
Once left behind, for how you'd persevere
With downcast eyes until that balding pate
Of yours first felt the sun, then yearned to sate
Those famished senses on the world you'd tried
So long to hold at bay like poison bait
Yet now made haste to – eager, starry-eyed –
For sights and senses newly gratified.

Thus Zarathustra spake, and told them straight:
You cloistered fugitives who joy to chide
Us walkers, wanderers, mountain-scalers, slate
Our vacant desks, our seats unoccupied,
Our densely cobwebbed carrels, ink-wells dried
Up long ago – it's life that's apt to rear
Its head so rudely up at you, deride
Your scholar-ways, and guffaw as you peer
Myopically at cruces long held dear.

How else should they be counted bona fide,
Your short-leashed 'leaps of thought', your 'pioneer'
Advances in philology applied
To this or that old text, or – not to sneer
Too brutally – your helping us get clear
About some textual crux that took no great
Heights of sagacity to commandeer
Yet, had you ventured once to ski or skate,
Might yet afford some cause to celebrate.



Scholar in his study

Let strenuous thought, let discipline severe
Instruct you: measured steps no more frustrate
The vaulting spirit, have it drink small beer,
Desist from all that might exacerbate
Its itch for that rare heaven-storming state
Of mind and body wherein must reside
The incommensurable power or trait
That marked them out, those precious few who vied
To storm the peaks, whatever might betide.

With time they'll step more lightly, levitate,
Or so it seems, and effortlessly glide
From thought to thought, as if to indicate
How gifts hard-won may gracefully elide
The hardships borne to win them, opt to hide,
Like Bizet's *Carmen*, all we're bound to hear
In Wagner's *Ring* had critics not supplied
Us with those crass directives: 'keep an ear
Well cocked and sport your motif-hunting gear'.

Let Bizet's sunlit melodies provide
Your mental music, bring you strength to cheer
Your wildest ventures on, not cramp your stride
With rambler's guides or lucubrations drear
As Siegfried's mindless, stupidly sincere
Attempt at hero-play. For then the weight
Of that *echt*-German load will disappear
And leave you free to make a hiker's date
With thoughts no hunched *penseur* could activate.

The Wednesday

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The Words Still Come

The words still come in metered measure
They cheer my spirit as they do,
Where can be found a greater pleasure
Than doing what the poets do?

I can be glad the well's not dry,
But gives me copious water still,
I can fly bird-like in the sky
And I can voyage where I will.

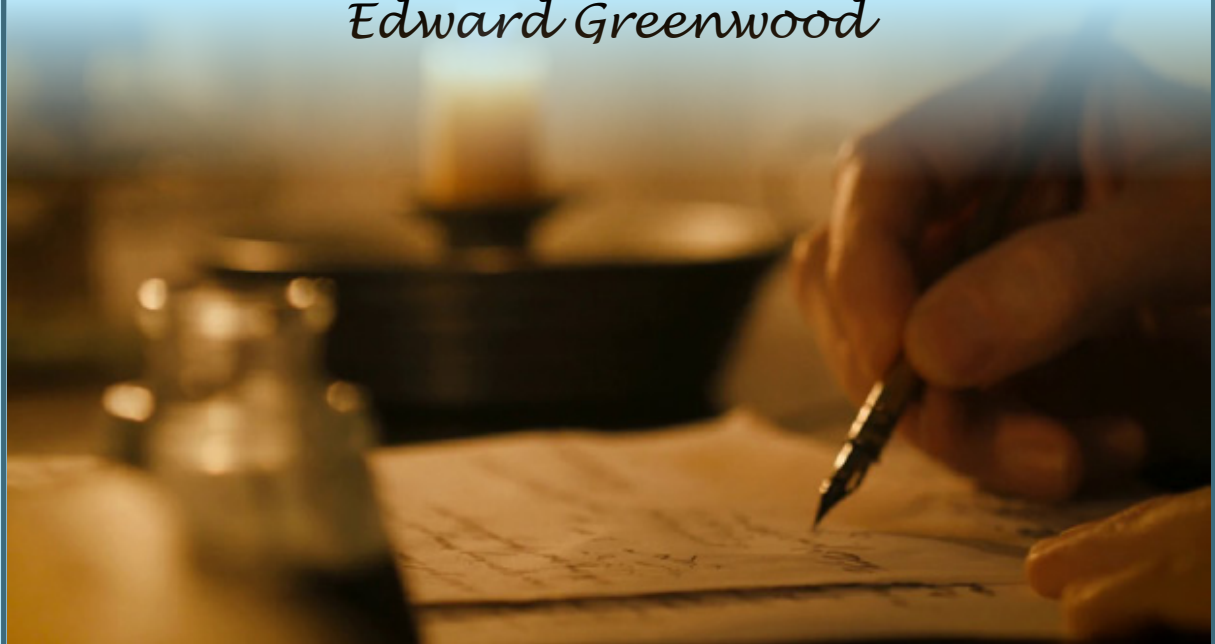
Now I can forsake my room
And wander up the nearside hill,
I love to see the bluebells bloom,
I love the roadside daffodil.

Far from the town's unnerving riot
I take my leisure in the sun,
The garden famous for its quiet
Will hold me now till day is done.

The future now my mind rehearses
As with mankind it's apt to do,
Will the morning bring more verses?
Will the words be minted new?

Oh may the words still keep on flowing,
Oh may the water sparkle bright
And the blessing they're bestowing
Be mine by day and mine by night.

Edward Greenwood



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To receive it regularly, please write to the editor: rahimhassan@hotmail.co.uk