

The Wednesday



Weekly Magazine of the Wednesday Group at Albion Beatnik - Oxford

Editorial

The Mystery of Language

Language seems very familiar to us. We use it in everyday dealings and we tend to think that words are the basic units that we think with, feel with and through which we produce images. But is it the case? David Jones has challenged this view in previous issues of The Wednesday and Dianne Cockburn gives a further challenge in the present issue. However, what interests me in this debate is the relationship between language and creativity. It seems to me that the mystery of creativity that we dealt with in a previous issue could also throw some light on the mystery of language. The usual courses on philosophy of language in analytical philosophy do not mention creativity, except in relation to Chomsky's 'poverty of stimulus' argument in which the mind is taken to be creative and this property innate. But it is creative people who could tell us about the working of language, even if they just point out for us its mystery.

Novalis, the German Romantic, was a philosopher, a poet and a scientist and he was writing in light of the writings of Kant's third critique, Fichte's subjectivity, Schiller's idea of play and Goethe's idea of form and ur-phenomena (original phenomena). It is a climate of thought that favours creativity and the *a priori* function of the mind. For them, the mind does not passively receive sensible reality but also has the power to create it through the imagination. We could come to this point again in future opportunity to explore the productive aspect of the imagination not just its reproductive function when the mind knows the world by theoretical cognition.

In his short but very important text, *Monologue*, Novalis reflects on language. Here is the part which we haven't published before:

'Speaking and writing is a crazy state of affairs really; true conversation is just a game with words. It is amazing, the absurd error people make of imagining they are speaking for the sake of things; *no one knows the essential thing about language, that is concerned only with itself*. That is why it is such a *marvellous and fruitful mystery* - for if someone is merely speaking for the sake of speaking, he *utters the most splendid, original truths*. But if he wants to talk about something definite, the whims of language make him say the most ridiculous false stuff. They notice its waywardness, but they do not notice that the babbling they scorn is the infinitely serious side of language.'

So, for Novalis, and for me, language is occupied with itself even when it seems that it is occupied with the external world in everydayness. We are constantly not sure of what we are saying and we always try to rephrase it, especially when it concerns something subtle and profound. Writers and lecturers particularly notice this in their work. It has been said of Hegel that when he delivered his lectures he used to move towards the window and back, rephrasing his sentence three times as he tried to capture what he intended to say. People still complain about Hegel's obscure language and the reformulation of his sentences. But my argument is that the deeper the thought the more difficult for it to announce itself to the world. This is more so for poets, for in poetry language is truly itself and becomes truly creative, or in Novalis's words it shows up as 'concerned only with itself'. But in doing so it 'utters the most splendid, original truths'. This why we think that poets get to the truth directly and in a very insightful way, a claim that has been denied by Plato but re-stated in Heidegger's idea of the 'happening' of truth in the work of art and Coleridge's rejection of the 'tyranny of the eye' in favour of the creativity of the mind.

The Editor



Nietzsche and Nihilism: A Philosophy for the Future

Nietzsche, as we read last week, gave many explanations of how the modern world ended in nihilism. Here, in the concluding part, Nietzsche presents us with ideas about how to overcome nihilism, and his vision of the culture and philosophy of the future:

RAHIM HASSAN

Part-2

Nietzsche thought that nihilism was a European phenomenon. His book *The Will to Power* (henceforth WP) is full of it. He comes to it from different angles and perspectives so as to make it more intelligible. Europe has to go through nihilism if it is to develop genuine life-affirming values (See WP, 2). It is the result of a particular process, religious, scientific and moral.

‘Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality – in other words, as we understand it, merely *one* type of human morality beside which, before which, and after which many other types, above all *higher* moralities, are, or ought to be, possible.’ (BGE, 202)

But unlike the passive nihilist, Nietzsche thinks that nihilism is necessary:

‘For why has the advent of nihilism become *necessary*? Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence; because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals – because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what values these ‘values’ really are.

We require, sometimes, *new values*.’ (WP, Preface, 4).

Nietzsche sees nihilism in a positive light. He sees it:

‘as a sign of increased power of the spirit: as active nihilism.’ (WP, 22)

In fact, Nietzsche thinks nihilism must go to its extreme before we can get something positive out of it:

‘The most extreme form of nihilism would be the view that *every* belief, every considering-something-true, is necessarily false because there simply is no *true world*. Thus: a perspectival appearance whose origin lies in us.’ (WP, 15).

This an important idea for Nietzsche and for all those who reject transcendence. Nietzsche is more radical here than most who reject transcendence in the form of religion or old metaphysics. He rejects the transcendence of truth as has been explained by the correspondence theory. For Nietzsche, there is no eternally, fixed world to which we compare our statements (or establish correspondences with it) in order to verify them. All seeing, thinking and norms

are necessarily only a perspective. For him, reality is not a fixed being but a continuing flux of becoming, and we form parts of it through a perspectival conceptual scheme. To have many perspectives on a phenomenon is good. Also, these perspectives are not all equal but come into conflict as different interpretations are explored. From this perspectival view:

‘[...]there are no moral phenomena, there is only a moral interpretation of these phenomena. This interpretation itself is of extra-moral origin.’ (WP, 258).

Perspectival truth will replace the unconditional truth that originated in lies and illusions. But:

‘To recognize untruth as a condition of life – that certainly means resisting accustomed value-feelings in a dangerous way; and a philosophy that risks this would by that token alone place itself beyond good and evil.’ (BGE, 4)

The Eternal Return and the Overman

Nietzsche thinks that the modern (last) man has been weakened. He is tired and weary. He can’t face up the truths that Nietzsche is telling him:

‘In the present age human beings have in their bodies the heritage of multiple origins.... weaker human beings’ (BGE, 200)

For this reason, he tries to give him self-confidence and to go beyond the everyday weariness that he suffers from and to raise him to a higher level:

‘for your true nature lies, not concealed deep within you, but immeasurably high above you, or at least above that which you usually take yourselves to be.’ (Untimely Meditation, 3)

Nietzsche came to realise the power of this idea and its implication during the writing of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (or what is known as his middle period). He realised that materialism, entertainment culture, new modes of production had displaced the old beliefs (specially the belief

in God), together with the morality based on such beliefs which does not have the courage to face up to the a new situation and be fully sovereign and legislate for new morality. Perhaps he is here thinking of the Schopenhauerian morality that is based on empathy. Nietzsche saw that this morality is a continuation of the Christian morality and that atheism still subscribes to religion through its morality, despite abandoning the belief in its foundation, which is the belief in God. This, for Nietzsche, is the mark of nihilism and decadence because the last man does not have the courage to face up to the truth of the situation he is in. Truth for Nietzsche depends on the type on man. The weak types prefer their small truth and hold on to their comfort. That is why the crowd in the *Gay Science* (Section 125) rejects the call of the madman who heralds for them the death of God:

‘God is dead...And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers of all murders, comfort ourselves? ...What water is there to clean ourselves?... Is not the greatness of this death too great for us? Must not we ourselves become gods simply to be worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever will be born after us-for the sake of this deed will be part of a higher than all history hitherto’. Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners; and they too were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern on their ground, and it broke and went out. ‘I came too early,’ he said then;’

Thus, Zarathustra calls for a new type of man; the strong type who will withstand the new truth he has been told. It is the Overman:

‘*I teach you the overman*. Man is something that shall be overcome.’ (Z, I, 2)

But who is this Overman? He is the one who will affirm existence and gives it his own meaning. For him, life is not invalidated by the hardships, suffering and evil that pushed Schopenhauer into selflessness and inaction. He will act and redeem the accidental and the fragmentary:

‘All “it was” is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful accident-until the creative will says to it, “But thus I willed it”. Until the creative will says to it “But thus I will it; thus shall I will it?”’ (Z, II, *On Redemption*)

Such an individual (as a type) has a strong belief in himself and his power to recreate a new ‘reality’, a perspectival and continuously changing reality. He is positive, affirmative and always active (as opposed to the nihilist and decadent). But how can one be an Overman? What is the test that one should pass? Nietzsche constructed a test that is very hard, but works as a Kantian categorical imperative.

It is the idea of ‘eternal return’ which has provoked so much debate. Nietzsche himself believed it at some point of his intellectual development as an ontological fact about the world, but I think it was only a thought experiment:

‘The greatest stress. How if some day or night a demon were to sneak after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you, “This life as you now lived it and have lived it, you will have to live it once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and everything immeasurably small or great in your life must return to you...” Would you throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or did you once experience a tremendous moment when you would have answered him, “You are a god, and never have I heard anything more godly.” If this thought were to gain possession of you, it would change you, as you are, or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, “Do you want this once more and innumerable times more?” would weigh upon your actions as the greatest stress. Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life to crave nothing more fervently than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?” (GS, 341)

The aesthetic solution

Nietzsche was never tired of saying that man must be overcome, especially so in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, His justification for it is that:

‘[...] life itself confided this secret to me: “Behold,” it said, “I am *that which must always overcome itself*.” (Z, II, *On Self-Overcoming*)

The overman will first create himself, by unifying his instincts and drives, unlike the people around him in whom these are fragmented:

‘*One thing is needful*. “Giving style” to one’s character – a great and rare art! It is exercised by those who see all the strength and weaknesses of their own natures and then comprehend them in an artistic plan until everything appears as art and reason and even weakness delights the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed: both by long practice and daily labour. Here the ugly which could not be removed is hidden; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime. It will be the strong and domineering natures who enjoy their finest gaiety in such compulsion, in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own. Conversely, it is the weak characters without power over themselves who *hate* the constraint of style...” (GS, 290)

In *Ecce Homo*, he characterised Zarathustra as the one ‘in him all opposites are blended into a higher unity’. And by being unified himself, he can redeem others:

‘I walk among men as among fragments of the future: of the future which I scan. And it is my art and aim, to compose into one and bring together what is fragment and riddle and dreadful chance.’ (Z, II, 21)

The redemption takes the form of giving a style to himself and to the new culture he is creating:

‘Culture is, above all, unity of style in all expressions of the life of a people.’ (UM, I, 1) Or in *Untimely Meditations* (I, 2), Nietzsche says: ‘true culture must in any event presupposes unity of style’.

This has been contrasted with the culture of the last man, the nihilistic culture where style is missing:

‘Motley, all ages and people look out of your veils, motley, all customs and faiths speak out of your gesture’ (Z, II, 14)

A new beginning

This is then Nietzsche’s new and strong society. It starts with recognising the hard questions but it doesn’t dodge them. It has the courage to face them. It finds itself fragmented and it works on this fragmentation to create wholeness and harmony. It faces the situation from the point of strength and not of weakness. There will be others who have such a dream but one must distinguish between dreaming from the stand point of strength and that of weakness. The latter ends up in decadence. This why Nietzsche rejected romanticism, Schopenhauer and Wagner:

‘The classically – disposed [Nietzsche means the harmonised individual] no less than those romantically inclined – as these two species always exist – carry a vision of the future: but the former out of a strength of their time; the latter, out of its weakness.’ (*The Wanderer and His Shadow*, 217)

Those who are strong and have seen the process through, from its nihilistic and decadent start to its final stage and the birth of a new beginning are the unique individuals and the strong types:

‘We...want to become those we are – human-beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves.’ (GS, 336)

With such unique individuals, a new phase in human history, or the history of the soul, will start. Nietzsche talks about the metamorphosis of the soul in a section in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* where



Rahim Hassan with a thought provoking poster outside Conway Hall, London

he summarises the philosophical development that will pioneer the new beginning. The soul starts as a camel bearing weight, then becomes a lion on the attack, but ends up in a new vision and total innocence. It becomes a child:

‘[...] The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred “Yes.” For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred “Yes” is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world.’ (Z, *On the New Metamorphoses*)

Nihilism is then defeated and a new belief and a spirit of creativity and innocence will reign.

Notes on the Wednesday Meeting 18th of October 2017

Paul Cockburn wrote:

The work and life of the philosopher Walter Benjamin was discussed. Benjamin was born in Berlin in 1892. His parents were wealthy Ashkenazi Jews. As a young man he studied philosophy, particularly Kant, translated Baudelaire. He wrote a Ph. D thesis on the concept of criticism in the German Romantics, as well as individual articles on these Romantics, including Holderlin. He also wrote on Kafka and the Surrealist movement in France.

The First World War threatened to interrupt Benjamin's studies but he succeeded in failing the medical examination for the German army by drinking large quantities of black coffee the previous night in order to simulate the symptoms of a weak heart.

In 1917, the draft board again ordered Benjamin to report for army duty, but he refused, this time on the grounds that he was 'suffering' from a severe case of sciatica.

In the 1920s he began to develop a literary form all his own – the *Denkbild*, the 'figure of thought'. This is a form of writing that replaces discursive argumentation with short observations and reflections, producing something like the 'album of sketches' described by Wittgenstein. He visited Russia, and in 1932 with the rise to power of the Nazis and growing anti-semitism in Germany, he left Germany for France. In 1938 the German government stripped German Jews of their citizenship, and Benjamin was imprisoned briefly in a camp in France as a stateless person.

In September 1940 he was attempting to flee

across the Spanish border as the Nazis invaded France. In the early hours of 27 September 1940, he used morphine to take his own life.

Benjamin was a complex character, perhaps psychologically unbalanced. This is not surprising, given his experience as a Jew in Germany in the early twentieth century. He was interested in the character of the flaneur, a dandy, an observer of urban life. He wrote his *Theses on the Philosophy of History* in January 1940. In Thesis 9, Benjamin wrote about the 'angel of history', a painting he bought from Paul Klee. This is what the meeting discussed.

Here is the text of the ninth thesis:

'There is a painting by Klee called Angelus Novus. An angel is depicted there who looks as though he were about to distance himself from something which he is staring at. His eyes are opened wide, his mouth stands open and his wings are outstretched. The Angel of History must look just so. His face is turned towards the past. Where we see the appearance of a chain of events, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before his feet. He would like to pause for a moment so fair, to awaken the dead and to piece together what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise, it has caught itself up in his wings and is so strong that the Angel can no longer close them. The storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the rubble-heap before him grows sky-high. That which we call progress, is *this* storm.'

Here is the painting:



'The Angel of History' By Paul Klee (1879-1940)

The painting and text show the angel of history seeing an explosion creating a pile of debris which blows him backward. As we survey history we see continual disasters, as humanity engages in war and despoliation. Certainly, for Benjamin, living through the awful chaos and loss of life in the First World War, then trying to escape the consequences of the Second World War, the future of mankind must have looked bleak.

The moral and ethical nature of humanity has not improved over history. In fact, with improved technology it seems that the disasters will increase in magnitude, as the weapons of war become ever more destructive. The angel is propelled into the future and cannot fold his wings to contain the explosion, cannot reach out and comfort stricken humanity, cannot

stop the evil continuing. Can technology be used to avert these continuing disasters? Technology is powerful, and can be used for good – look for example at antibiotics such as penicillin, the wonders of modern medicine, the ingenuity of scientists. But our human nature, as exemplified in the groups we call nations, is taken over by fear and hatred of the other, and greed based on the expanding ego which wants more and more of what the other has. Our relationships at the personal level are often marred by selfishness and the wish to control others, to assert and fight for our rights, and this translates at a national level to exploitation and war.

Benjamin did have a positive thought about history. What he calls 'the ultimate condition' and 'highest metaphysical state of history' appears not as the *telos* or end of history, but as an immanent state of perfection which has the potential to manifest itself in any particular moment. This links into a Jewish Messianic concept of time: the Messiah can come at any time.

Benjamin's *Arcades Project* perhaps gives a more positive view of history. Here modernity is embodied by the character of the flaneur, a dandy, an observer of urban life. The covered shopping streets in Paris fascinated him, and he would wander the city as a flaneur!

He was a Marxist, coming under the spell of his Latvian lover Asja Lacis. They went to Russia together and lived in Moscow for several months. However, his Marxism is not prominent in his writings. He was also attracted by Zionism, but did not follow his friend Gershom Scholem to Palestine. His essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* was very influential, with its thesis that the 'aura' of a work of art, its direct effect on the viewer, is lessened dramatically by the modern ability to make many copies of it.

'Turkish Night' by the Italian artists Sara Berti

The Catastrophes of History: 'And the Gods Laugh'
by Victor Stanley Rose (1911–1991) (Conway Hall, London)

David Clough wrote:

Three versions of Walter Benjamin were presented at the meeting. Paul Cockburn talked about how Benjamin avoided the military draft during WWI. David Clough said the women in his life, not just Dora, but his Russian radical passion (Asja Lacis) are key to the Moscow diary. His movements to Paris, Moscow and even Denmark (to see Brecht) imply he was not without an ability to travel even as anti-semitism starts to take hold. Rahim Hassan pointed toward an instability in his personality.

David kind of agreed but talked about how he got into Benjamin from Hesse. He mentioned Benjamin's meeting or corresponding with Hesse, took Hashish with Bloch and read Steppenwolf in 1928 and the effect of Arendt's publishing Benjamin's *Illuminations* in 1961.

David mentioned Buck Morss's *Dialectics of Seeing* with its emphasis on *The Arcades Project*. The Klee painting of the *Angel of History* is illustrated in the book. We need more digging out of how the picture increased in dominance during the post holocaust period perhaps when Adorno and the French critiques were strongest up to 1990.

Benjamin's *Illuminations* had included his views on Kafka, with whom he felt a close personal affinity; his studies included writings on Baudelaire and Proust; his essays on Brecht's Epic Theatre, a penetrating study *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, an enlightening discussion of translation as a literary mode, and his theses on the philosophy of history.

The *Trauerspiel* (Tragedy) book by Benjamin directly

inspires *The Rhetoric of Temporality* by de Man. Benjamin had disputed the superiority of symbol over allegory. Paul de Man is said to have investigated allegory's deconstructive tendencies in his books *Blindness and Insight* and *The Rhetoric of Temporality*. It's a version of Hamann against Herder. But the changing view that symbol should not have been elevated above allegory may have affected C Day Lewis and the pursuit of the image in modernist poetry.

According to de Man this aesthetic elevation of the symbol refuses to distinguish between experience and its representation and still assumes that poetic language can somehow transcend this distinction and still touch the infinite. Allegory rather sees a difference instead between experience and its expression. Between 1760-1800 everything looked allegorical. It was the allegorical turn. And as in Benjamin, time is the key category. Allegory is romanticism's early negative moment that recognizes the pain of difference. But de Man is not as melancholy as Benjamin.

(The next issue of **The Wednesday** will have a full article on Benjamin's analysis and documentation of Modernity by David Clough.)



Mesmerising Evening with Beckett

The *Wednesday*

The *Mad Mask Theatre Company* put on a very courageous show of two rarely performed monologues by the Irish playwright Samuel Beckett, dealing with the eternal themes of mortality, time and memory. One is hypnotised by the range of topics mentioned in the two pieces and the existential anxieties they raise about age, identity, loneliness, the impossibility of communication, the passing of time and the sense of ending.

The minimalist production, the simple stage, light, one actor and the use of a video and a number of loudspeakers, the short pieces and the small number of audience (no more than 20 on the second day of the showing that we attended) gave us the chance to concentrate and to follow the feelings that were stirring beyond the mask of sound and sight deep in the single character on the stage.

The show which was performed in the back room of the Jam Factory in Oxford for three nights, starting on the 18th of October attracted a small but lively crowd.

The first piece, *A Piece of Monologue*, was about 20 minutes long. A dying man confronts his imminent mortality. In his final moments, birth and death are solemnly examined; he notes their parallels, how one begets the other, the fleeting space between. Fragments of memory compete in his imagination. The limits of

theatre are tested in this moving kaleidoscope of one man's memories. There is a sense of discomfort in this piece that is transmitted to the audience. It was made more plausible by the possibility of its happening to the spectator at a future stage of his life.

This monologue was originally written by Beckett at the personal request of the English actor David Warrilow in 1979 asking Beckett if he would write a solo piece for him to perform. Beckett questioned as to what he had in mind and Warrilow wrote back saying that he 'had an image of a man standing on stage lit from above. He's standing there in a sort of cone of light. You couldn't see his face and he's talking about death.' Beckett's reply



Jeremy Allen in 'Monologue'



Director, Simon Image



The audience mesmerised by 'That Time'

began: 'My birth was my death,' a sentence that gets repeated throughout the piece. The play, directed by the actor, premiered in New York in December 1979.

In the new production by Simon Image the solo character was played by Jeremy Allen who had done one-man shows before. He told *The Wednesday* that this is his first performance of a text by Beckett and he admitted that these two pieces are very difficult. It is hard to go on reciting a piece for twenty minutes in the Monologue although the second piece was not taxing to remember as there was in fact nothing to say.

The slightly longer piece, *That Time*, examines themes of identity and memory. An old man reminisces in three separate monologues that merge into one, to represent different stages in his life. As he wrestles to establish his sense of self and dwells upon his formative experiences, fiction plays havoc with memory, until he is forced to question the foundations of his entire existence. The old man seems to be tormented by these memories and events,

however ordinary they sound. However, in a surprising move at the end, the old man, whose mouth was gaping and eyes shut most of the time, managed a good smile to finish the piece.

We asked Simon image why he selected these particular pieces. He said they are complementary, although Beckett wrote them at about five years interval. He also told us they say something interesting about what one could remember.

Simon Image is a theatre and film-maker based in Oxford. He said that he mainly works with plays by Pirandello and Beckett. This is his first experience of directing a play by Beckett. He is also interested in and gives talks on Dante's *Divine Comedy* and the poetry of William Blake.

The Wednesday wishes Jeremy Allen, Simon Image and the Mad Mask theatre Company every success with their future productions and offers them warm congratulations for such an interesting evening with brilliant acting and directing.

Thinking In Words

DIANNE COCKBURN

I would posit that if we only thought in words that would be very restricting. But, perhaps we should ask how do we define ‘thinking’? Does it include ‘imagining’? And what about ‘emotion’? Would we ever have new ideas and concepts if we only used words to think, words which, as we know, are so culturally bound?

Let’s take each of these propositions in turn:

- 1 Does thinking include imagining? I would argue that it does. Yet imagining is by its very nature seeing images, pictures and is not verbally based.
- 2 Emotion is a feeling which can be outwardly expressed and so communicated by sound alone, such as laughter, crying or screaming.
- 3 New ideas and concepts. If we look at experiments in science where the result is new or exciting, or something

unexpected has occurred, then the empirical scientists have to search within their vocabulary for a way to express this because they may not have the semantics immediately available. If they are a theoretical scientists then I suggest the ‘Eureka Moment’ may come when they are not thinking in words, but rather from a deeper unconscious level. Here words are not available and the thinker has to work out at a conscious level what words (or formulae) to use to express the new concept. Such unconscious thought comes from within (*Unconscious Thought Theory*, Ap Dijksterhuis and Loran Nordgren, 2006) and is constantly called upon by creative people in writing, painting and performing.

So, to answer the question whether we can think without using words, the answer at the unconscious level is a definite ‘yes’.

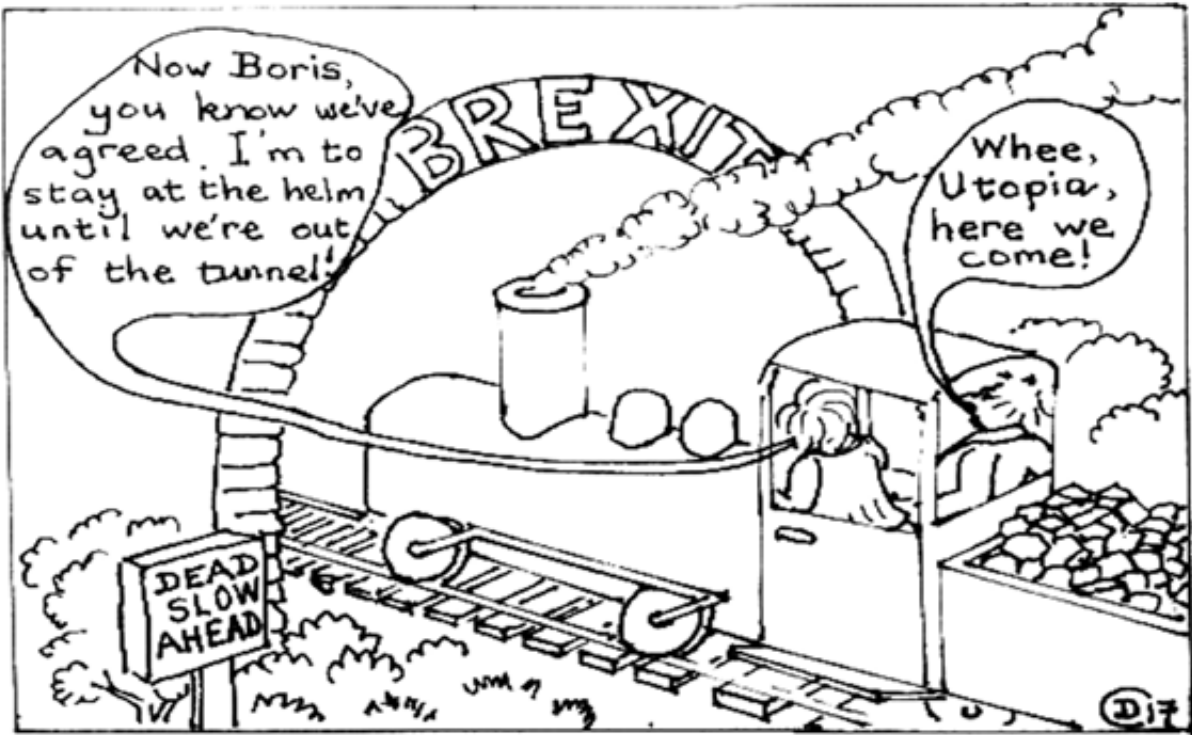
ADDENDUM

Communication – Words And Language

Words, sounds and signals in the human and animal kingdoms. However, we must not confuse words with language. They are not synonymous. We use both to communicate, but language is far broader. Whereas, in the human world language includes sounds and signals and words, in the animal world it includes only the former two. Sounds such as a sigh, yelp or cry all carry a meaning which is communicable in both worlds. For homo-sapiens, signals (culturally specific) in

English vary from a forefinger placed on pursed lips for silence to a shrug of the shoulders by a petulant teenager signifying ‘who cares?’ In the animal kingdom, bees dance outside the hive to show other worker bees where the nearest and best nectar is or an alert rabbit will thump its hind feet to warn other rabbits of danger. Animals may not have a verbal language, but they possess many, often very sophisticated ways of using sounds and signals far beyond our capabilities.

Cartoon By Dianne Cockburn



Philosophical Reflections

DAVID JONES

• Being and Viewpoint

Sometimes things which are thought to be separate opposite things are actually really only one indivisible same thing viewed from different positions. An example of this is rights and responsibilities. The actual being of your right to life only comes into existence insofar as other people practice their responsibility not to kill others.

• Existence and Reality

The way the word ‘exist’ is commonly used would seem to imply that something is thought to exist if a person or any other thing in the universe could be affected in some way by it.

According to this way of using the word ‘exist’ then even dreams, fictional characters and lies ‘exist’ insofar as they have an affect on people. However sometimes we revise the way that we understand

these ‘affecting’ things like the apparent movement of the Sun or the substance chemists called ‘phlogiston’ in the 18th century whose properties to cause combustion were later ascribed to oxygen. It would seem that such ‘revisions’ of what ‘exists’ suggest that it is the ‘affecting’ that underlies (and is logically prior to) the way we think about what exists and what does not exist.

Modern scientists focus on finding ‘affecting’ processes that are regular, consistent and determinable particularly because this knowledge then can be used in technology. There are some people who make this determinability a criterion for existence which is to say that nothing exists which is not determinable so it is quite understandable that such people also assert that humans could not have any free will.

Dylan Or Dylan: Looking for Dylan Thomas in New York

In August 2013, I attended a wedding in Brooklyn. Brooklyn Botanical Gardens to be precise. I had some free days after the wedding to explore and this is what I found.

FRED COUSINS

Being a big Bob Dylan fan, I did some research and found out he used to hang out in Greenwich Village, New York. So, I headed off on foot. I walked across the Brooklyn bridge into Manhattan. What a walk that is! If you've not done it, it's a must for your to do list if your ever around there; I was Greenwich village bound.

I headed for 567 Hudson street, NY 10014. This was the address of *The White Horse Tavern*. I'd read Bob Dylan drank there so I thought: this is the place to start.

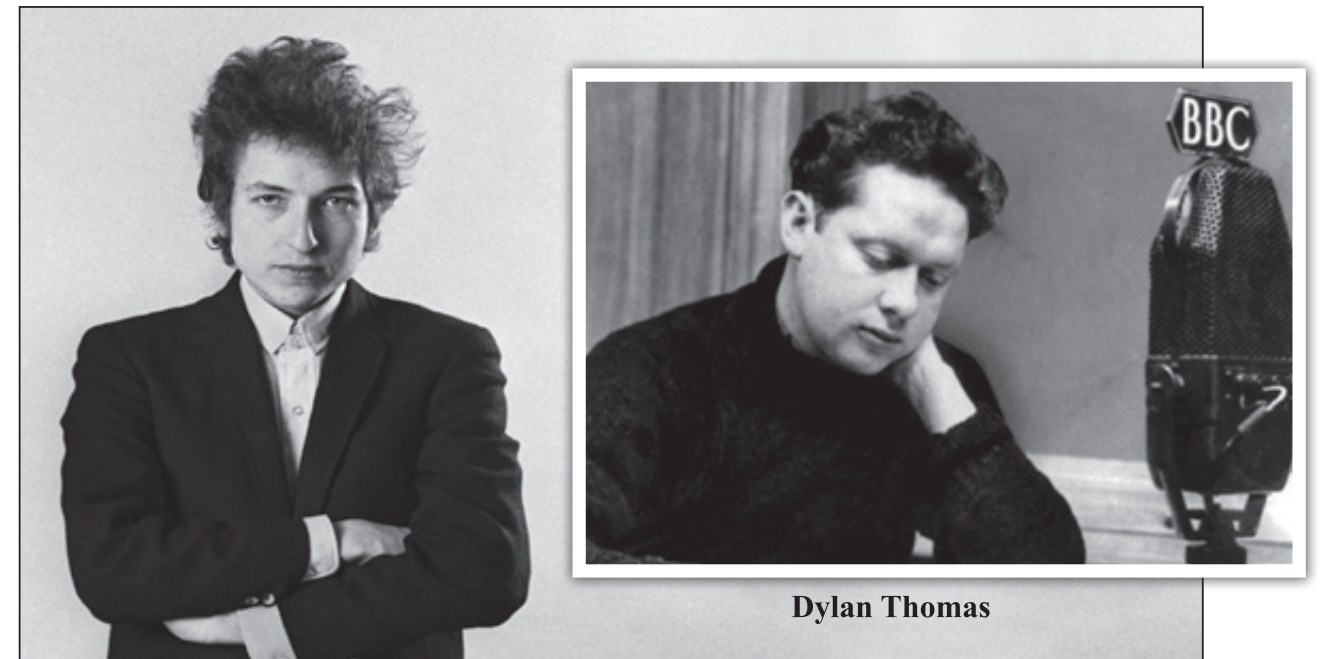
Well when I walked in, I was surprised by what I stumbled upon, yes it was Dylan, but it was another Dylan, Dylan Thomas, his pictures and sayings, poetry, and posters were everywhere. No mention of Bob Dylan anywhere to be seen.

I felt inspired none the less, I had a couple of beers and read the poems that were in frames on the walls, looked at the photos and posters, Under Milk Wood, etc.

I carried on only to find that the gaslight cafe where Bob Dylan hung out had since



The White Horse Tavern



Bob Dylan

closed down. Never mind, I had found Dylan Thomas. In the bar, he had eighteen whiskies and then he drank no more.

So, my research began, in 1959. Six years after the death of Dylan Thomas, Robert Zimmerman was re-inventing himself, so he named himself, Bob Dylan. This was a nod in the direction of Dylan Thomas, who had a big influence on the style of our Bob's writing to come.

A central theme of the poetry of Dylan Thomas and Bob Dylan is conflict; the conflict between the content and the structure of the poem and the conflict between the speaker and the subject being spoken.

In poems such as "*Do not go gentle into that goodnight*" and "*And death shall have no dominion*", the speaker is at odds with death, while in other poems it's not so obvious.

The new Dylan, if I can call him that, always seems to be at odds with something. In "*Oxford Town*" he seems at odds with racism and in "*Masters of War*", he is at odds with war. There is, then, a conflict in both poets' words. There is also a lyrical style to both.

Nobel prize for literature in 2016, we should remember Dylan Thomas, for the influence he had on him, and the style in which Bob Dylan wrote. I think Bob Dylan knew this and paid Dylan Thomas the greatest respect when he named himself Bob Dylan.

I may also add that the *White Horse Tavern* in New York was also a favourite watering hole for Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Jim Morrison and many others. It is still there in New York; you can sit in the favourite window seat of Dylan Thomas and soak up the atmosphere, as well as a few drinks.

The Wednesday

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The *Wednesday*

Weekly Magazine of the Wednesday Group at Albion Beatnik - Oxford

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