

# The Wednesday

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Magazine of the Wednesday Group - Oxford



## Editorial

### *Divine Thoughts*

I have interest in both philosophy and mysticism, and I am concerned with their approaches to knowledge. Each group questions the method of the other, and in some cases deny their opponent the capability of grasping the ultimate truth. However, at a deeper level, they seem to share in the same or similar method in their approach to truth and way of life. Philosophers talk about aesthetic and intellectual intuitions. Mystics talk of unveiling. In both cases, it is meant as a direct seeing of the truth. But one might object, in that philosophers articulate this vision and construct systems of thought, conceptually. This is true, but so is the case with mystics. They articulate their visions with concepts at the base of their systems, although they present it through images and poetry. In some cases, they write huge volumes to express their systems. The systems are not much different from those philosophers who are interested in the absolute and the unity of being. But of course, visions precede their articulation in poetry and prose.

Philosophy has become technical and sophisticated in argument and analysis. But if one goes back to the roots of philosophy in the Greek and Roman traditions, as does Pierre Hadot in his collection of articles published under the title *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, one gets a feeling for what philosophy and philosophers meant. One topic that attracts Hadot's attention is the task of philosophising and the character of the philosopher rather than the content of what has been said by the different schools of philosophy. These two aspects could be separated and a philosophy could be considered without considering the character of the philosopher, as is almost the norm nowadays, but it seems that there was a time when philosophy was a deep part of the life of the philosopher, very much like the mystics' visions and life.

Hadot starts by pointing out that philosophy is a strange phenomenon, one that involve a rupture with daily life. Ordinary people see the philosopher as a strange mysterious figure or 'a bizarre, if not dangerous character'. The second century Roman Jurist Ulpian advised the authorities in matters of litigation between philosophers and their debtors that they should not concern themselves with philosophers because 'these

people professed to despise money'. Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* describes the state of wisdom as 'divine'. It is a state of perfection of being and knowledge. Again, the comparison with the mystics is obvious.

Moving ahead in time, we hear Heidegger's talk about 'thinking' as somewhat reminiscent of mysticism. In his lecture series *What Calls for Thinking?*, Heidegger says: 'What must be thought about turns away from man. It withdraws from him. But how can we have the least knowledge of something that withdraws from the beginning, how can we even give it a name?' However, he thinks that the withdrawal creates a draught and a philosopher like Socrates 'did nothing else than place himself into this draught, this current, and maintain himself in it'. The withdrawal gives a sign, a direction to thinking. It calls, summons, invites. Such a direction and a state of receptivity echoes the following prayer by Ibn Arabi, which my teacher and friend Stephen Hirtenstein reads at the start of his classes on *Fusus al-Hikam (The Ringstones of Wisdom)*:

*'We empty our hearts of reflective thinking, and we sit together with the Real in remembrance, on the carpet of spiritual courtesy (adab), attentiveness (murāqaba) and presence (ḥuḍūr), and readiness to receive whatever comes to us from Him, so that it is the Real who takes charge of our instruction by way of unveiling and realisation...*

*So when their hearts and powers of concentration have turned to God, and taken refuge in Him alone, and have cast out of them whatever else is clinging to them, of pretension, investigation, rational observation and intellectual conclusions, then their minds are secure and at peace, and their hearts are purified and empty. When this state of preparedness is in them, the Real reveals Himself to them as the Teacher; and this witnessing informs them of the meanings of these reports and words in a single outpouring'.*

There are more parallel thoughts in philosophy and mysticism, and we may come back to discuss them on another occasion.

*The Editor*

# An Analysis of History

In reading through the *Philosophy of History* entry in the Stanford Encyclopedia of History, I came away unsatisfied. The essay took a number of things for granted, and seemed to come at describing ‘history’ from the perspective of an observer, suggesting a desired gap between the author of the accounting and the historical event(s) described. It failed even to reference foundational original texts such as Polybius, Livy, Herodotus, or Thucydides. And finally, while it made great efforts to define history, it did not ask the fundamentally important question: what is history, and why does it exist?

## DAN MCARDLE

### What is history?

If we go back to our foundations, the concept of ‘history’ is fuzzy. The earliest known text of Western Culture, the *Iliad*, is poetic and mythic in that it focuses on telling a story and communicating ideas rather than adhering to a fact-based rigidity we would expect today. The first written text we could actually call a ‘history’ would be the accounts of Herodotus, which are only partially recognizable to us as history. Conversely, the standard which modern historians employ was set by Thucydides, who takes a markedly different approach. Because there is much debate about their respective approaches, we should examine them both to begin to answer our questions.

Herodotus’ *Histories* (430 BC) is a fascinating tome that cannot quite figure out what it wants to be. It begins as one thing, morphs into something else, and ends as a completely different work. I like to call Book 1 the ‘bridge’ chapter, because it is filled with endless stories and fables, giving equal veracity to mythical gods and verified historical figures. In my opinion, it serves as a bridge between the pre-classical world of poetry and mythology and the world in which Herodotus lives. There is almost no narrative structure, and the book at times reads like a written pot-luck dinner of legends. We do not have to guess why he wrote this work because he tells us in the first sentence:

I, Herodotus of Halicarnassus, am here setting forth my history, that time may not draw the color from what man has brought into being, nor those great and wonderful deeds, manifested by both

Greeks and barbarians, fail of their report, and together with all of this, the reason why they fought one another’ (Translated by David Grene, 1987).

It is worth noting that the word ‘history’ here is a modern interpretation. The original text uses the word ‘ἵστορίης’ which, according to Perseus, means ‘inquiry’ or ‘recounting’, despite the fact that it phonetically sounds like our word ‘history’. I emphasize this point so that we do not confuse Herodotus’ purpose statement with how we view history today.

His readers will quickly find that he is fascinated by the world around him, and does his best to document things. He travels to many parts of the known world, and writes down what people tell him, sometimes giving two or three versions of the same story. He is famous for his ‘digressions’ in which he happily breaks narrative flow because something catches his eye, and he will go into great detail on seemingly insignificant things. At times his writing has the same feeling as that produced by a director who captures in film moments that are not relevant to the plot, simply to create immersion. In a way, his opening sentence is also a summary of his book: he begins with the pot-luck, transitions into an almost anthropological study of the known world, and ends with the Persian war.

Thucydides takes a very different approach. He opens his *History of the Peloponnesian War* (c. 400 BC) with a major event, the Corcyran civil war, and describes how an isolated incident festered and then



**Thucydides**

erupted into what might have been called a World War in his time, between Athens and Sparta. This first chapter is so compelling and meticulously detailed that it has been revisited many times, usually when yet another major crisis is threatened between major powers, such as the tension that happened after WW2 between the United States and the Soviet Union. Graham Allison, an American political scientist, coined the term ‘Thucydides Trap’ to describe the natural progression when one great power sees another as a looming threat.

In his opening, like Herodotus, Thucydides explains his purpose behind writing his work:

‘Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote the history of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, beginning at the moment that it broke out, and believing that it would be a great war, and more worthy of relation than any that had preceded it’ (translated by Richard Crawley, 1874).

Unlike Herodotus, Thucydides becomes very involved in his own narrative. Rather than simply acting as a relay for unverified stories and fables, Thucydides is quite clear that he is documenting the war as a lesson for future generations to provide that they might avoid such a conflict. He tries to analyse what happened, asks hard questions, and

focuses on the ‘why’ in addition to the ‘what’. In this way, his story is analytical, and even attempts to be preventative.

Thus, we have two competing origin stories for how our concept of history came to be, and an argument over what history *should* be. The first view is descriptive: it tries to paint an unbiased and objective picture of what things existed, what events happened, and serves as an act of preservation. We might ascribe the inclusion or exclusion of certain people or events to the biases or knowledge of the author. I would even argue that this is what comes to mind for the modern person when they hear the word ‘historian’.

Of equal importance is the analytic view: instead of focusing on the ‘what’, this view focuses on the ‘why’. We can see this in Thucydides’ opening statement if we read between the lines. He tells us that he began writing because he believed the war he was seeing would be ‘great’, and then proceeds, through his entire work, to explain *why* he believed that. We could further infer that he is writing to attempt to capture what transpired in an attempt to help ensure such a war never happens again.

### **How does history begin?**

Now that we have some idea of what history is, we should explore how we construct it. At its very base, both of our notions of history stem from placing

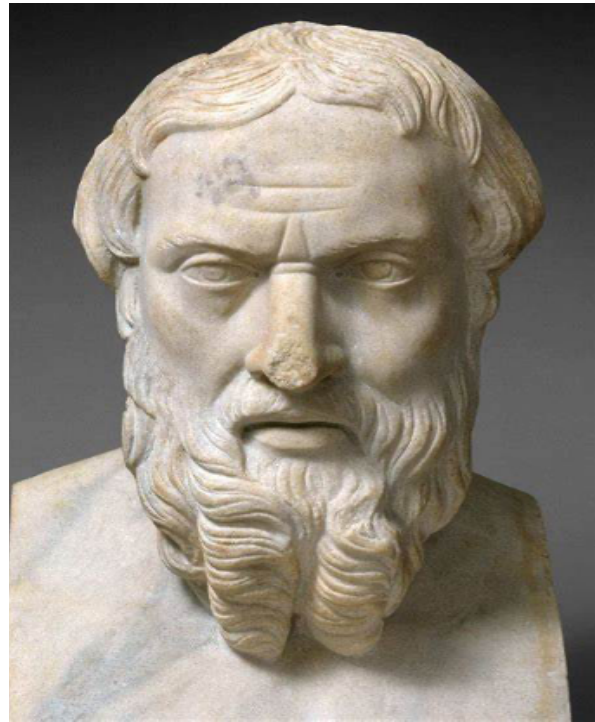
## History

markers onto time and trying to form meaning from them. In a sense, time is a constant of change. To borrow from Newton's Third Law of Motion, we know that every action in nature has an equal and opposite reaction. If we follow this law to its extreme conclusion and assume we have full knowledge of all actions, we should, in theory, be able not only to account for every action and reaction that happens at every point in time, but also, from a single point, to predict the state of everything in every other point in time.

Euclid teaches us that two points on a plane make a line, and that within a finite space, a line must have a beginning and an end. From this principle, we can start to plot out what we call 'history'. Because our documented events are predated by a potentially infinite unknown, the starting point will inherently be guided by our intentions and biases. One useful analogy might be the roots of a tree. If we consider recorded history to be like an ancient tree, instead of a single point of origin from which we can trace all events, we have a frayed tapestry of texts, inscriptions, and fables, the less relatable to modern standards the farther back we go. As we climb the roots to the surface and continue upwards, we find coherence, stability, and structure which allows the tree to stand tall, and the higher we go, the more we are able to see. As a tree is a living being, the limit to its height is unknown, as is the location of our endpoint in history.

And, once again, we have two competing notions of how the start of time should be recorded: 'in media res', and from a blank slate. We can find the former in the *Iliad*, which literally opens in the middle of a conflict, and we must spend the first few pages trying to read between the lines to understand what has happened. In order for a conflict to transpire, some prior history must have occurred which sets the stage for said conflict. Therefore, this view suggests a difference between the start of recorded history, and the start of actual history. In some sense, this is a paradox, because if there is a history, we must ask what lead to there being a history.

We find the other view in Plato's *Republic*. Notice that when Socrates attempts to describe a 'just' society, he does not take an existing society and improve it, but starts from scratch. He seems to think that if we can simply go back to the beginning of civilization and trace each event, we can avoid the

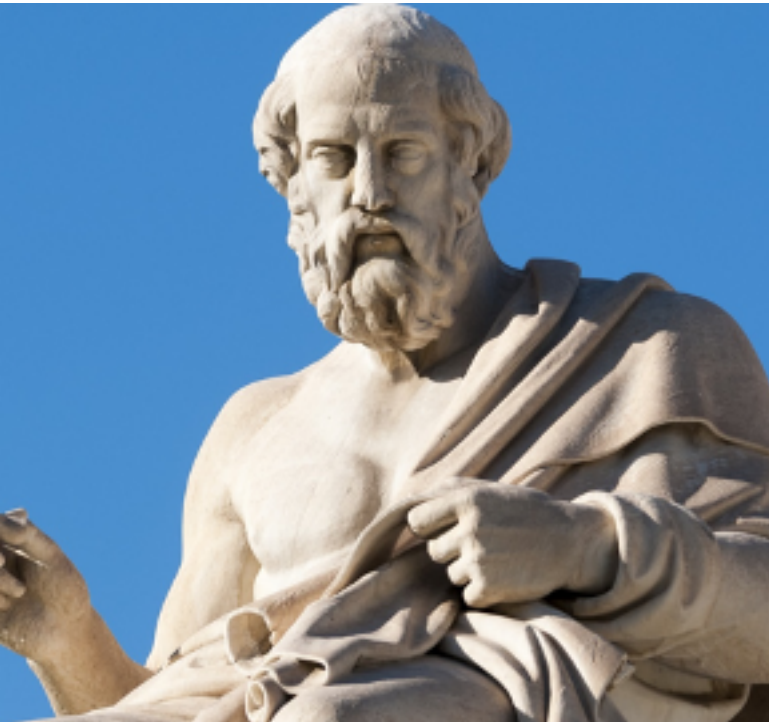


Herodotus

introduction of 'injustice' that leads to societal ills. This implies both that an early society can be free of injustice, and that once injustice is introduced, it is impossible to remove. To place this into the proper context, I would contend that Socrates is proposing a society in which the Peloponnesian War could not occur. However, his society exists in an unrealistic world: he seems to suggest it could exist to the exclusion of other societies, like an Athens without a competing Sparta, or like a tree with only a single root into the ground.

We are left facing the question of how injustice enters a society. If we return to our Newtonian concept of motion, it is obvious that we are looking at a massive, interconnected machine, where every action is explained by a previous action. But if this is how the world operates, then why does war happen? The clear answer is that Newton's Law is far reaching but not universal: it does not consider free will. It is a mechanistic view of the world, an attempt to reason out a simple pattern by which we can interpret reality, but its formula does not predict Achilles igniting a war against Troy.

The other problem with this approach is that history is only a line of points when we look at it retrospectively. When we stand at the current point of

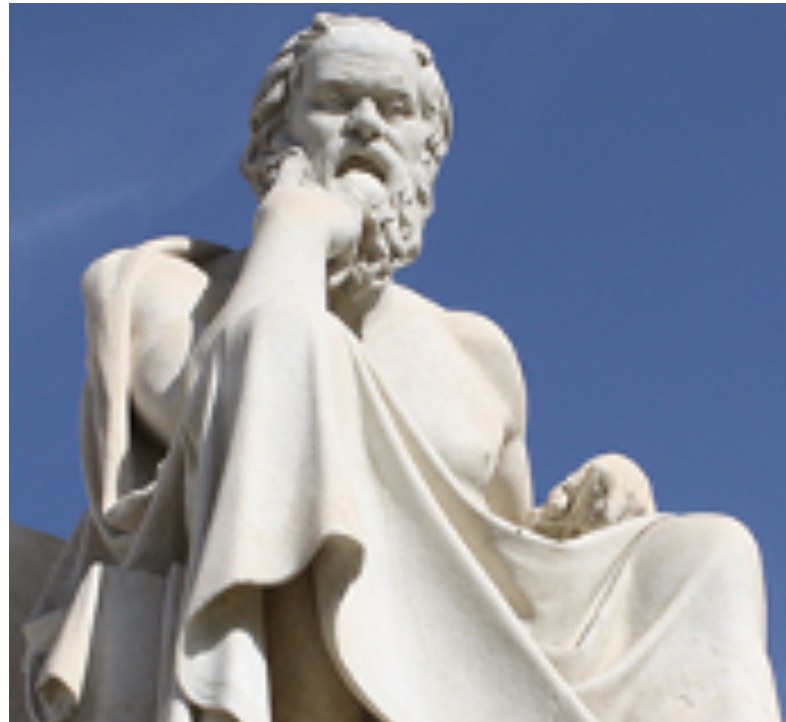


Plato

time, that which we might call ‘now’, it seems there are an infinite number of ‘next’ points to which we can connect, and asking how we make this decision brings us to the analytic view Thucydides would appreciate. It is clear that the next step happens as a combination of things we can control, such as our own interactions, and things we cannot control, such as what others may do, and time.

There is a different approach to this question in the Bible. Genesis opens with the fall of Man, and the rest of the Bible attempts to reconcile the consequences of the fall, and understand its implications. One might argue that the biblical account is what happens when Socrates’ ‘just’ society encounters free will. It is, after all, only after Adam and Eve both act of their own accord, that they are evicted from paradise. However, sin seems to be the biblical form of injustice, and without it, we feel empty. Consider how people born into rich households with very few ‘real’ problems often turn to drugs or crime for the thrill, or compare the adrenaline rush of surviving a dangerous situation to the complacent boredom of ‘normal’. It seems that humanity creates problems of sin and injustice in their absence.

Because of these problems, we feel a need to explain why they happened, and to try to ensure they never



Socrates

happen again. We see this in Thucydides, when, after he completes the saga of the Corcyran civil war, he then presents a history of the past fifty years leading up to said war, a nice continuity from where Herodotus left off. We also see this in Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which starts immediately after the reign of Marcus Aurelius— which Gibbon considered the height of the Empire— and continues with Aurelius’ son and successor Commodus, an awful tyrant who marks the beginning of the end. What follows is three thousand pages of disasters, attempts to resolve them, and cracks which emerge in the solutions and lead to yet another set of disasters. A similar pattern can be found in the historical books of the Bible (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles), in which a society is blessed by God, becomes comfortable with success, strays from God’s will, destroys itself, and then is born anew with a ‘chosen’ one who creates another society that is blessed by God. Recall that the parting of the Red Sea was in recent memory when the Israelites demanded Aaron create the Golden Calf.

### How does history end?

Neither Herodotus nor Thucydides gives a conclusion, so to answer this question, we will turn to Gibbon, who, like Thucydides, asks why a great society collapsed. But first, we should ask what

## History



Edward Gibbon

makes a society a society. How does a society or civilization start? Does it arise with the advent of commerce, with a legal system, or perhaps is it an extension of social norms when a given community acquires land and power in a region? Or is it shaped by events? Consider the comradery felt by soldiers after they have been in combat together. Whatever the cause, there is clearly some bond that unites people.

Another question worth asking: is civilization the natural state of man, or is it somehow different from or superior to nature? We often see people dismissing things they consider improper as ‘uncivilized,’ suggesting that adhering to a set of norms is what separates us from animals. But if civilization is a marker of superiority, then why does it naturally arise, and why does it also seem to naturally fall after an inevitable conflict? Could it be that there is something inherent in human nature that both propels us to great aspirations, and then ensures that we fly too close to the sun and burn up? Hesse asks this question in *Steppenwolf*, where Harry Haller is ripped apart by internal conflicts, perhaps the same ones which affect societies.

Let us assume that Socrates is correct, that there is

some inherent sin or injustice which will destroy society, but which, with proper care and planning, can be excluded. If its origin is free will, then why is it that his ‘just’ society goes through cycles, from aristocracy to tyranny? On the one hand, he implies that there will be no need for a criminal justice system because the society is just; on the other hand, why would the governing system evolve, if not to address and improve upon past injustices? Clearly, a society exists within two tensions: the forces that bring it into being, and those which try to destroy it. A society would not exist without the former, but at a certain point, the balance tips. There seem to be multiple reasons why this might happen.

One explanation is that its populace simply grows too large in size. The anthropologist Robin Dunbar explores this phenomenon in his research into the populations of primate societies and finds a correlation between brain size and the point beyond which their societies fracture. Applying this conclusion to humans, we can also see a fracturing in societies that become ungovernable like Rome, or when the government becomes detached from the populace, such as in monarchies. In most cases, such societies will either devolve into war, or split into multiple different societies. It is noteworthy that the Ancient Greeks had two words for war: ‘πολεμῖς,’ which means war between two cities, and ‘στᾶσις,’ meaning war within a city, known as ‘civil war’ in modern parlance. This is a curious linguistic development, and perhaps related to the issue of how a society identifies itself.

Another explanation commonly cited is known as the ‘third generation decline’. In this, a culture comes into existence because of some phenomenon, the next generation continues to exist but takes many of the benefits of said phenomenon for granted, and the third generation loses sight of why the benefits existed in the first place, and ultimately collapses. Thomas Mann explores this concept in his novel *Buddenbrooks*, in which a German family comes into wealth in the mid nineteenth century, proceeds to squander it, and by the third generation loses everything. While there are a number of factors that contribute to the family’s decline, a combination of clinging to past glories and an inability to cope with inevitable changes gives their heritage and reputation a death sentence.

Sometimes society collapses for reasons beyond its

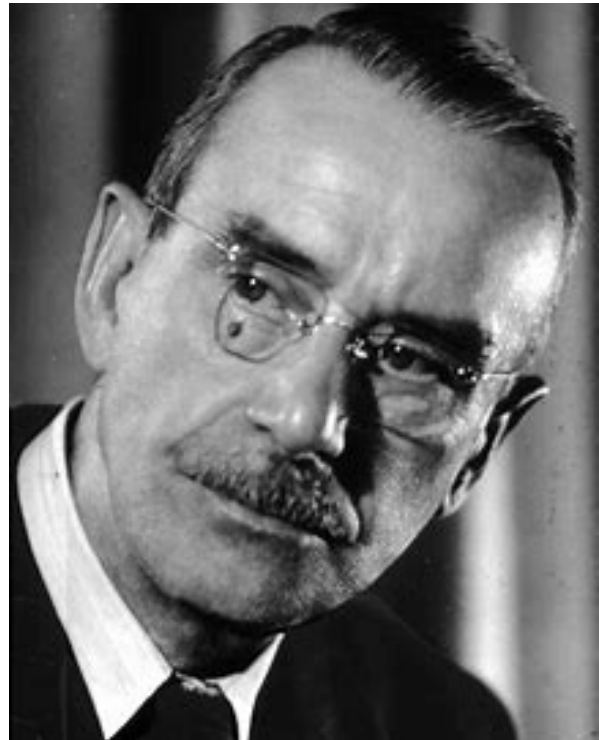


**Hermann Hesse**

control. It could be due to natural disasters, such as a volcanic eruption (Pompeii) or a hurricane. It could also be due to a resource shortage, such as Ireland during the potato famine, or when a coal mine is exhausted and along with it the livelihoods of the coal mining town. A similar argument comes from Joseph Schumpeter, that of creative destruction: with each new evolution in technology, one industry is created and another dies.

But often, the reason is fully within its control. In *Decline and Fall*, Gibbon makes many comments about what happens when comfort and luxury replace strife and toil. He decries the relaxed standards of Roman citizens once their empire reached far enough to hold any enemies at bay; he also suggests that the Roman military itself becomes lazy without any real competition, which eventually leads to their own decline and defeat by the Vandals and the Huns. Of course, this could also be Gibbon falling into the trap of mythologising Cincinnatus, the Roman military hero who, after his dictatorship returned to being an obscure farmer, just as in many societies the ‘cultured’ praise the “peasants” who do all the hard work.

And finally, although this point is controversial,



**Thomas Mann**

societies fall apart with the passing of great leaders. In almost every case, we can look at a society, name a leader around whom it gravitated, and after whose passing it collapsed. Thucydides claimed this about Pericles, many Romans said this about Augustus (the first Emperor), and while Tolstoy himself writes at length in the second epilogue of *War and Peace* about why he believes that leadership is an illusion and all history is itself a formless chaos, his epic work exists under the shadow of Napoleon.

While it is difficult to identify an exact origin from which to begin a history, agreeing on a conclusion is almost impossible. Original sources are often biased by their own experiences: if a soldier is banished partway through a war, might his history change in tone to reflect that? Secondary sources have the advantage of distance and time, and the comfort that they do not need to defend or justify any actions of their own. Finally, especially in the modern era, we have the advantage of knowing how the past played out, and therefore can use outcomes to cast narratives that further our own vision of how things transpired. In the end, there seems to be no ‘ideal’ way to capture history, but we can at least use known challenges to help guide how we navigate the future.

## There

There, deep in your centre,  
in its impenetrable core,  
constantly feeding itself  
in the sacred duty to be,  
because it has been decided,  
signed and divined  
from another deeper life.

There it resides,  
your life without borders,  
eternal, because eternity  
cowers in such a short outline,  
lurks and hides, lives and dies  
in a given time.

There it sings without sound,  
as everything that is silent is melody  
and a swish of retained birdsong and window  
into never passing mornings,  
immobile, crystalline, and enclosed.

There, where you do not suffer,  
nor doubt yourself, where you are quiet,  
without the pain of your frozen life,  
where you lie, immortal for the moment,

there,  
where you become storm and your own sunrise  
and beginning, there you respond,  
where the miracle grows,  
erupts and unfolds  
into salvation.

**Poem by *Scharlie Meeuws***





**‘Tree of life’ by *Nicola Meeuws***

## It's Just a Matter of Time

This snowman's beauty rests in transience  
Reminding us that all experience  
Is one of flux and flow, of come and go,  
Of change that's fast and change that's very slow.

These seeming solid buildings here, donate  
Atoms to forces that crush and create.  
If every year became a human day  
Th'appearance of stability would fly away.

The states and stasis we rely upon  
Are snapshots of reality, and gone  
Is any sense of permanence. Instead  
This dance is one of energy outspread.

But time comes to our rescue as it bends  
And swerves and adds its agency to ends  
That, hijacked meanings, give us purpose  
And fill our lives with structured calculus.

Then all substantiality is fixed,  
Like frozen light, dynamically, and mixed  
In matter for a splendid passing-by  
That finds its finest forms in you and I.

**Poem by *Mike Churchman***



Artwork by *Chris Churchman*

## Scholar-Dancer

*(in memory of Laurence Peddle)*

Are we human or are we dancer?

(The Killers, song lyric/title)

How can we know the dancer from the dance?

(W.B. Yeats)

Grace appears most purely in that human form which either has no consciousness or an infinite consciousness. That is, in the puppet or in the god.

(Heinrich von Kleist, 'On the Puppet Theatre')

12



CHRIS NORRIS

The scholar's gone, the dervish-dancer too;  
The curious scholar, Rodin's *Le Penseur*,  
And, on the instant, that gyrating blur  
Of limbs when tempo-change arrived on cue.  
Always they marvelled at it, those who knew:  
How should twin selves so closely intertwine,  
Such rigour with such vigour thus combine?

A false antithesis, so they aver:  
Think rather it's the dancer who'd divine,  
Absent that tempo, where some latest line  
Of thought went wrong, how trip-ups may occur,  
Or some missed step admonish him 'you err'.  
Think also, as he dances nimbly through  
The logic proofs: what did we know of you?

The dance climactic and each thought a sign  
Of otherness, of just how far the true,  
The valid, and the tenable withdrew  
From all that we'd assuredly define,  
We 'normal' types, as 'normal'. Why decline  
Their promise, those rare moments that confer,  
Dance-wise and for the logic connoisseur,

Such attributes on him as left behind  
All recourse to the normal, to the test  
Of standard scholarship or what goes best  
On any dance-floor. Let's say he'd a mind  
To think the world afresh, reject the kind  
Of sequence, plan, or way of doing things  
Where dance and thought are routine happenings

No cause to think of him as one possessed,  
Like saint or prophet, by the zeal that springs  
From thwarted genius or vainly clings  
To self-belief as if uniquely blest  
With such high tidings. Rather hear the zest  
That radiates when scholar-dancers find  
Steps unprescribed, truth-values unassigned.

His message: there's no stumbling-block but brings  
New footwork forth, no error that's so blind  
It yields no insight. Let that DJ wind  
The tempo up until the woman sings  
A proper dervish-stirrer, gives new wings  
To body-mind, and drives the single quest  
For what thought's body-snatchers long suppressed.

Rodin's *Le Penseur*



# Quantum Entanglement

Dr. ALAN XUEREB

In lay terms quantum entanglement is when two particles link together in a certain way no matter how far apart they are in space. Their state remains the same. It so appears that information between these entangled particles travels instantaneously. Travis Norsen, in his review of Alisa Bokulich's and Gregg Jaeger's *Philosophy of Quantum Information and Entanglement*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, says that the puzzling features of quantum theory were first noticed and explored especially by Einstein and Schrödinger in the 1930s. Schrödinger (1935, 1936) coined the term 'entanglement' to describe this kind of situation, and Einstein (along with co-authors Podolsky and Rosen, 1935) famously pointed out that the 'spooky action at a distance' associated with measurement on entangled states seemed to reveal a conflict between quantum theory, as it was understood especially by Niels Bohr and special relativity's prohibition on faster-than-light causal influences.

This poses an interesting paradox, as is the paradox of art itself. Indeed, it is amusingly paradoxical that we try, as artists, to reproduce something which we cannot even perceive, sometimes not even conceive. This, as I have many times mentioned here and elsewhere, appears to depart from the principle *ars imitatur naturam*. One question is what is art after all?

Aristotle believed that visual art, like all art, is a form of imitation or representation of reality. He argued that the purpose of visual art is to produce a certain emotional response in the audience, which is achieved through the skilful use of colour, line, and form. Aristotle believed that visual art has the power to reveal the essence of things, as it can capture the underlying qualities and characteristics of the subject matter. He also noted that different forms of visual art, such as painting and sculpture, have their own unique methods and techniques, and that each requires a different kind of skill and knowledge. Ultimately, Aristotle saw visual art as a way to enhance our understanding and appreciation of the world around us, and to inspire us to reflect on our own experiences and emotions.

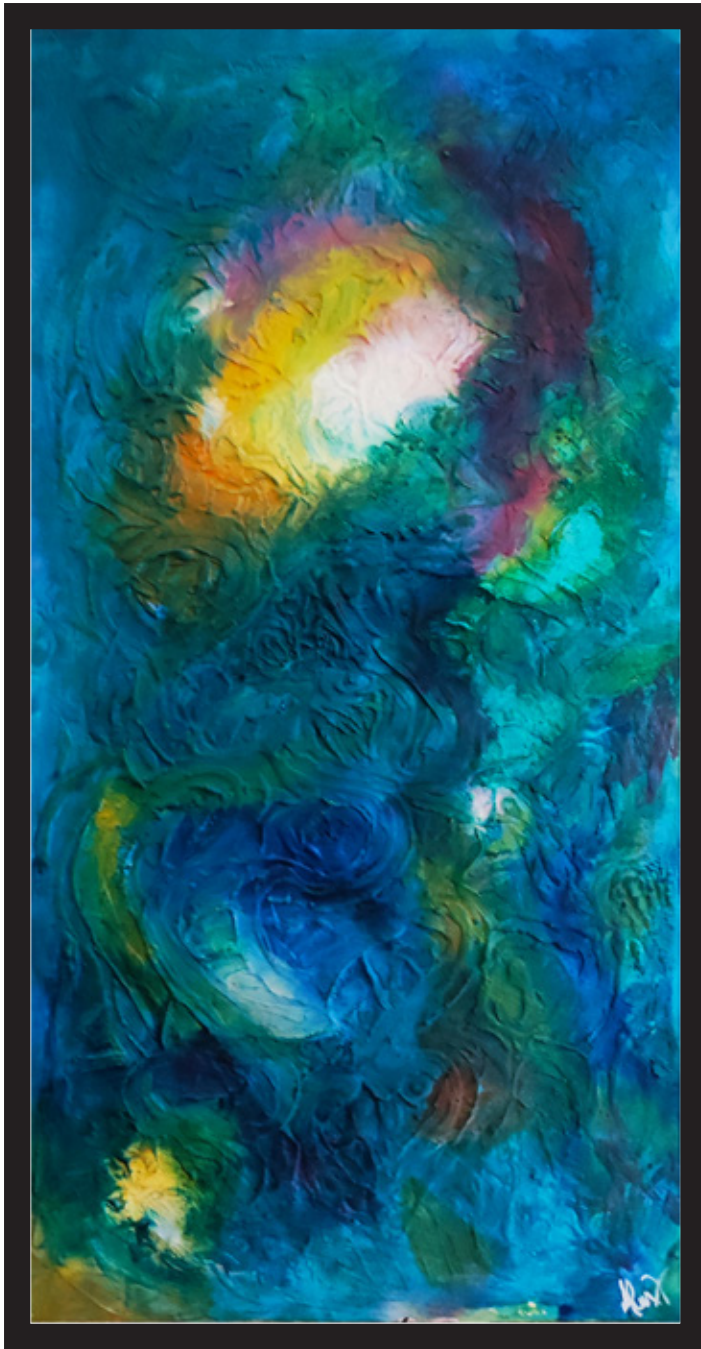
On the other hand art, according to Heidegger, is not merely a means of creating visually pleasing objects or entertainment. Instead, art is a way of revealing the truth of being. He believed that the aestheticization of art has led to a limited and abstract view of it, which

has ultimately hindered our understanding of the world. Additionally, Heidegger rejected the idea that art is subjective, and instead argued that it reveals objective truths about the world.

Heidegger does not think of the work of art, (a 'great' work of art), in terms of representation or form and content. While aesthetics has long used these classes in order to evaluate and interpret artworks, Heidegger considers that these methods are unsuitable for investigating the *Being* of works of art. This, of course, is not to say that these categories are totally useless in relation to the study of works of art. Heidegger will lay out his own categories through which the *Being* of artworks is revealed. Surprisingly, Heidegger only sporadically mentions beauty in the course of his analysis. Another surprise in his book *Poetry, Language, Thought* is that Heidegger, unlike many philosophers from Plato to Nietzsche, argues that truth and art are deeply interconnected — not mutually exclusive. Heidegger flat out discards the belief that art is *subjective*, a belief that is very much in fashion to this day.

I cannot here go too deep in this analysis. However, Heidegger proceeds to explain that despite whatever else artworks may be, one thing is clear — they are *things*: *'[W]orks are as naturally present as things. The picture hangs on the wall like a rifle or a hat. A painting, e.g., the one by Van Gogh that represents a pair of peasant shoes, travels from one exhibition to another. Works are shipped like coal from the Ruhr and logs from the Black Forest. During the First World War Hölderlin's hymns were packed in the soldier's knapsack together with cleaning gear. Beethoven's quartets lie in the storerooms of the publishing house like potatoes in a cellar'*. Moreover, Heidegger was always concerned with truth throughout the course of his whole career. As far as truth-as-uncovering goes, Heidegger developed this concept of truth in one of his later essays entitled *On the Essence of Truth*, and this is the concept of truth that is relevant to our discussion of *The Origin of the Work of Art*. Heidegger argues in this later essay that truth is *unconcealment*.

Heidegger's concept of truth (*alētheia* — this is the Greek word for truth that Heidegger translated as 'unconcealment') is very original. Some commentators have interpreted Heidegger as rejecting the concept of truth-as-correspondence, but I believe this is a mistake.



**'Quantum Entanglement'**  
Oil on gypsum (2017)

Mark Wrathall argues very convincingly that Heidegger did not reject truth-as-correspondence in his essay entitled 'Heidegger and Truth as Correspondence'. However, what Heidegger was primarily concerned with was primordial truth, a truth more basic than the truth of correspondence — the former being the condition of the latter.

Well, perhaps humanity will never get to know the truth about these two paradoxes – what is sure is that we as philosophers and artists should keep trying to disentangle artistically or otherwise for as long as we can!

## *The Wednesday*

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The Wednesday Press, Oxford

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*When Rumi Made The Distance Disappear*



When Rumi made the distance disappear  
By fond imagination's power to tease,  
He felt the presence of his Shams was near,  
Although Shams was far distant in Tabriz.

The thou and I were in a garden one.  
Birdsong and the scented roses blest  
The union on which light with blessings shone,  
As two souls mingled from each touching breast.

I in Iraq and you in north Iran,  
Yet distance was abolished in our trance  
Oneness and immortality achieved.

We did far more than common mortals can,  
As Sufis when united in their dance  
Achieve a bliss that cannot be believed!

*Edward Greenwood*



The *Wednesday* – Magazine of the Wednesday group.

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