The *Wednesday*

Editorial

A Matter of Style

A year ago, I wrote about philosophical style. Since then, I have been collecting some further thoughts about this topic. I thought first that it was a matter of personal taste, but gradually I have come to understand that it may have a necessity of its own, in that style may be dictated by content. It also became clear to me that philosophy - or rather, doing philosophy by philosophizing - could be extended to any topic and could be formulated in any style, but with this one guiding thought: that style is suggested by both content and context.

I have come across some ideas from aesthetics, which could be applied here. It has been suggested that there is a 'severe style', one that is not primarily aimed at helping the reader or listener, but at helping the philosopher to work out their system. Such a severe style directs its efforts towards its object, a concept, and performs an immanent development of that concept in a rigorous way that may require of the reader and the listener more effort fully to understand that development. You may call this 'an austere style', a style that attempts to be faithful to the concept and its development rather than the ease of understanding it. Perhaps this is what makes Spinoza's Ethics difficult to read, with its geometrical method of deduction and sets of definitions, axioms and theorems. Similarly, it is the case with Schelling in his identity philosophy and the absolute and Hegel's Logic, starting with the concepts of Being, Nothing, Existence and their internal development. Heidegger is another case, with his Being and Dasein. But all these philosophers and others who apply the severe style end up with interesting results and not just logical manipulations.

The alternative is the 'agreeable style'. Unlike the severe style, it tries to relax the emphasis on the conceptual minimalism, and involves information and context, maybe through bringing in previous philosophers' views and making contrasts and comparisons, relating the argument to personal, social or political context. The emphasis here is less on logical purity at all costs, and more on involving the reader or listener in the argument, through raising his personal interest in the topic intellectually and emotionally. In its popular style, it may involve a dramatic setting, as in the Socratic dialogues or Kierkegaard. One of the last attempts at reviving this style was in Schelling's dialogue Bruno. The dialogue form was also used in replying to a given text, such as Leibnitz', and Berkeley's to Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

But if the severe style is difficult to follow despite its fidelity to its object, and the agreeable style loses clarity despite its charm, there is a third style which insists on fidelity to the concept without losing its charm to the reader. This is called the 'ideal style'. It has been described as 'truthful and edifying', where hopefully content finds the right form. In other words, the content suggests the method of developing the thought.

Philosophy has been done in many styles or forms, from sharp, austere writing with an intensive use of logic, to novels and plays, such as we find in the work of existentialist philosophers from Kierkegaard to Sartre. It has also been suggested that philosophy could come from music, poetry, tragic drama, mythology and initiation rituals, such as it was in ancient Greece.

The ideal style is obviously an ideal. It may be difficult to find a form that will fit its content, but the point I am making is that philosophy should not sacrifice relevance, understanding and interest for the sake of formal rigor.

The Editor

Forging Truth with Rorty's Ironist

This is an exploration of how we use ambiguity in speech to handle complex ideas, to show ambiguity as a feature, rather than a bug. It is a response to Richard Rorty's idea about truth and why it's not a useful concept for philosophers.

PETER STIBRANY

Richard Rorty famously declared that the idea of 'truth' has long passed its use-before date and should be abandoned by philosophers. When I first read an account of this, it seemed yet another validation of my choice to go into the engineering sciences. My thinking was that without truth to discipline our thinking, discussion is just one person's word against another. I read several of Rorty's essays and listened to hours of his lectures, looking to load ammunition in my anti-Rorty mortar, but was surprised to find little with which to disagree. So, I changed my mind about Rorty. He takes from us the conceit of attaining a divine perspective and places us in the human realm of what we can know. He completes the excision of absolutism from our thinking, in both philosophy and science.

Truth in Science

My starting point could not have been further from Rorty's declaration regarding truth. I know certain things to be true, and I am puzzled by philosophers and scientists who say otherwise. They say: 'Of course, our theories are provisional; we cannot think of them as true. We must remember that they might be overturned, like Newton's laws of motion overturned Aristotle's and Einstein's overturned Newton's. We do not yet have the truth'. This thinking presupposes that we will not know the truth until we know 'how things really are', when we have a theory of everything. By this view, all phenomena will be shown to be emergent from this most fundamental theory and its unique ontology. I see this as a search for the divine perspective that knows all as it really is. But this search for ultimate knowledge overlooks what we already know to be true: Buildings stand, electronics operate, aeroplanes fly, artillery shells and missiles rain down on cities. These all embody truths.

The way I see it, the laws of motion proposed by Aristotle, Newton, and Einstein are not just tentative. They are all true within certain domains and to certain degrees of accuracy. The physicist Carlo Rovelli sets his students the exercise of showing how Einstein's general relativity equations simplify to become Newton's laws given certain assumptions to do with low velocities and weak gravity, and how Newton's laws become Aristotle's ideas of motion given additional assumptions to do with the dynamics of fluids and operation on the surface of the earth. I would go so far as to say that most people today get by very nicely holding Aristotelian ideas of motion.

The idea that we do not already know many truths is simply wrong. But our minds are not infinite. To respect our human cognitive limits, true statements must always be pared down to a specific context, to a domain in which they apply.
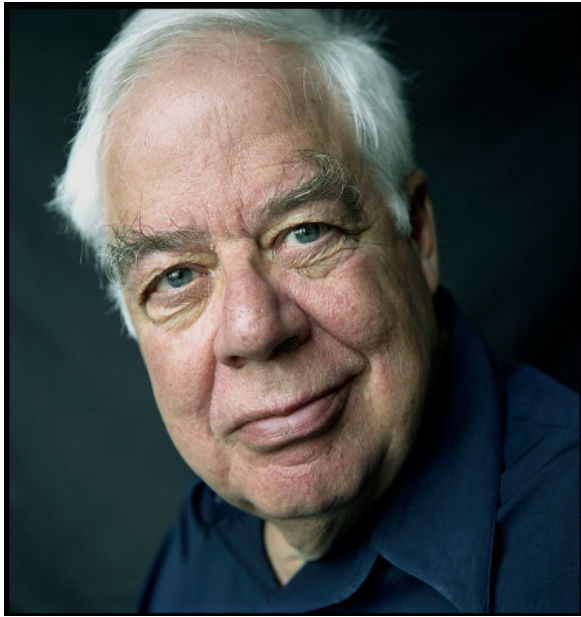
Rorty

Carlo Rovelli

Truth in Literature and Philosophy

I blush to say that it took me a long time to see the humanities as worthwhile. I thirsted for truth independent of people and their opinions. For me, people were irrational. This starting point was very far from that of Rorty, the professor of philosophy, humanities, and comparative literature. I am therefore hoping you will see it as surprising that I might agree with a great deal of what he said. For instance, I agree that truth does not help evaluate poetry. For example, here are the first lines of 'What I am' by Edie Brickell and the New Bohemians. I find these immensely elegant:

I'm not aware of too many things,
I know what I know, if you know what I mean.

The meaning intended by the author for the phrase 'if you know what I mean' is probably 'I am not sure I expressed myself adequately'. With this meaning, the first two lines come across as both anti-intellectual and complacent. Furthermore, asking whether the poet said something true seems irrelevant. But if we interpret the 'if' to mean 'if and only if', then we have a different creature entirely. The line then might mean 'I know something only after I write it or say it for someone else to understand'. That would be a comment on the impossibility of private language and the intersubjective nature of thinking and understanding.

If we constrain the meaning of poetry to the intentions of one person, the author, we miss what happens when multiple minds combine and bring the richness of their experience to the interpretation. And it could be that the author does not have any specific meaning in mind; the poem may just feel right to them. Borrowing from the ideas of the psychiatrist philosopher Iain McGilchrist, it may largely be a right-brain affair. What is at issue is not any hypothetical true meaning, or the conveyance of true propositions, but interesting, productive, meaningful interpretations and experiences. This is how I imagine the world of Richard Rorty, the professor of humanities.

Richard Rorty's Escape

To Rorty, what matters is agreement and disagreement; truth is not relevant. If everyone is convinced that X, then by definition, no one is arguing X is false. These items of consensus become invisible to us. We focus instead on views for which there is no consensus, and wonder: 'Who is right and who is wrong? Is anyone right? What is the truth of this?' But Rorty counsels these to be pointless questions. He sees truth as a matter of conversation and not a mirror of nature. Reality may be whatever it is, but what matters is what we know and what we can agree on. What matters is conversation, justification, and the democratic process towards decision and action. That said, even consensus statements must be held lightly. After all, someone may come with a novel view for us to consider.

Rorty sees it as futile to seek a God's-eye view of the world, of how things 'really are'. As the song says, we are not aware of too many things; we only know what we can know. We are only able to take in

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Walking on sand

what our human abilities allow us. In this way, Rorty escapes the grasp both of religious truth and the kind of scientific truth that takes the place of religion for the irreligious.

Rorty concludes that the attitude to cultivate is that of an ironist, i.e. someone who understands that any particular description of reality is only contingent. This is awfully close to what I said earlier about scientific truth necessarily being contextual, to respect our human limitations.

Rorty's Ironist Doing Science

Rorty attacks the idea that we know exactly how things are. I suppose this view might put out some scientists, but I see it as very friendly to scientific thinking. Finding completely different descriptions and ontologies for the same phenomena is, if anything, an objective of good scientists. Diverse descriptions can yield diverse insights. What differentiates scientists from artists is their effort to bring these alternative descriptions together. Scientists take for granted that nature is just one way, therefore scientific theories should not contradict each other. This reality is different in the humanities, where ambiguity may be inherent, unresolvable, or

even desired.

Importantly, in scientific observations, the same circumstances always bring about the same results. Nature does not bring new ideas to be considered. Even Rorty's ironist can find statements that do not need to be held lightly, when talking about nature. I was going to argue that science is a branch of philosophy, and that the same holds for philosophy, but some philosophers have managed to cut themselves off from nature, and swim solely in the creations of their minds. A close relationship between philosophy and action is in medical ethics. But there again, medical ethics is not about truth. It is about settling the minds of human beings, assuring them that the medical process changing their lives is fair. It is all about feelings. The same can be said of ethics generally.

Thinking need only be tested by our minds; actions are tested by the much larger mind of nature. Scientists and their institutions are subject to all the human frailties. But the scientific conversation, expressed through the actions of experimentation, includes nature as an interlocutor; it is not just us talking to each other. It is not their rationality but the

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rationality of nature that pushes the institutions of science away from the worst excesses of politics. A consensus with nature can be held firmly.

Rorty's ironist uses rationality and intuition to navigate conversations to some conclusions, always ready to resume the discussion if new insights come to light. Science is consistent with this, but not the same. All this is to say that I do not want to give the impression that science produces truth and all else is opinion. So, to conclude this article, I offer the following metaphor of the rocks, the sand, the surf, the deep, and the sky.

The Rocks

I said there are certain statements that I am happy to call true; not somewhat true, approximately true, or provisionally true until something better comes along, but simply true. For example, one of those statements is that acceleration due to gravity on the surface of the earth is is 9.8 ± 0.1 m/s²) (is 9.8 +/- 0.1 m/s²) in the International System of Units. It is reliable and useful. With it, we are walking on a solid, rocky surface.

The Sand

Take a statistical forecast such as 'in the UK, there is a 95% chance that between 20,000 and 21,000 people will die of a heart attack in 2023'. For me, relying on probabilistic statements is like walking on sand. This statement cannot be falsified, but it is also not entirely without justification, and it is not useless. Such statements are squishy, like walking on loose sand, but they do hold us up. Creating these statements and justifying them enough to take seriously is rational. Large swathes of public policy depend on such not-strictly-speaking-true statements.

The Surf

Then we get to wading in the surf. We are not just walking on sand but also buffeted by waves. I would put statements from medicine and psychology into this domain. These statements tend to have wide variances. Something like this is happening with statements like those of psychology and medical treatment generally. They are based on scientific investigation, so metaphorically we are still walking on something. But we are severely buffeted by specific, unpredictable circumstances. Those that say psychology is not a science because it can explain everything but predict nothing are missing an important point; it is a science that creates pathways for exploring and treating individual, unique cases.

The Deep

Then, we get to the depths where we are not walking on anything. We are swimming. Firm ground is down there somewhere, but we might swim over plains, valleys, or mountains beneath us and not realise it. Swimming over the deep is the domain of literature, poetry, and art generally. It is the realm of opinion. But that is not to say that anything goes. We may no longer be in the realm of science, but we are not without structure. For example, we judge statements based on their interest, whether they lead to other ideas and connections, how pleasing they are, and what experiences they provide. We can still rank statements. We can swim, we can dive, or we can sink. In this realm of opinion, Richard Rorty is not a relativist believing that you can have your truth and I can have my truth and that neither of us can judge the ideas of the other. We have a common destiny and must engage and work together.

The Sky

Finally, we live under a common sky, far above us and equally unreachable from all the domains. Except that now and then, someone reminds us that the sky has no boundaries either above or below.

Where we differ

I have defined scientific truth as contextual and arising from an interaction with nature, calling true any statement that is reliable and useful. The job of the scientist is to take actions that create and test such statements and find the boundaries within which they meet these criteria. On the other hand, Rorty focuses on interactions between people, where only agreement and disagreement are on offer. Our positions are different but not at odds; both do away with absolute frames of reference. But I find unpragmatic Richard Rorty's thought that we can hold our opinions ironically and settle all our disagreements in good faith through conversation. People sometimes hold even unwarranted opinions very tightly. Disagreements not resolvable through discussion are resolved by violence, and I have not yet found how Rorty's philosophy extends in this area.

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Scientists are no less likely to hold tightly to unwarranted opinions than anyone else. But however hard they pull, nature pulls harder, so eventually they must loosen their grip; this is nature's violence, its tender mercy. But letting go does not cast scientists into chaos. Their salvation lies in the stability of nature, in truth.

Encounter with my dead father

I am holding my father's hand so white
and in silence we walk up the whispering track.
Dark figures with helmets lie on the side.
Blue shapes of hands wave to me in the night
and I dare not look back.

No purple blood runs from father's bones,
no wound below his heart I can see,
but softly a cross rises up from the stones
for his soul that still lingers and moves and moans
in the breeze of eternity.

Oh, the nearness of death, however far,
from a ghost to a weeping child,
since that fateful day when the morning star
had decayed into darkness, where still we are
in a world that's abused and defiled.

Oh, that quietness along the blue river's bank,
when thoughts raise forgotten things…
And like phantoms they move in silent rank,
point to the sky and the earth, draw a blank,
and open their filigree wings

and rise into disappearing white mist
and leave me alone, where I stand and remain,
in the midst of shadows that turn and twist,
and grow and decline and cease to exist
when a bird calls strangely in vain.

Poem and Artwork by *Scharlie Meeuws*

What is a discussion?

We had a debate recently on the nature and style of discussion. Below is one view of what it means to have a discussion.

RUUD SCHUURMAN

I defined 'discussion' as 'an exchange of reasons for or against an assertion'. My opponent claimed that the actual meaning of 'discussion' is wider, and that any conversation about a particular topic is a discussion. While I agree that the word 'discussion' is sometimes used loosely and indiscriminately, to define 'discussion' as 'a conversation about a particular topic' seems far too broad. It includes types of interpersonal communication that are clearly not discussions (e.g., interviews, gossiping, interactive teaching) or not just discussions (e.g., debates).

	My opponent	Ruud
Conversation	Interchange of thoughts through words	Exchange of **words**. (Conversational)
Discussion	Conversation focused on a topic	Exchange of **reasons** for or against assertions. (Rational)
Debate	Discussion for or against a proposition	Exchange of **reasons** (*logos*), **emotions** (*pathos*), the speaker's (lack of) **credentials** (*ethos*), etc. (Rhetorical)

Confusing 'discussions' with 'debates' is a horrifying thought! Whoever has seen presidential debates in the US or debates in the UK parliament will know why. Debates are closed-minded, rhetorical efforts to persuade others at all costs, while discussions are rational (i.e., reason-able, exchanges of reasons) and aim at understanding. While debates may also appeal to reason (*logos*), they are more often primarily (or only) an appeal to emotions (e.g., fears, desires, instincts, myths; i.e., *pathos, mythos*), an appeal to the credibility of the speaker or lack thereof (e.g., claiming that the speaker is an authority, expert, or, vice versa, an amateur or liar; i.e., *ethos*), an appeal to conformance (e.g., to public opinion, common sense; i.e., *dogma*), and they tend to employ the kind of tricks that Arthur Schopenhauer listed in 'The art to keep being right (even if you are wrong).' (*Eristische Dialektik: Die Kunst, Recht zu behalten*; 1831).


The whole issue may be culturally based: Definitions in Germany and The Netherlands support my (narrow) view of what discussions are. Definitions in the UK are vaguer, perhaps because they also try to accommodate the loose use. But if we strip the UK definitions of decorum, they seem to boil down to the continental view of what discussions are.

But let me take a step back because this particular discussion about the meaning of the word 'discussion' is just one in a series. We had similar discussions about the meaning of, e.g., 'real', 'know', 'certain', and even 'identical'. So, the question is: How can we determine the (correct) meaning of a word?

My opponent claims that the meaning of a word is determined by **how it is used**. But a word can often be used in different ways, even within a given context, geographical location, social class, etc. Also, the use of a word may change over time. It would require a sophisticated (qualitative and quantitative) research to see how a word is used right now. So, this criterion has its drawbacks, to put it mildly.

Arguably, **the etymology** of a word can help to determine the meaning. But not all words have a known etymology. Also, the etymological meaning may clash forcefully with what words are taken to mean today. For example, the etymological meaning of 'phenomena' is 'appearances' ... but
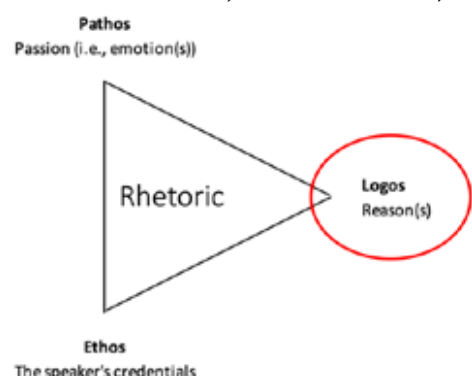
when I suggested this to Galen Strawson, he accused me of foul play. According to him phenomena are 'real existents'. (He is so used to being deceived by appearances that he accuses those who are not of foul play). So, this criterion also has its drawbacks.

What about the direct, **literal meaning** of a word? To use the examples: Dartmouth is the village at the mouth of the river Dart. But is that really the meaning of the word? What if the river changed course? And what about the Holy Roman Empire, which was neither Holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire. So, this is not a reliable criterion either.

But what's all the fuss about? Can't we simply agree on **the dictionary meaning** of the word? Yes, this seems to be the only way. After all, what matters is not so much that we have the most correct meaning of words, but rather that all participants in a discussion understand words in the same way (i.e., that we avoid ambiguity). We can assure the latter by relying on a ruling dictionary. So, in case of disagreement about the meaning of a word, we can use the dictionary as the referee. Of course, we would have to agree on which dictionary we would use, which may be surprisingly difficult (e.g., *Oxford English Dictionary* (which is not as good as the name suggests), Merriam-Webster's (as it seems better), *Wiktionary* (as it is more international), or ...?). Also, we would have to agree on which of the definitions to use; Dictionaries typically offer several definitions of a word, e.g., a primary, secondary, etc., archaic and etymological definitions, as well as definitions for particular contexts (e.g., law, mathematics,

philosophy, medicine). So, I guess, we would have to agree on using the definition for the particular context (if any is given) or else agree on using the primary definition (as opposed to alternatives that may also be listed). The differences between primary and secondary meanings can be crucial. For example, I am happy with the primary definitions of 'real', as 'not merely apparent', while my opponent insists on the secondary meaning of 'real', as 'genuine'; According to him, the first definition is archaic and has no application, if I understand him correctly. One drawback of relying on definitions is that words can only be defined in terms of other words, which may have to be defined in other words, resulting in an infinite regress of definitions or self-reference. So, while relying on a selected dictionary may be the only practical way to go about it, even this has important difficulties.

Last but not least, I believe that in discussions and other communication with or intended for others, we should leave it up to the speaker to define the terms he uses. Of course, it would be helpful if the stipulated meaning is in line with how the word is used, with its etymology, with its direct, literal meaning, and with definitions found in dictionaries, but that is not always possible.

If I have learned anything about the meaning of words, it is that it is not a matter of being right or wrong. It is not something that can be objectively determined, but only subjectively agreed upon. The importance is not to find the elusive correct meaning of a word, but to agree on the meaning.

Past Masters

Diego Velázquez painted Juan de Pareja in 1650, muting all signs of rank and class so that, despite his dark skin, he became unplaceable in the social order . . . . He was a man of African descent, whom Velázquez held in slavery for decades before persuading him to pose. A few years later, he was a free man with a trade: he too became an accomplished professional painter. Velázquez executed Pareja's portrait in Rome, where it was exhibited in the Pantheon and electrified the city . . . . Velázquez, though well known in Spain, arrived in Rome as a provincial celebrity and left as a megastar. Pareja arrived as his property and departed the same way, though with a formal promise of freedom.

Ariella Budick, 'Juan de Pareja', *The Financial Times*, April 23rd 2023

1

I call him 'master' without fear or shame.
They catch our glances, know we share a jest.
I call him 'master' without fear or shame.

Once there were certain limits still to test;
Now painting grants that master-pupil tie.
They catch our glances, know we share a jest.

It's art's demands we set our standards by;
Unequal still, yet on a common scale
Now painting grants that master-pupil tie.

Some master-strokes he brings off where I fail;
There's none could say 'Velàzquez, now yield place!'.
Unequal still, yet on a common scale.

Pure mastery, no thought of master-race:
A hallowed partnership, teacher and taught.
There's none could say 'Velàzquez, now yield place!'.

Moments there are . . . But no, they count for naught:
Beware lest art succumb to envy's claim!
A hallowed partnership, teacher and taught.
I call him 'master' without fear or shame.

CHRIS **NORRIS**
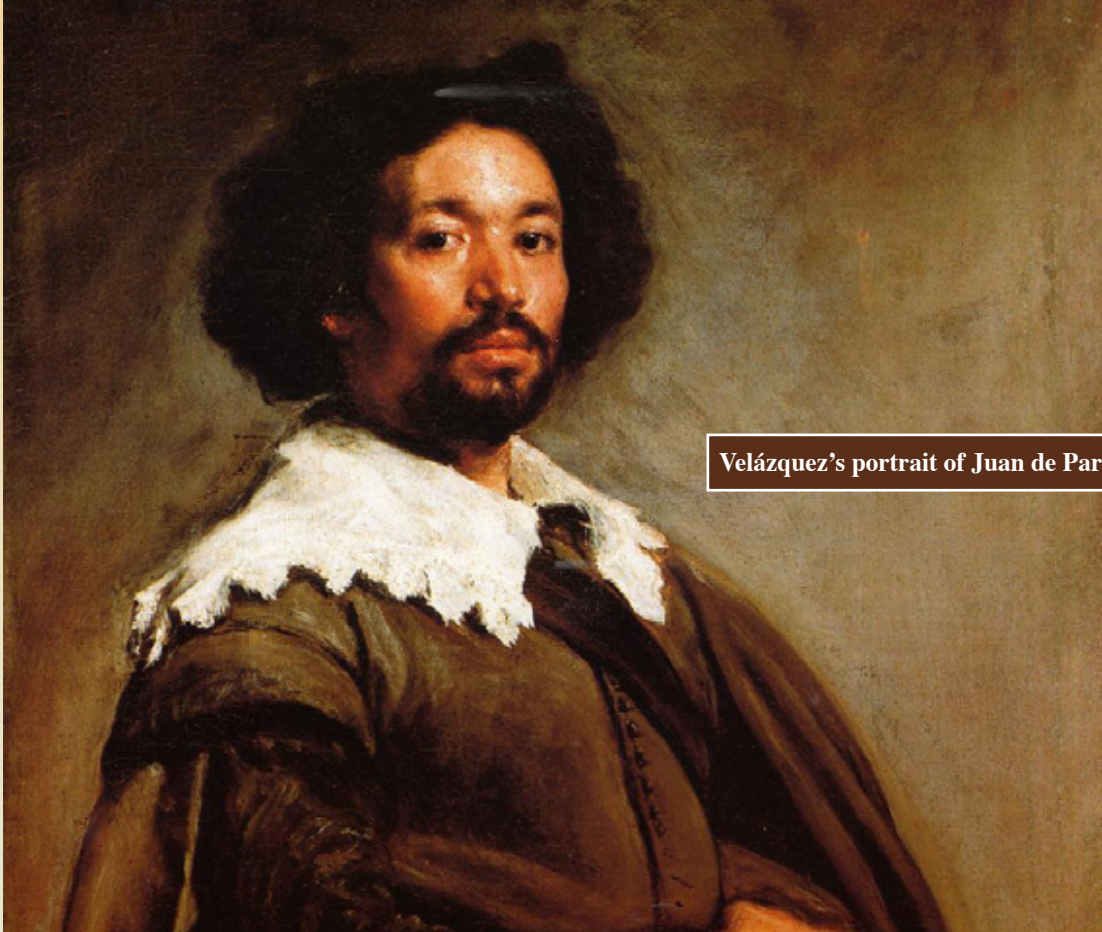
Velázquez's portrait of Juan de Pareja in 1650

2

What if he plays that other master's game?
Might not my signs of talent fail the test?
What if he plays that other master's game?

Sometimes he's apt to bark out a request –
'Do as I say: do not presume to vie!'.
Might not my signs of talent fail the test?

They note it, and the rumours quickly fly:
Just shows how blood and breeding must prevail.
'Do as I say, do not presume to vie!'

I pay no heed to it, that cynic's tale.
It's friendship, lives, and paintings they'd deface:
'Just shows how blood and breeding must prevail'!

Yet there's no whispered word but leaves its trace.
I lend an ear more often than I ought.
It's friendship, lives, and painting they'd deface.

All intrigue, lies, and scandal, Philip's court!
Even as I paint its filth invades the frame.
I lend an ear more often than I ought;
What if he plays that other master's game?

11

Velázquez's self-portrait

3

How should I know we feel and think the same?
What proof have I? A suitor's hunch at best.
How should I know we feel and think the same?

Me 'greatly gifted', he with genius blest:
I cruise the middle air, he cleaves the sky!
What proof have I? A suitor's hunch at best.

Still we've our works as witness, he and I.
Art's bond stays strong where other links prove frail.
I cruise the middle air, he cleaves the sky,

Yet his work wings me upward when I flail:
Great masters glide this side of outer space!
Art's bond stays strong when other links prove frail.

We venture out together, far from base,
He Jason, I his trusty argonaut.
Great masters glide this side of outer space!

Yet when I think what miracles he's wrought
Then it's my own sad fallings-short I blame.
He Jason, I his trusty argonaut;
How should I know we think and feel the same?

4

Still cause for doubt, his stalling my quitclaim.
Four years he left that business unaddressed.
Still cause for doubt, his stalling my quitclaim.

Such was my stifled cry: divest, divest!
Why keep me slave, why spurn my silent cry?
Four years he left that business unaddressed.

Damn those 'School-of-Velàzquez' alumni!
They steal my thunder; may they reap the hail.
Why keep me slave, why spurn my silent cry?

And yet I wrong him when I thus bewail
The wrong that set me right by his good grace.
They steal my thunder; may they reap the hail

Whose minor art shows theirs the servile case.
My twin indentures – freedom dearly bought,
The wrong that set me right by his good grace.

His art showed gifts in me unknown, unsought.
From some obscure yet radiant source they came.
My twin indentures – freedom dearly bought.
Still cause for doubt, his stalling my quitclaim.

13

Philosophy

Nietzschean Reflections on Morality

EDWARD GREENWOOD

I am indebted for these reflections to the best survey Of Nietzsche's thought, George Morgan's *What Nietzsche Means*, 1941. Nietzsche sees investigating morality as more urgent than investigating knowledge. We must emancipate ourselves from morality, become immoralists so to speak, in order to see morality as a problem. In particular we must not just accept the current morality as a given. The approach of such a moralist as the dreary, if conscientious, English moralist Sidgwick, and, in our time, Derek Parfit in his enormous boring tomes is the sort of approach Nietzsche rejects.

Nietzsche, like his friend Burckhardt, saw the nineteenth century as inaugurating comparative critical history. This is in many ways more humanly important than contemporary progress in biology and physics. To compare and contrast the nature and origin of past moralities enables us critically to evaluate our own in a way which could not be done in previous centuries. His friend Paul Ree and the English philosophers who had influenced him also affected Nietzsche, but he did not think they had been historical enough.

Nietzsche rejects any divine command or universalist morality such as Kant's. Unlike Kant, but like Hume, he is a naturalist in morals. The moral history of humankind has three phases, the pre-moral pre-historic period, the post Plato and Christian moral period and the *aussermoralisch* or extra-moral modern period of criticism. The first period was the time of *Sittlichkeit* or custom rather than *Moralität*. A contemporary parallel

Nietzsche

is with the *Physics and Politics* of Walter Bagehot published in 1872. Bagehot also writes of three stages. In stage one, the age of custom, the tribe and the imitation of others ruled, and there was no natural science, the second is the age of the unified polity and the third, the modern age, is preeminently the 'age of discussion' as regards both politics and morals, in short the critical age.

According to Nietzsche, in the age of unified polity of which Periclean Athens is an example, the dominant values were those of an aristocracy - the masters set the tone, not the slaves. A combination of Socratic and Christian morality, over successive ages, effected a revaluation of values in favor of the poor, humble and meek. Jesus himself, however, and Epicurus, Pyrrho and Buddha had tried to eliminate the motive of resentment, but the ascetic priests had inflamed it. The doctrine of original sin triumphed, that is, the notion of *Böse - radical evil -* as opposed *to Schlecht - the merely bad.* .

In 1870 Nietzsche heard his friend the Swiss historian Burckhardt give a lecture in which he condemned power as evil, much as the English historian Acton, a Catholic, was to do. Nietzsche could not agree with this, and he developed what was to become the most misinterpreted of his doctrines, that of the 'will to power'. In particular it was wrongly identified with the military power of Bismarck's Germany, which in fact Nietzsche repudiated, telling the monarchs to disarm, in the appendix to *Human All Too Human* ('The Wanderer and his Shadow section 284). Nietzsche's conception of egoism was also misinterpreted as common selfishness. For Nietzsche the egoist must have a worthy ego, a magnanimous ego which is capable of greatness, particularly in the arts. Nietzsche repudiates both the individualism lauded by capitalism and the collectivism lauded by communism.

I conclude by dissenting from Brian Leiter's view as expressed in his *Moral Psychology with Nietzsche*, Oxford, 2019, that moral realism entails the view that moral judgments are like the judgments of natural science in that they would be true or false even if no human sensibilities existed. This is not the case. Nietzsche is a moralist realist because he believes that there is a truth or falsity in moral judgements as mediated through human sensibilities. The investigation of the objects and processes that science deals with are mind and sensibility independent, the investigation and evaluation of human thought and action are not.

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BOOK FAIR 25th NOVEMBER 2023

The *Wednesday*

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BOOK FAIR 25th NOVEMBER 2023

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exhibited at the European Court of Justice (Luxembourg)

Peace, Justice, and Love

Dr. ALAN XUEREB

There can be no peace without justice. Indeed, justice appears to be a prerequisite, or at least a precursor to peace. It is interesting to note that the United Nations has a programme called The Sustainable Development Goals. These are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. Goal 16 is about promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

How Can Religion Help?

Richard Dawkins appears to think that religion may be a source of conflict plaguing humanity. Indeed, the fact that religious faith can be exploited so easily to violent ends is a problem in itself. However, I am one of those who think that the source of conflict can be anything which humans do. Politics, water and technology are in many ways also sources of conflict and violence, should we eliminate them as well? So you see the real issue is not religion *per se*, which John Finnis considers a basic human good the participation in which brings about all-round flourishing, but what we do with it. Most of the religions of the world have something in common, which is the idea of treating others as you would like to be treated by them. This is the basic principle underlying love, though is itself not love. Love is more.

My Personal Experience

Jesus appears to his apostles who are locked away, living in fear that they too may lose their lives to the powers of

their day. His words are resounding 'Peace I leave with you'. These are the words we need desperately to hear today.

There is an intricate relationship between peace and justice, but also one between peace and love.

Few people know that I was part of the Dominican Third Order, a long time ago, and during this time at an international conference in Leon, Spain, I met the Oxford educated Thomist Fr Timothy Radcliffe while he was still the Grand Master of the Dominican Order. He left quite an impression on me when he told us that a Dominican has to embrace the society he or she lives in and change it. We need to dream in the dark and live in the light. Recently he delivered a series of speeches at the Synod in Rome, and in one of these speeches he stated:

'The disciples gather because they saw that God was already doing something new. God had gone before them. They had to catch up with the Holy Spirit. Peter proclaims that "God, who knows the human heart, testified to [the Gentiles] by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us," (Acts 15.8)'.

More recently Fr Radcliffe said:
'Pedro Arrupe, the marvellous superior general of the Jesuits, wrote: "Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything." That passionate man, St Augustine, exclaimed: "I tasted you and now hunger and thirst for you; you touched me, and I have burned for your peace"'.

This last part about passion has always interested me and it is exactly what I told around a hundred first year Law students a few weeks ago, at the University of Malta when I delivered a lecture entitled 'The Environment as a common good?'. We must be passionate about something. This passion has to come with a lot of love for something. As Anna Rowlands, a professor of Catholic social thought and practice at Durham University in England said:

'Communion is the beauty of diversity in unity. In a modern world that tends toward both homogenizing and fracturing, communion is a language of beauty, a harmony of unity and plurality',

In this context then, it is making a lot of sense that this bas-relief named 'Pax' (peace) is part of my exhibition at the European Court of Justice, entitled 'In Varietate Concordia' - united in diversity. As peace comes with justice, both of them must have a very strong input of love. We must move from the concept of justice based on *lex talionis* and move towards the concept of *lex amoris*. Peace comes when our hearts change. The female figure carrying the burning torch, in my bas relief, symbolises amongst other things this idea of universal love – as a form of authentic wisdom.

What Was The Voice?

What was the voice that Matthew Arnold heard
Those afternoons under St Mary's tower,
What gave those last enchantments mystic power
That could so draw him with each magic word?

In the dim light he felt his spirit stirred,
He seemed to be borne heavenward for an hour,
Modernity no longer seemed to lour,
In the great transformation that occurred.

That voice was crying in the wilderness,
And it was to a wilderness it led.
Unable to content his open mind,

It could not dissipate his deep distress.
What other voice could do so in its stead?
Must he then seek and know he would not find?

Edward Greenwood