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The *Wednesday*

Weekly Magazine of the Wednesday Group at Albion Beatnik - Oxford

Editorial

The Postmodern as the Last Man

There is an idea which was suggested by the Algerian thinker, Malik Binnabi (1905-1973), that there are three stages of civilisations with three types of human beings: The Man of Pre-civilisation, the Man of civilisation and the Man after civilisation. These three stages may correspond to: Pre-Modern world, Modernity and Post-modernity. Binnabi had knowledge of both Nietzsche and Spengler, with the emphasis on instincts and drives by the former, and on the spirit by the latter.

Binnabi suggested that the Post-civilisation man is in real trouble. He is, in Nietzschean term, "*The Last Man*" (See ***Thus Spoke Zarathustra***, Prologue Section 5.) The last man is exhausted, decadent and seeks comfort. When confronted with the idea of greatness, he refuses it and prefers not to take risks.

What Binnabi is saying is this: the pre-civilisation man exists with latent energy waiting to come out, the man of civilisation is the man who puts that energy into action. The man of post-civilisation gets exhausted and becomes mediocre, technical and just doing routine work and falling into nihilism and decadence. I think Nietzsche would agree almost completely with this picture with instincts driving the pre-civilisation era, reason dominating civilisation era, and an unworkable mixture of instincts and reason in a confused way dominating the post-civilisation era. The Post-Civilization man is the Last Man.

One could apply the above to Pre-Renaissance, Enlightenment and finally Post-Modernist periods. The picture doesn't change very much. There is a difficulty of deciding where a period finishes and the other starts, but the underlying idea is that in the first stage, the drives are in the driving seat as the energy that fuel the movement of history, then gradually submit to reason in the second stage and eventually both get exhausted in the last stage.

Of course, there are big generalisations here but that is part of building a theory. One might object that the particular is important but if you are a sociologist or a scientist you can't get to a social rule or a scientific law without the risk of leaving the particular behind. This doesn't lead to propaganda or ideology as long as one is aware of the limit of the theory or the critique.

One final point, is that the Germans, since Spengler, made the distinction between Civilisation and Culture. In my argument, no such distinction has been assumed. If we use this distinction, then I would say the cycle goes from: Pre-Culture, to Culture, then to Civilisation. The first is associated with the active instincts and drives, the second with reason and the third with weakened drives and instinct. This third phase ends up in nihilism and decadence (or war!)

The debate within Critical Theory (Adorno, Horkheimer and Habermas) on the limit of rationality and ***The Dialectic of Enlightenment*** is just this: has reason run its course and landed us in in trouble? What about Myths and the irrational? The truth may be somewhere in between.

The European civilisation got over the problem in the last two centuries by being critical. It has been aware of its problems and it seeks solutions, sometime by assimilating other thought which has threatened it. From Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to Critical Theory there is a constant attack on the entertainment society or, in Adorno's term, the *Cultural Industry*, or Heidegger's *Idle Talk* and a call for revitalising the spirit. There is also a critique of science and scientific culture but it is a pessimistic critique (for example, John Gray's critique of progress). What is needed is a balanced view, critical but confident in the future of Man and Civilization.

The Editor

Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis) and his Romantic Encyclopaedia

Reading Das Allgemeine Brouillon [1798]

DAVID **SOLOMON**

Philosophers between Kant and Hegel sought to ground Kant's philosophy, which contained disparate and inconsistent elements, into a unified system. Kant's critical philosophy contained core elements which seemed separate and to belong to different worlds: Experience for example was conceived by him as only being possible through a unity of the different domains of sensible intuition and self-consciousness built up as it was by a process of what he called 'transcendental apperception'. The phenomena of appearances similarly contrasted with Things in Themselves, and the determinism of nature was opposed to the freedom of the will. His contemporaries and successors, philosophers and poets, starting with K L Reinhold, and including Fichte, Schelling, Holderlin and Novalis attempted in different ways to unite these elements into coherent systems in which each of these elements related to other elements. Their solutions to the problems presented but not solved by Kant's Critical Philosophy were different and often in conflict with each other, and in themselves raised important questions and themes in philosophy. In this essay, I am going to describe an outline of a particular synthesis presented in a work by the poet / philosopher Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis) [1772-1801]. This was a work called **Notes for a Romantic Encyclopaedia** (**Das Allgemeine Brouillon**) which he began in 1798 and was one of the most original and wide-ranging attempts to describe a unity or harmony between various elements of the world, and the different ways of understanding it. The result is something very imaginative, and we can trace its influence forward into 19th and 20th aesthetics and philosophy.

In this work, Hardenberg rehearses philosophical, poetic and spiritual themes that obsess him: What is the relationship of multiplicity to unity in the world? How can the diverse things of the world, and the diverse subjects of study, be harmonised to produce a unity? What is the nature of nature? Is it a self-generating system or is it driven and motivated by spirit (and therefore is it moving towards something and if so to what)? How does our activity as humans, including our activity in seeking knowledge and understanding, relate to nature? How does it affect it, and how is it affected by it? Are we by our actions in the world (including our scientific and philosophical activity) helping to move nature on, and towards what? Hence are we on the inside or outside of nature?

The questions are raised here in the form of notes on very diverse subjects, seemingly jotted down at random, but each one arranged (or at least partly arranged) by being prefaced by subject headings e.g. Psychology, Archaeology, Philosophy etc. One of the most frequently occurring headings is **Encyclopedistics**, as if the very project of producing an Encyclopedia is problematic and requires a justification. The Encyclopedia becomes a metaphor for Nature itself, with its potentially infinite capacity to expand to encompass all the subjects of human knowledge, but which nevertheless is something

Novalis

Fichte

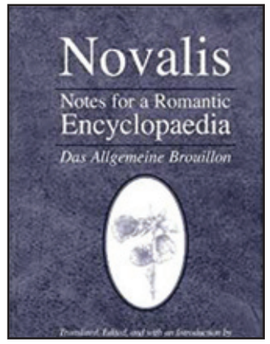
that stands under the requirement to cohere into a unity.

The title of the work has multiple resonances. With the term "***Encyclopaedia***" we think of the contemporary efforts in producing comprehensive summaries of all knowledge, in such works as the **Encyclopedia Britannica** (the first edition of which came out from 1768-1771) and the French **Encyclopédie**. The latter was a collective effort, and maybe there is a hint of Hardenberg's idea that philosophy could be a co-operative activity. What has come down to us in the text we have are clearly notes, jottings on the many different subjects that fell under Hardenberg's interest. The term '**Romantic**' is especially significant. It has its origin in precisely the period of this draft work, and is associated with the Schlegel brothers and with Novalis / Hardenberg himself. According to Isaiah Berlin, Romanticism is associated with:

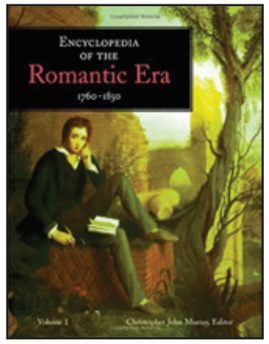
> *"a new and restless spirit, seeking violently to burst through old and cramping forms, a nervous preoccupation with perpetually changing inner states of consciousness, a longing for the unbounded and the indefinable, for perpetual movement and change, an effort to return to the forgotten sources of life, a passionate effort at self-assertion both individual and collective, a search after means of expressing an unappeasable yearning for unattainable goals."*

'**Romanticism**' suggests dynamism, therefore, the yearning for meaning and unity, the desire for things in nature (and things as objects of our knowledge), to become something more than just themselves, their tending towards a unity and completion.

Hardenberg is philosophically driven by the urge to system i.e. to finding ways to relate the parts of the world into a whole (or alternately to describe the ways a single principle within a system can get to express itself in multiplicity). In particular he was influenced by the systems described by his contemporaries such as **J. G. Fichte**, where everything proceeds from the **Absolute I**, then the I is differentiated into the **I** and **Not-I**, and subsequently this differentiation reproduces itself at different levels. He refers



Cover of the English translation of Das Allgemeine Brouillon



Another translation of the Encyclopaedia

especially to Fichte's ***Wissenschaftslehre*** in these notes. He is also motivated by **F.W. J. Schelling**, whose description of worlds / systems / organisms which arrange themselves into ever bigger systems in a fractal series, influenced him and he refers specifically to the latter's concept of an encompassing '**World Soul**'. Hardenberg throughout is concerned with the way that his vast and disparate written material (and the vast and disparate material of the universe) might unify and harmonise into a whole. The references to 'harmony' are frequent in this text. For example, in **note 61** of the ***Encyclopaedia***, when discussing our moral activity, he equates this with a process by which God becomes perceptible to us:

> *The moral sense is the sense for existence, without external affection – the sense for unity – the sense for the highest – the sense of **harmony** – the sense for the freely chosen, and innovative, and yet communal life.*

There are correspondences within the vast diversity of the world, just as there are correspondences in the way that diverse material is presented to us. The principles of harmony are epistemological as well as ontological. One important mode of correspondence is that of **Analogy**, the way one object or activity in nature parallels another. This can happen at any level. For example, in **note 13**, under the heading of **Medicine**, he says:

> *Benefits of every illness – Poesy of every illness.*

So, illnesses are diverse expressions just as poesy is. We can use Analogies empirically by speculating about the unknown on the basis of the known, as in **note 98**:

> *Encyclopedistics. Analogical analysis. (Analysis – art of finding the unknown from out of the known). Analogical equations – and problems.*

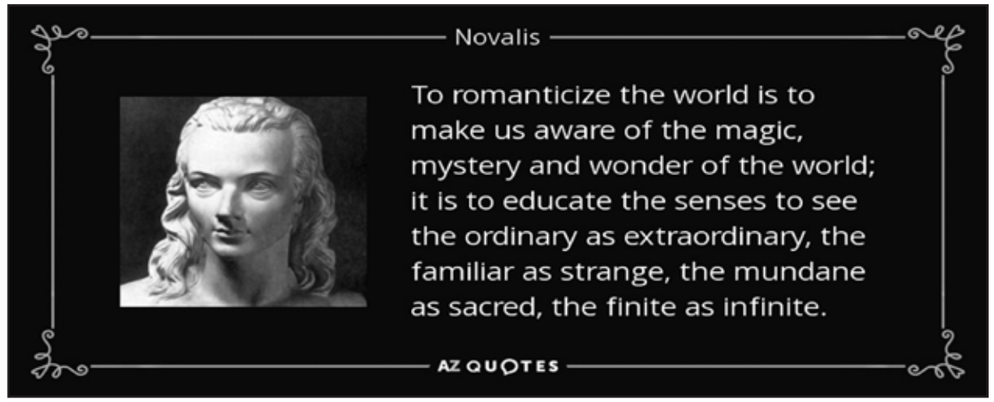
…or else analogies show us the existing harmonies within the World i.e. ways in which changes in one system correspond to changes within the overall World System to indicate a unity [**note 113, COSMOLOGY**]:

> *Our world is what it is as a member of the universal system of the world. Its changes are determined in conjunction with the changes in the larger system.*
> *The more diversely individualized something is – the more diverse its contact with other individuals - the more variable its boundaries – and neighbourhood.*
> *An infinitely characterized individual is a member of an infinitinomium – Thus our world – borders on infinite worlds – and yet perhaps only One. Furthermore, the world as a whole only has one world opposite to it.*

Another organising principle is that of **Signature**, the idea that nature is a script, a cipher system that can be read off and interpreted [**note 143, GRAMMAR**]:

> *It is not only man that speaks – the universe also speaks – everything speaks – infinite languages.*

Signatures are read from the outside (nature) inwards (towards our understanding of it). The opposite principle, proceeding from our inward ideas to the outward expression of them is **Symbolism**, which Hardenberg also refers to as a foundational principle [**note 52,**



Novalis's quote

ARCHAEOLOGY]:

> *Man has always expressed the symbolic philosophy of his being in his words, his acting, and his forbearance – He proclaims himself and his gospel of Nature. He is the messiah of Nature – antiquities are at once products of the future and of the distant past.*

Another principle is the **Synthetic Placing** of things in a series. Individual objects are never just isolated things, they should be placed in order to form a totality because they are what they are only within the context of the infinite series. Viewing things in isolation is wrong on a number of levels. This idea along with the preceding ones also make their appearance in the Novices of Sais.

When we look at the themes that emerge on these fragments, we can see that one idea that recurs is the distinction between Nature and Spirit. This is not just the distinction between what is static and what moves but between the universe and what animates it. In **note 50** Hardenberg describes a dialectical movement by which Nature moves from a state of chaos, through one of polarity, into a harmony / unity of what has been polarised. [**note 50, ENCYLOPEDISTICS**]:

> *Transcendental physics is the first science … It treats of Nature, before it becomes Nature – in those states, where mixture and motion, (matter and force) are still one. Its subject is chaos. Transformation of chaos into harmonious heaven and earth….*
> *Facture is opposed to Nature. The spirit is the artist. / Facture and Nature mixed – separated – united. When mixed, they are the concern of transcendental physics and poetics – When separated, the concern of practical physics and poetics – When united, the concern of higher physics and poetics.*
> *Higher philosophy is concerned with the marriage of Nature and spirit.*

[Also **note 50, sub-heading: PSYCHOLOGY**]:

> *Love is the final goal of world history – the One of the universe.*

The Spirit – Nature distinction is reminiscent of the distinction between **Natura Naturans** and **Natura Naturata** in **Spinoza**. The universe has a goal and 'the spirit is the artist' but significantly, each stage of this dialectical process is superintended by a human faculty, whether poetics (transcendental, practical or higher) or physics (transcendental, practical or higher).

Elsewhere Hardenberg distinguishes nature as sense perception from what animates it, the power of imagination and ultimately of reason [**note 70, COSMOLOGY**]:

*The world is a sense perceptible power of imagination that has become a machine. **The power of imagination has entered, or become the world, first and most easily – reason, perhaps last of all**. Concerning this emergence - and spiritual secretion. / Seed and stimulus secretion – the first is feminine – the second masculine. / Development of our nature. First generation – 2nd – third etc. cumulative.*

In his description of ethics, Hardenberg was influenced by **François Hemsterhuis [1721-1790]** the Dutch aesthetician and moral philosopher. In his conception, our process of becoming more moral brings us closer to unity with God and in harmony with existence. [**note 61, THEOSOPHY**]:

The moral sense is the sense for existence, without external affection – the sense for unity – the sense for the highest – the sense for harmony – the sense for the freely chosen, and innovative, and yet communal life – and Being – the sense of the thing in itself – the truest sense of divination / Divining, to perceive something without cause or contact.

Here we have the role of the human in assisting nature's realisation of itself. All these activities, of imagination, reason and morality are human but they are of the essence of the universal spirit. There is an echo of the Schellingian idea here**,** that **we do not only know nature, but that nature gets to know itself through us**. The spirit which moves nature towards its goal are the activities of the human in its development.
We see this in Hardenberg's treatment of Fichte. He wants to make Fichte's system into a poetic activity, a kind of retrospective construction of the absolute ego by virtue of the imagination. In terms of the historical, natural development of humanity, this activity must come later, but it retrospectively begins something new which radiates forward [**note 76, PHILOSOPHY**]:

The beginning of the ego is merely ideal. – If it had to begin, then it had to begin in this manner. The beginning is already a later concept. The beginning originates later than the ego, thus the ego cannot have begun. Consequently, we see that here we are in the realm of art – yet this artificial supposition is the foundation of a genuine science that always arises from an artificial fact. The ego should be constructed. The philosopher prepares, creates artificial elements and thus tackles the construction in this fashion.

We see this theme of retrospective construction of something that points forward, again in his discussion of antiquities. Antiquities are human products, deriving from his own past activities but in their mystery and significance, they point at the same time towards the future, the goal of the World. Past and future are human but also part of Nature [**note 52, ARCHAEOLOGY**]:

Man has always expressed the symbolic philosophy of his being in his works, his acting, and his forbearance – He proclaims himself and his gospel of Nature. He is the messiah of Nature – antiquities are at once products of the future and of the distant past.
That is why Man is an ambiguous being as both the product of nature and as affecting it.

Also, [**note 74, THEORY OF HUMAN RELATIONS**]:

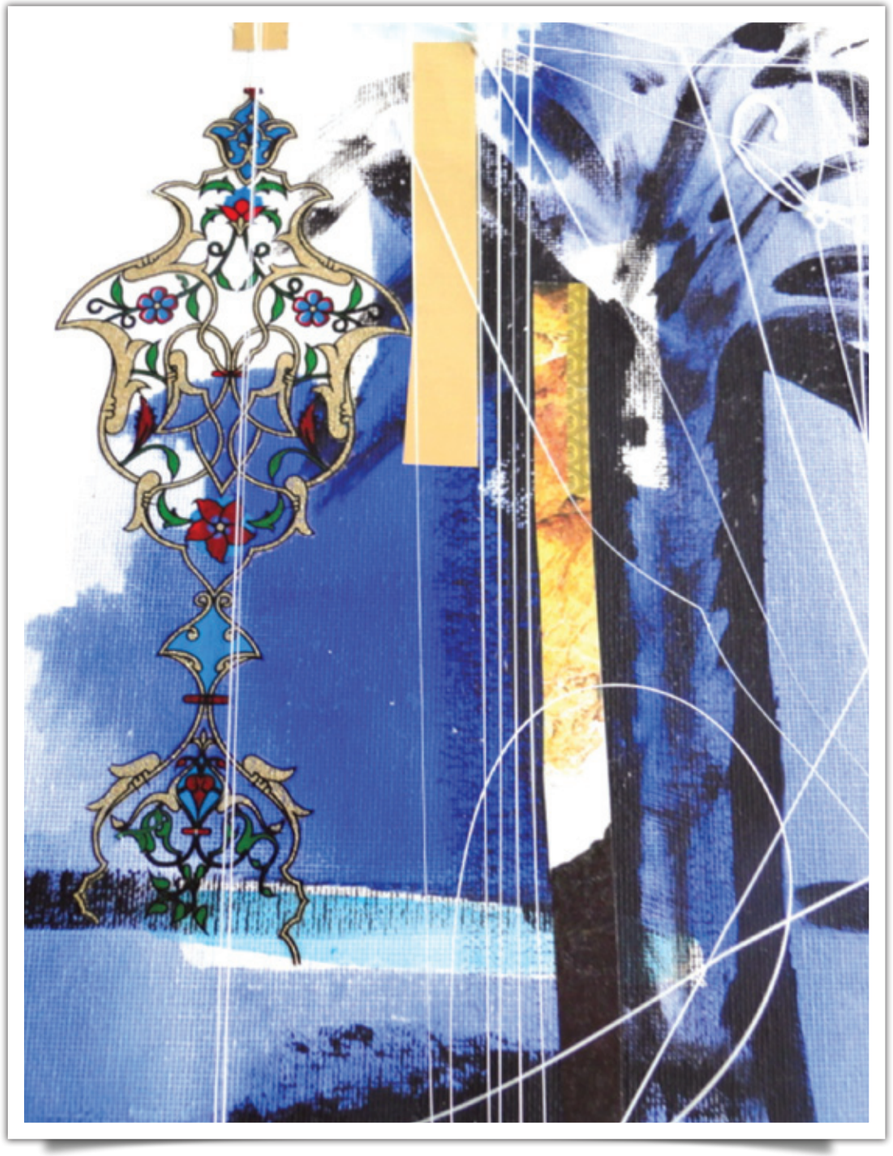
*As we are still **currently a foreign stimulus for Nature, our contact with her is also only temporal. She gradually secretes us again – Perhaps it is a reciprocal secretion**.*
…and…

Finally: [**note 75, DITTO**]. We are both inside and outside of Nature. As a result, Hardenberg [**note 54, PHYSICAL HISTORY**] can pose the following problem (one which is resonates with our own concerns about our effect on the world, environment etc.):

Examination of the question: whether or not Nature has significantly altered with the growth of culture?

"Composition with Palm"

by the Italian artists ***Sara Berti***



Acrylic, collage and plastic on canvas

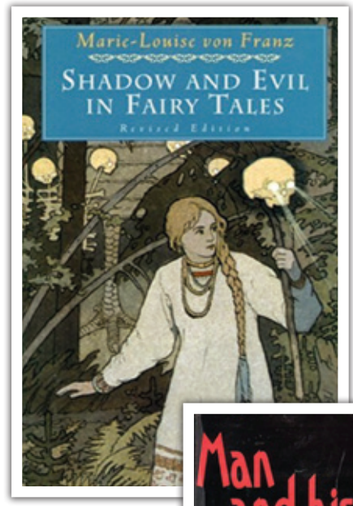
I first stumbled upon **Marie-Louise von Franz** (Jan. 1915 to Feb. 1998) while on a **Jung** course "***The psyche of the human mind***", being taught at Ewert House, Oxford, by Andrew Burniston, a Jungian lecturer that I got to know well for a period of years. He has now moved to Devon. Semi-retirement for him, I heard.

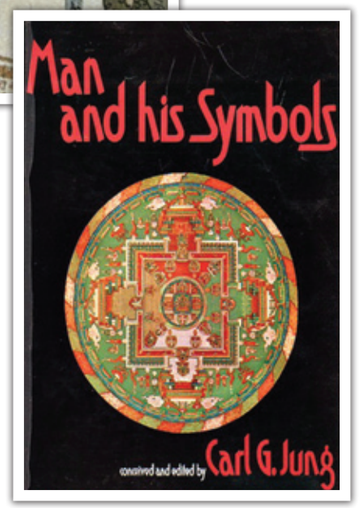
So, we studied the book "***Man and his symbols***". It is in five parts. Part Three is about the process of individuation and was written by von Franz. A brief description of individuation in Jungian terms is as follows:

> The self is one of several archetypes. It signifies the coherent whole, unifying both the conscious and un-conscious mind of a person. The self, according to Von Franz/Jung, is realised as the product of individuation, which is defined as the process of integrating one's personality. In simple terms: it is about overcoming the ego. The self and the ego recognise each other and with this recognition you become complete.

I loved the way she wrote and her explanation of the individuation process. So, I had to look at her other work and found she really was very important to Jung. She worked closely with him from when she was 18 in 1934 until his death in 1961.

Von Franz attended the university of Zurich and reached a point where she had to choose between a doctorate in classical language or medicine. Her choice of classical language was brilliant. It meant she could translate for Jung all his Greek and Latin texts in exchange for free analytic sessions. This is how they started out together and they went from strength to strength.





Jung was smart enough to realise that to study the human mind, you really need the perspective of a woman. There weren't really many women involved in psychology in the 1930s so von Franz was opening the door for other women to enter psychology.

For 30 years she became Jung's closest colleague and contributed a great deal to his major works, particularly on his monumental work ***"Psychology and alchemy"***. She was also the author of a number of books. She is best known for a collection of books on the psychology of fairy tales. She became a leading authority in this field.

Jung wanted to study the human imagination, so between them, they had the idea of collecting stories from all around the world, and this is what she did.

In the early days, storytellers would travel from village to village or town to town and tell stories. It was a form of early entertainment. Von Franz gathered information on these stories and found common denominators in the stories, a hero, a villain, a jilted lover, a murder based on jealousy - this sort of thing. So, even though it was the 8th or 10th century, where people could not communicate all over the world with each other, they were having similar thoughts and imagining the same sort of stories. Therefore, she could see the human imagination was very similar in all parts of the world. When storytelling stopped, due to books and plays and other ways of telling stories, we then called them fairy tales and told stories to our children as we still do today.

The first two books I bought by Von Franz were "***The interpretation of fairy tales***" and "***Shadow and evil in fairy tales***". The easy to read style of her writing was a joy for me and made her very successful, as almost anyone could pick up one of her books and enjoy it as much as enjoying the fairy tales themselves. There are many other books by her on a variety of subjects. In 1980, she had a book published called "***Number and time***". It is on the connection between psychology and modern physics. She also wrote with **Jung's wife Emma** on the symbolism of the grail legend.

If you had not come across Von-Franz before, but this has stirred your imagination, then please go on **You Tube** and you can see three or four interviews with her. She was an exceptional woman who was Jung's right hand for thirty years and she deserves to be well remembered for her outstanding input into Jungian psychology, hence, her title ***"The Queen of Jungian Psychology."***

Impressionism and Post-Impressionism

Their relevance to our present art and life

DIANNE COCKBURN

Every movement in Art demands a new language. Today it is a given that artists depict in some way the life of the times. Every new movement interprets their world in a different way. **The Impressionists,** Èdouard **Manet, Camille Pisarro, Edgar Degas, Alfred Sisley, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Walter Sickert, Mary Cassatt, Frédéric Bazille, Eugène Boudin and Gustave Caillebotte** were concerned with the modernization of the landscape, with the encroaching industrialisation, the bustle of modern cities and with the ensuing development of suburban and rural leisure.

Claude Monet, 'La Gare Saint-Lazare', 1877

They reacted to this world by emphasising **Naturalism** and the importance of light in their work. By taking an industrial scene they could recreate it in brilliant colour and light (see Monet 'La Gare Saint-Lazare', 1877).

As Monet said, 'The principal subject in a painting is light'.

Artists depicted this new world they were encountering by using innovative composition. Thus, Degas introduces cropping, i.e. cutting off the legs, arms or bodies of his ballet dancers (see 'Three Dancers in an Exercise Hall', 1880).

Short broken brushstrokes give an immediacy and life to a work. Often the loose painting style complements any leisure activity portrayed, as in Monet's 'La Grenouillère', 1869, where the long languid brush strokes describe the slowly lapping water.

Edgar Degas, 'Three Dancers in an Exercise Hall',1880

But overall, it is the Naturalism and importance of light as seen in Monet's 'Impression, Sunrise', 1872 which are the hallmarks of Impressionism.

Claude Monet, 'La Grenouillère', 1869

This new language of loose brushstrokes, when short, can become energised, much suited to depict the fast-moving world the artists were living in. Along with representing the fleeting conditions of light, colours were becoming brighter with the use of synthetic pigments. New hues of green, yellow and blue had been developed. We can see this in the work of Manet. His 1874 painting entitled 'Boating' uses the new cerulean and ultramarine pigments.

The introduction of paint in tubes meant that artists did not have to prepare their pigments prior to painting and so could work outdoors 'en plein air' more easily (see Manet, 'Monet - Painting in his Studio Boat', 1874).

Claude Monet, 'Impression, Sunrise', 1872

Post-Impressionists

In a rapidly changing world perhaps it is not surprising that artists too moved on in reaction to the world around them. So, we turn to the **Post-Impressionists** and their new language, a new sign system suitable to and reflective of new subjects demanded by a new era. As 'Impressionism' is used as a term to cover other movements within it such as **Pointillism, Fauvism and Art Nouveau** so under the umbrella of 'Post-Impressionism' lie further movements, from the **Neo-Impressionism of Georges Seurat** where

Edouard Manet, 'Boating', 1874

Claude Monet – 'Painting in his Studio Boat', 1874

he uses colour in shadows and highlights and pure hues juxtaposed so that one colour jumps against the other, (often over a white outline or margin) giving the work a vibrancy (see Seurat 'Bathers at Asnières', 1884) to the **Symbolism of Paul Gauguin and van Gogh**. **Many artists such as Seurat, Gauguin, Henri Matisse and Edouard Munch moved between different styles as their work developed**.

But a recurring theme is the subjective vision of the painter, looking into their own mind and soul. **As Munch said, 'Nature is not only all that is visible to the eye . . . It also includes the inner pictures of the soul'**. Many painters came to focus on abstract form and pattern, such as Matisse (see 'The Dessert-Harmony in Red, 1908) and van Gogh.

Many were still highly influenced by the stylised **Japanese prints** that had been coming into Europe since the reopening of Japanese ports in 1853 which provided decorative images of everyday subjects.

Post-Impressionists now moved forward turning their backs on the Naturalism of the Impressionists and by employing colour and shape to represent their world. Here one thinks of **Paul Signac** ('Place des Lices, 1893), Paul Cézanne ('Mont Sainte-Victoire seen from Bellevue',1895) and in particular, van Gogh ('Wheat Field with Cypresses', 1889).

Georges Seurat, 'Bathers at Asnières', 1884

Henri Matisse 'The Dessert – Harmony in Red', 1908

Paul Signac 'Place des Lices', 1893

Paul Cézanne 'Mt Sainte-Victoire seen from Bellevue' 1895

The world they lived in was changing rapidly with the increasing use of technology and expansion of cities. Many artists turned away from the new urban development as such, turning instead to the life of the working people (van Gogh, 'The Potato Eaters', 1885) and life outside the cities.

Gauguin travelled to Tahiti where he got away from 'the abominable error of Naturalism' by using the line and flat colour found in stained glass windows and illuminated manuscripts (see 'Gauguin, 'Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?', 1897).

He said of his work, 'By the combination of line and colours, under the pretext of some motif taken from nature, create symphonies and harmonies that represent nothing absolutely real in the ordinary sense of the word but are intended to give rise to thoughts as music does!'

Vincent van Gogh 'Wheat Field with Cypresses' 1889

Vincent van Gogh 'The Potato Eaters' 1885

Paul Gauguin 'Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?' 1897

Where, before Impressionism, the bourgeoisie wanted 'familiar art' with stories illustrated in a narrative form through traditional realism, after Post-Impressionism the question is: If the purpose of art is to respond to nature and if reality has an objective base, then, can it be modified by a subjective response? If so, we see why the work of the Post Impressionists varied with individual attempts to interpret and express nature. Not only are the Post Impressionists important for the work they did, but they are pivotal in the influence they had on the beginnings of Modernism in the twentieth century.

Notes on the Wednesday Meeting 6th of Sept 2017

We started with an idea by the Algerian thinker **Malik Binnabi** about three stages of human development in each civilization: the pre-civilized man, the man of civilization and the man of post-civilization. These three possible historical stages of man were discussed in various terms. **Owen Barfield** presented the following picture of all human history:

Stage 1: Primitive man is connected to nature in an intuitive way, somehow seeing himself as 'naturally' part of nature.

Stage 2: The Enlightenment stage, where man treats nature as separate from himself, using reason and logic to study it.

Stage 3: Man will hopefully unite himself with nature again while maintaining his self-consciousness.

These stages can be summarized as: Primitive, Rational, Unified. But can man combine intuition and rationality? Will rationality be too strong and harm man emotionally? Maybe irrationality will flourish?

Other topics

Hesse's view of jazz came for discussion. It maybe jazz was Hesse embracing the wolf-man in himself at that time. Adorno had the opposite view of jazz.

Brexit was slightly discussed. It has been thought that Britain will lose a lot as the years roll on. The general social environment may become uncongenial for non-natives.

Scruton on Europe: He does not like European law. He says it is built from the top-down rather than the more pragmatic British approach of bottom up.

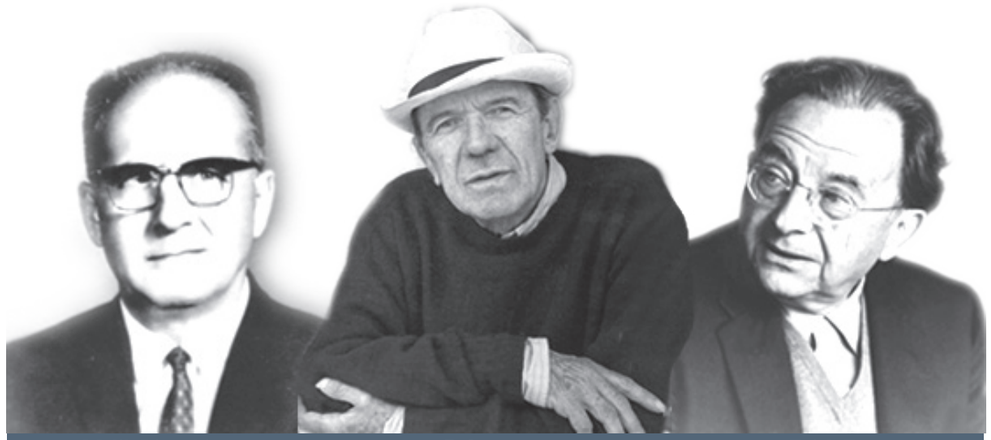
Notes on the Wednesday meeting 20th of Sept. 2017

We had few remarks about the poetry evening organized by **The Wednesday**, with the poet and philosopher **Chris Norris**. There was a feeling that part one of the evening was well connected, with poems on Derrida, Lacan and Adorno, but the second part had a variety of poems. Different members had different responses to this. However, they all agreed that it was a very enjoyable evening and that the magazine should do a similar evening soon, perhaps with the poet and philosopher David Burridge.

David Burridge read to the group a good poem he has recently wrote about robots and artificial intelligence. The poem will find its place in the near future on the pages of ***The Wednesday***. This has brought up the topic of technology and human life. In Japan 'social talking robots' appear to be acceptable: would they be here? David also talked about walking up a hill behind his home and meeting others who are glued to their mobile phones. He wonders why are they not lifting their eyes to the countryside. Are we being controlled by technology? All this is happening so fast and affecting the rhythm of daily life. One asks: how harmful is it or will it be?

Thought and words

Following the short article by Davis Jones in our last issue, issue 9, we discussed the sphere of the Pre-linguistic. A question came up: is the 'pre-linguistic related to Deleuzian '***Planes of Immanence***'? These 'mental' planes avoid transcendence (by being immanent) and the empirical (by being a priori). They lead to the creation of new concepts. It is not the Platonic view of concept, as it was in the case of Frege, but one of immanence. However, this immanence is not rooted in the external world (the empirical).



Malik Binnabi **Deleuze** **Erich Fromm**

Do we need the transcendent? In religion we reach up to it, say to God? And we hope to receive a gift coming down from Him.

There is also a transcendence in the everyday sense as when there is a demand from someone in need, and we surrender ourselves (our ego?) to help them. Current Christian theology is thought to be reaching a flat (worldly, immanent) plane according. Social work is becoming important now, heaven is now to be realized on earth rather than heaven after death.

It was suggested in the meeting that Big concepts are now being debunked – they used to be mediated somehow. But now we just improvise, on a flat (immanent) plane.

Erich Fromm

There was a brief discussion of the psycho-social analysis presented by Erich Fromm in the 2nd half of the last century. He presented two types of characters: the domineering one and the submissive. They are different ways of belonging to a group and the relationship between them is not static but dynamic. But is there a relationship that forms a group and goes beyond the domineering and the submissive characters? It is thought that there is an alternative way of perceiving the relationship within a group; one that is based on love. We belong to the group because there is love, respect, equality and understanding. This is the way we relate to each other in the Wednesday group.

Other topics

There was also discussion of music and different composers, and the state of American poetry and criticism.

Paul Cockburn

The Wednesday

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The Wednesday

Weekly Magazine of the Wednesday Group at Albion Beatnik - Oxford

Written by friends.. for friends

Please keep your articles, artwork,
poems and other contributions coming.
Send all your contributions and comments to the editor at:

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Visit us at AB on Wednesday afternoons