

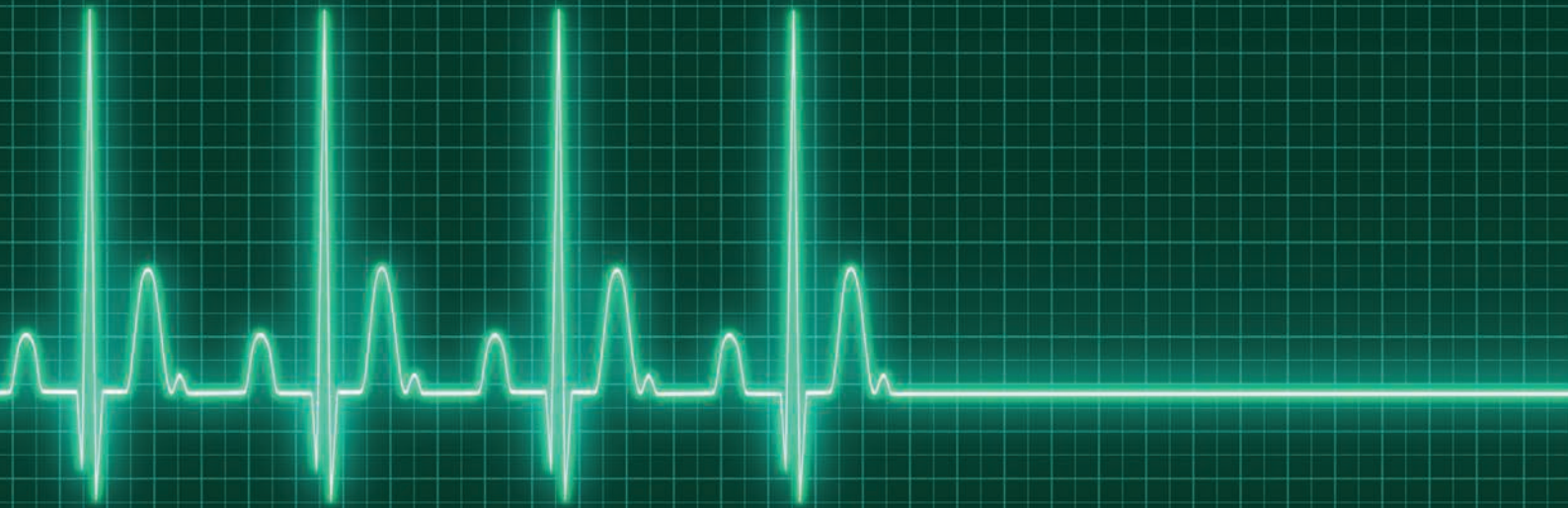
# Ethical Record

April 2017 Vol. 122 No. 3

*The Proceedings of the*  
Conway Hall  
Ethical Society

## My Death, My Decision?

by Phil Cheatle  
PAGE 5



### What if we could Rebuild the EU?

by Lucy Anderson and  
Prof Keith Pilbeam  
PAGE 9

### Cheering for Trump?

by Chris Bratcher  
PAGE 13

### The Role of Language in Understanding Sexual Behaviour

by Dr Cicely Marston  
PAGE 17

**CONWAY HALL ETHICAL SOCIETY**  
**Conway Hall**  
**25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL**  
**[www.conwayhall.org.uk](http://www.conwayhall.org.uk)**

*Trustees' Chair: Liz Lutgendorff; Treasurer: Carl Harrison; Guest Editor: Martin Robbins*  
*Please email texts and viewpoints for the Editor to: [editor@ethicalsoc.org.uk](mailto:editor@ethicalsoc.org.uk)*

<i>Chief Executive Officer:</i>	Jim Walsh	<a href="mailto:jim@conwayhall.org.uk">jim@conwayhall.org.uk</a>
<i>Festivals &amp; Exhibitions</i>		
<i>Coordinator/Administrator:</i>	Martha Lee	<a href="mailto:martha@conwayhall.org.uk">martha@conwayhall.org.uk</a>
<i>Finance Officer:</i>	Linda Lamnica	<a href="mailto:finance@conwayhall.org.uk">finance@conwayhall.org.uk</a>
<i>Library/Learning:</i>	Sophie Hawkey-Edwards	<a href="mailto:sophie@conwayhall.org.uk">sophie@conwayhall.org.uk</a>
<i>Library, Archives and</i>		
<i>Digitisation Assistant:</i>	Samantha Callaghan	<a href="mailto:samanthac@conwayhall.org.uk">samanthac@conwayhall.org.uk</a>
<i>Hon. Archivist:</i>	Carl Harrison	<a href="mailto:carl.harrison@btinternet.com">carl.harrison@btinternet.com</a>
<i>Programme/Marketing:</i>	Sid Rodrigues	<a href="mailto:sid@conwayhall.org.uk">sid@conwayhall.org.uk</a>
<i>Digital Marketing &amp; Evaluation:</i>	Deborah Mohanan	<a href="mailto:deborah@conwayhall.org.uk">deborah@conwayhall.org.uk</a>
<i>Venue Hire:</i>	Carina Dvořák, Brian Biagioni	<a href="mailto:lettings@conwayhall.org.uk">lettings@conwayhall.org.uk</a>
<i>Visitor and Events Manager:</i>	Kevin Emsden	<a href="mailto:kevin@conwayhall.org.uk">kevin@conwayhall.org.uk</a>
<i>Caretakers:</i>	Eva Aubrechtova (i/c) together with: Brian Biagioni, Sean Foley, Tony Fraser, Rogerio Retuerma	<a href="mailto:eva@conwayhall.org.uk">eva@conwayhall.org.uk</a>
<i>Maintenance:</i>	Zia Hameed	<a href="mailto:zia@conwayhall.org.uk">zia@conwayhall.org.uk</a>

The views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the Society.

---

## *In This Issue of the Ethical Record:*

3	<i>Editorial Progress and be Damned</i>	<i>Martin Robbins</i>
5	<i>My Death, My Decision?</i>	<i>Phil Cheatle</i>
9	<i>What if we could Rebuild the EU?</i>	<i>Lucy Anderson and Prof Keith Pilbeam</i>
13	<i>Cheering for Trump?</i>	<i>Chris Bratcher</i>
16	<i>Obituary John Barrett</i>	<i>Norman Bacrac</i>
17	<i>The Role of Language in Understanding Sexual Behaviour</i>	<i>Dr Cicely Marston</i>
20	<i>Viewpoint Who is Threatening Whom?</i>	<i>David Simmonds</i>
21	<i>Viewpoint Man-made Climate Change: Is it Trumped up?</i>	<i>Colin Leakey</i>
22	<i>Book Review The Spirit of Meliorist Reform and Other Essays</i>	<i>Norman Bacrac</i>
23	<i>Forthcoming Events</i>	
24	<i>Sunday Concerts Programme</i>	

# Progress and be Damned

**Guest Editor: Martin Robbins**

Charities and historical institutions live and die by the choices they make, the ways they react to a rapidly-changing world and the ways they don't. Faced with a new and unfamiliar landscape it's easy to stick to what one knows. To keep things safe and do the things that have always worked.

Preservation is an understandable instinct in the face of change, but often brings the most danger. Great buildings become dull monuments to a bygone era, ominous and off-putting to the casual visitor. The most vigorous societies, preserved in aspic, wither into irrelevance; grey meat, devoid of fresh blood and appealing to nobody. Once the rot sets in it, it can become impossible to cure.

One of my first experiences with the Society, several years ago, was a terrible one. I had been to a few impressive events at the Hall, such as the Pod Delusion 3rd birthday live event and the Leveson Debate, but when invited to deliver a Sunday Lecture the experience was one of the worst I've had as a speaker. For a long time that first impression remained indelibly linked to the entire organisation.

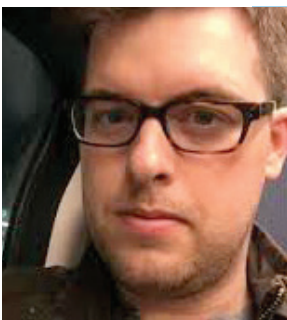
Yet something about the place grabbed me, and after further discussion with trustees my attitude softened. CHES faced the same problems that affect great institutions like Toynbee Hall and the Royal Institution; being true 'to thine own self' yet relevant to the 21st century, all on a shoestring budget. Deciding that helpful action would be more productive than

moaning from the sidelines, I ran (and was elected) as a Trustee in 2014.

These challenges are now my challenges. We have chosen to be bold in meeting them. Our goal is not to merely survive but to thrive. Our greatest assets in this fight are our historic building and our talented and motivated staff. By choosing to believe in them, to invest in them, we intend to keep Conway Hall the home of freethought for the next century and beyond.

Already, this investment is paying dividends. The Society's income has soared to record levels, allowing us to invest more than ever into our activities, building and staff. More new faces of all ages are passing through our doors than ever before, attending our thriving concerts, lectures, courses and workshops. Through digitisation our archives are being opened up to the world, and cutting edge technologies are providing new ways to showcase our history. For all the new activity however, we are still the same Society, still pursuing a more rational and ethical world.

We live in interesting times to say the least, but then so did our predecessors. It is more important than ever that we embrace their history – our history – to offer ethical and radical alternatives. We can only achieve that if we ride the waves of progress and remain a vibrant and relevant institution. That's no less true today than it was when Moncure Conway was elected minister of a small radical unitarian chapel 150 years ago.



**Martin Robbins** is a journalist and software engineer with a background in artificial intelligence and data science, who writes about science and politics for The Guardian, New Statesman, Little Atoms and Vice Magazine. He has been a trustee of Conway Hall Ethical Society since 2014, and is currently the chair of the Heritage and Fundraising Committee, seeking to build on our society's heritage and find new ways for us to improve and grow.



# Sex Appeal Six

Annual comedy fundraising event for Brook, the young people's sexual health charity.

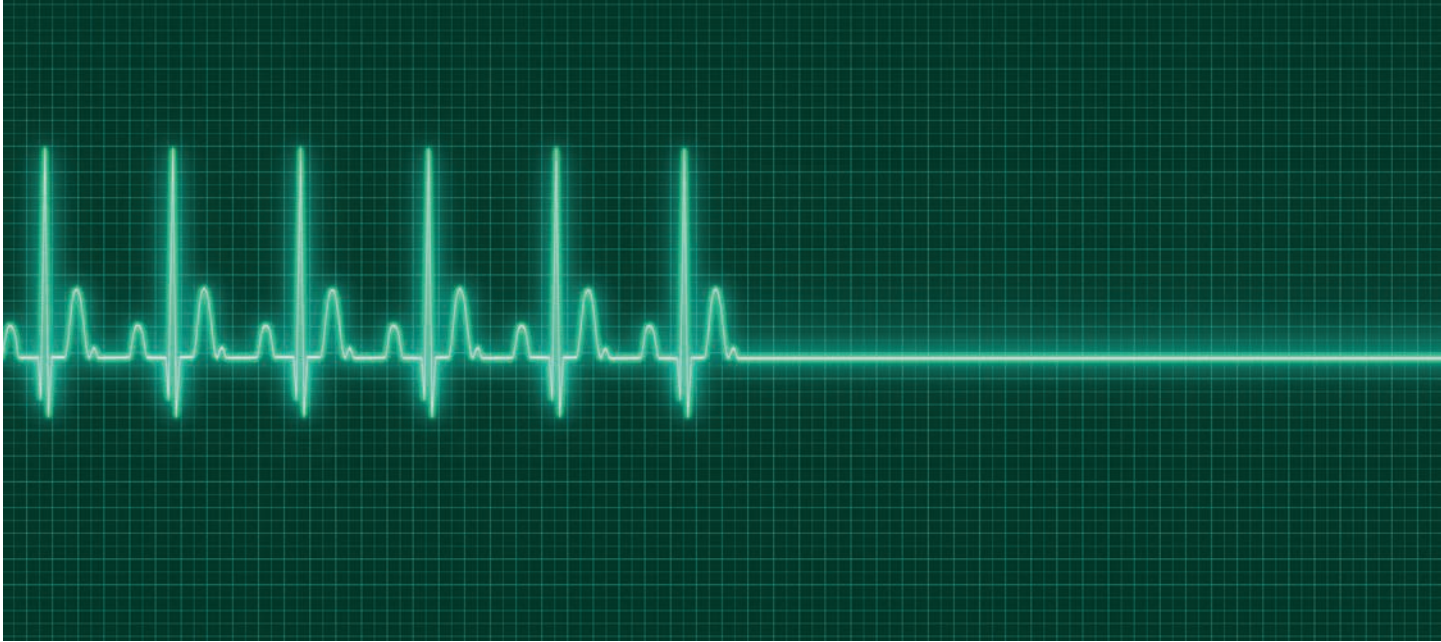
*21 January 2017*



Photos: © Paul Clarke Photography

# My Death, My Decision?

**Phil Cheatle**



In her early 90s my mother suffered from the early stages of dementia, and several other problems which gave her severe pain which could not be adequately treated. On several occasions, she asked me to help her to die. I sympathised with her condition. It seemed a rational request – she had lived a good life, her condition was incurable and her quality of life was increasingly unbearable. If I were in her position, I know I wouldn't want to continue living. After careful consideration, I refused her request, explaining how it was against the law. She asked if doctors could help her. I carefully explained how they too were unable to help in the way she wished. "Make them see sense" was her response, "make them see sense".

I believe I made the right decision. I am not a health care professional. I was emotionally involved. I had no idea how to help my mother end her life – it could have gone horribly wrong if I tried. There could be no witnesses that I was carrying out my mother's own wishes.

We are living longer. Traditional killers such as heart disease and some cancers are increasingly curable. This is wonderful when it leads to extra years with an acceptable quality of life. But eventually we all die. An increasing number of people are dying from degenerative diseases. In November 2016, the Office of National Statistics reported that dementia is now the leading cause of death in England and Wales – and that excludes those who die with dementia but not of it.



**Phil Cheatle** spent 30 years as a research scientist at Hewlett Packard. His involvement in right-to-die campaigning was triggered by his mother's end of life experience suffering from dementia. He formed the Bristol support group for Dignity in Dying, but realising their policy would never help people like his mother, he joined the Society for Old Age Rational Suicide. He became its Coordinator in 2015, overseeing the name change to 'My Death, My Decision' and new website design.



Despite excellent care, my mother had a “bad death”. But what is a “good death” and how can we ensure more of us have one? Being free from physical pain is a minimum. Dying in a place of our choosing, often at home rather than a hospital or nursing home, with close relatives or friends present, is important for many. Dignity is often mentioned – being able to manage our basic personal care; retaining our mental faculties so that we keep some control of our lives; retaining the ability to hold a conversation and recognise those close to us. My mother just wanted to go to sleep and not wake up – over two years before she eventually did. For people like her a “good death” requires medical assistance to die at a time they feel is right for them.

The campaign group My Death, My Decision believe that medical assistance to die should be an option for adults who are suffering from incurable health problems which permanently reduce their quality of life below the level they can accept. To be eligible such a person would need to be mentally competent to make the decision, and it must be their own persistent choice. People who make this choice are typically elderly, believing that their life is complete.

Why hasn't the law changed to allow this? In September 2015, the House of Commons debated a Private Members Bill proposed by Rob Marris. It would apply to mentally competent adults who were terminally ill (expected to die within 6 months), and who had a voluntary, clear, settled and informed wish to end their life. The Bill was based on a law which has been working successfully in Oregon since 1997. It was defeated, 118 votes for, 330 against.

The defeat does not mean the issue will go away. It won't. An increasing number of people are witnessing “bad deaths”, and are deciding “not for me”. Instead they are contemplating one way trips to Switzerland; starving themselves to death; or unassisted suicide. None of these alternatives are satisfactory. How do we find an acceptable, better solution?

An important place to start is to look at the things that unite people on both sides of the debate. We all feel that end-of-life care can, and should, be significantly improved. We share a concern that people should not be pressurised into requesting an assisted death if it is not what they themselves want.

Many MPs spoke in favour of better care for the

elderly, especially palliative care. The disagreements here concern the extent to which the best possible care can make life bearable. Physical pain can usually (but not always) be treated successfully. Other forms of suffering, and feelings of loss of dignity, can be harder to resolve. The last two years of my mother's life became a living nightmare for her, despite excellent specialised dementia care. The UK is recognised as having some of the best palliative care in the world. But for some people, with some conditions, even this is inadequate. It is sometimes kinder and more compassionate to allow an assisted death, if that is the person's wish.

MPs made many strong speeches supporting the Bill, but it is important to consider carefully the opposing arguments, if we are to find a way forward.

We can divide the concerns into two groups. First there are objections which, on principle, oppose any movement towards allowing people to have a say in the timing and manner of their own death. Second, there are issues concerning how the Bill would work in practice. Underlying the reasons, MPs are no doubt cautious of supporting such an emotive and controversial issue, while the BMA, palliative care groups, and many leading religious figures remain opposed.

A fundamental concern in the first group relates to the value of life itself. People on all sides value life which is of high quality – or has the potential to recover a quality which is acceptable to the patient. The difference comes when we consider people who have a quality of life which is permanently below the level they can tolerate. Is it acceptable to insist that such people continue living against their will? Or is it more compassionate to accept the situation realistically, easing the person's suffering with a medically assisted death, if that is their wish? MDMD, along with around 80% of the country, think the latter. We respect those who have different views, often based on religious beliefs. However, in a multi-cultural society, with people of many faiths, and increasingly none, we need to be respectful of different views. One group should not prevent others from having the “good death” they seek, when that means an assisted death. Instead we should respect the wishes of the person whose life and suffering is concerned.

Another fundamental objection to change is the view that the current law is adequate. Guidelines

from the director of public prosecutions clarify that it is “not in the public interest” to prosecute in cases of assisted suicide done for compassionate reasons. As suicide is not a crime, people can kill themselves if they want to.

But where is the compassion? People who are desperately ill are generally not able to end their own lives unassisted. Instead, some people are choosing to end their lives too soon, while they still can. This is a tragedy. Ironically, when people know that medically assisted suicide is available they sometimes find they can carry on for longer. The security of knowing that they have an option to end their life, if it becomes totally unbearable, can raise the quality of their final stage of life – sometimes allowing a natural death.

How exactly do those resisting a change of law expect chronically ill, desperate people to end their lives unaided? The drugs which can do this painlessly and efficiently are, rightly, carefully controlled. People who try to end their lives themselves are left with horrible alternatives, which can fail disastrously.

The DPP guidelines acknowledge that in some circumstances assisting suicide is acceptable. But, unless you go to Switzerland, there are no safeguards, no checks, no professional counselling and help. Any investigation that occurs is after the death, too late to prevent foul play. The potential for ill-advised, botched suicides, possibly coerced, or worse – not even requested at all, is very real.

However, it is not easy to decide what an acceptable law should be. A major criticism of the Marris Bill was the restriction of only helping people with a life expectancy of 6 months or less. Doctors oppose this as they are often not able to give an accurate prognosis. Others oppose the criterion as it excludes people with long term intolerable conditions, including dementia.

Recognising this, some MP’s felt that the proposals could be the start of a “slippery slope” towards a situation where it was too easy for people to end their lives. There needs to be extreme care in how assisted dying is introduced. It may be that a cautious, step-by-step approach would be prudent, each step being carefully considered, debated in parliament, and evaluated in practice, before progressing to the next. An example of how this approach has worked in the past is the extension of the right to vote. In the early 19th century less than 3% could

vote. This increased, in a series of hard won steps, to now include everyone over 18. Was that a “slippery slope”? No, it was cautious gradual change to reflect a changing, better educated society.

MDMD believe that the six-month criterion causes more problems than it solves. We advocate its replacement with a clause limiting assistance to die to those suffering from incurable medical conditions resulting in intolerably low quality of life. It is interesting that in Canada, where an assisted dying law was introduced in 2016, a fixed life-expectancy time limit was rejected in favour of the more flexible “reasonably foreseeable death”.

Perhaps the most important issue MPs raised was how people would be protected from coercion. In the Bill two doctors must certify that the person had mental capacity and had not been coerced. In addition, the High Court must give consent. The Bill did not give detailed guidance in how the process would work. This caused concern. There are many professionals in healthcare and social services who are experienced in interviewing elderly patients to elicit their own views. It should perhaps be made clearer how this expertise can best be brought to bear – especially if there is any suspicion of coercion. A video of a professional interview with the person asking for assistance to die could be required as evidence for example. The interviewer could probe the background to the decision, with the requestor, for others to see.

A new safeguard, being suggested by MDMD, is for people to make an advance statement of their wish for the option of a medically assisted death at some point in the future. The proposed new statement would need to be made well in advance of vulnerability. Should a person, at a later stage, decide that they have reached the point of wanting assistance to die, their advance statement would provide strong evidence that the decision had been reached after serious consideration over a long period, without coercion. If the statement was a requirement for vulnerable people, those without it would enjoy the same legal protection as today, while those with it could safely be permitted the assisted death they crave.

In conclusion, MDMD believe that to move forward we need to constructively address valid concerns. Our suggestions of avoiding the six-month

criterion; and adding a strong safeguard requiring a formal statement of wish for the future option of assisted dying, are two contributions we hope will prove useful.

As a compassionate society, we must do more to help avoid suffering at the end of life. Yes, we need to ensure the best palliative care options for all, but when someone's idea of a good death cannot be met by palliative care, but instead requires a medically assisted death, we should respect their wishes.

MDMD are doing what we can to work through the many difficult issues to identify a safe, acceptable solution – to help “them” – the politicians, the doctors, the religious leaders – “see sense”, as my mother put it.

[coordinator@mydeath-mydecision.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@mydeath-mydecision.org.uk)  
[www.mydeath-mydecision.org.uk](http://www.mydeath-mydecision.org.uk)



## THE HUMANIST LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

Conway Hall Humanist Library and Archives is home to a unique collection of published and archival sources on humanism and its related subjects. We are open for members, researchers and the general public on Tuesdays to Thursdays from 10 till 17. Our collections include printed materials such as books, pamphlets and journals as well as archival material of unpublished institutional and personal records and papers, such as manuscripts, letters and photographs. For your time and convenience it is advisable to contact the library before your visit so we can ensure the material you seek is available.

Tel: 020 7061 6747.

Email: [sophie@conwayhall.org.uk](mailto:sophie@conwayhall.org.uk)



# What if we could Rebuild the EU?

Lucy Anderson and Prof Keith Pilbeam



In this unique and controversial discussion event, Lucy Anderson and Professor Keith Pilbeam addressed the question of whether our focus should be on creating a brand new EU rather than worrying about soft and hard versions of BREXIT, as well as other questions, head on.

## LUCY ANDERSON

Unless there is a large shift in the political climate, it is likely that we will all need to come to terms with the UK formally leaving the European Union. Despite this, there is a general consensus that the EU

will survive without the British. Indeed, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker says categorically that Brexit is not the end of the EU and that, on the contrary, is encouraging its continuance and resulting in a growing approval for European integration 'in more or less all Member States'.



**Lucy Anderson** is a London Labour MEP. She took office in July 2014, and is spokesperson for the European Parliamentary Labour Party on transport and tourism. Her background is as a lawyer and policy campaigner, and her areas of expertise include transport, employment rights and equality law, and health. She has held senior positions in the National Union of Teachers, the Greater London Authority and the Trades Union Congress, where she worked on the implementation of European Union directives.

But, whatever happens next, those of us on the Left and centre ground of politics should nevertheless continue to unite across Europe to rebuild the EU and organise together to combat right-wing dominance. There are positive trends in this direction which can be strengthened and accelerated.

Firstly, there is genuine renewed interest in a more 'positive populism' and focusing on improving the lives and prospects of everyone in Europe and not just a privileged minority. This deeply ethical goal self-evidently cannot be reached by national governments acting individually without any pooling of sovereignty. The EU continues to be the best mechanism we have to achieve more equality overall, setting basic standards and norms that can endure. Racism and xenophobia are on the increase, but are utterly against the stated fundamental principles of the EU and must be fiercely opposed on that basis.

Equally, the growing concern about insecurity at work cannot be addressed without some level of shared framework of employment and social entitlements. The argument that workers may often prefer so-called 'flexible' contracts just doesn't stand up. For the British workforce, the evidence shows that those on a zero-hours contract are three times more likely than other workers to say that they would like to work longer more regular hours. And at least 30 percent of temporary staff want a permanent job.

Key to rebuilding the confidence of Europeans, whatever their nationality, in a collective way forward is real progress towards the availability of secure jobs and sufficient social protections. The long-awaited strategy from the European Commission on this will be important. The European Parliament has made its views abundantly clear; overwhelmingly passing a resolution in January 2017 calling for concrete measures for 'full practical implementation' of a European Pillar of Social Rights in pursuit of the social objectives of EU treaties.

There is also still major resentment and concern about lack of transparency and accountability in EU macro-economic and financial policy, as in relation to the treatment of Greece. It is doubtful that the actions of Eurogroup finance ministers and the European Central Bank when dealing with the Greek debt crisis were sufficiently authorised through the EU treaties. This issue must be addressed through legal measures and policies, not simply ignored.

And one of the absolutely critical areas of interest for a rebuilt EU is its attitude to globalisation, and trade in particular. As economist Joseph Stiglitz and many others have pointed out the problem is not globalisation itself but the way in which it is managed. Special interests in so-called 'advanced' industrial countries have clearly prevented fair regulation of global capital and markets. The recent debates in the EU about trade deals with the US and Canada are a good example of this. From now on, the EU should be vigilant about ensuring that its trade policy promotes the well-being of disadvantaged groups in society in all countries, whilst making sure that legitimate local regulation is not overridden by multi-national companies. The EU can also still continue to play a very positive role on a range of key global challenges, especially leading the fight against climate change, pollution and high-level tax avoidance.

Significant and welcome too is the recent enhanced emphasis at European level on regulating and encouraging new technologies in the interests of both consumers and businesses. Sensible frameworks of regulation on issues such as data protection, copyright, and digital content need to be in place across national boundaries. This is a concrete area in which the EU can demonstrate its worth.

It is true that there are contentious policy areas where the EU is struggling. Sadly a genuinely common and effective EU approach to helping refugees and migrants seems further away than ever. The UK's hard-line stance has certainly not helped, although new asylum law proposals are under discussion in the European Parliament and over €10 billion was allocated from the EU budget over the past two years for humanitarian projects and other support. But at least through EU structures, processes and constitutional values a decent and humane standpoint can be articulated and fought for.

In a final analysis, it is hard to see that there is much wrong with the institutions and aims of the European Union. Talk of democratic deficits and ever closer union seems to be missing the point and diverting energies from the real task at hand. It is the policies and laws that matter, which can be improved within the existing frameworks. Winning hearts and minds, and therefore elections at all levels, determines outcomes.

## PROFESSOR KEITH PILBEAM

The vote for Brexit on 23 June 2016 is a watershed moment in the history of the UK and the European Union. The majority was very narrow 51.9% to 48.1% but sufficient to cause a major dislocation in UK relations with the European Union. Does that mean that the European Union and its four freedoms, free movement of goods, free movement of services, free movement of capital and free movement of labour require fundamental reform? Is there a need to reform the institutional infrastructure of the European Union to cope with the diversity of its 28 and soon to be 27 countries? Do we need to consider a multi-speed Europe with different levels of integration and the possibility of some countries adopting a deeper form of economic and political integration than other members? These are some of the interesting questions that arise as the UK invokes Article 50 and undertakes a 2 year negotiation period concerning its divorce terms and its future trading relationship with the EU27.

My opinion is that like any organisation the European Union has its imperfections and therefore some reform is called for, but the concept of greater integration is a fundamentally sound thing for the European countries. As an economist, I quickly learned that free trade is a good thing for nations as a whole but it does nonetheless create winners and losers. However, the key point is that the gains to the winners exceed the losses to the losers and it is possible to redistribute some of the gains from the winners so that the losers are compensated for their losses so that they are no worse off and still have a net gain for the winners. When it comes to Economic integration there are trade creation gains as trade is opened up between the trading partners but there are also trade diversion losses whereby the common external tariff of a customs union can give an unfair

competitive advantage to high cost trading partners within the union over lower cost trading partners from the rest of the world. However, an economic union offers many trading advantages because of its long term nature. This means a guaranteed export market for the indefinite future, the ability to exploit economies of scale and the undermining of domestic monopolies due to competition from other countries within the trading bloc and the competition effect which forces domestic companies to become more efficient. These dynamic gains should not be underestimated.

The European Union has gone further in promoting trade in goods and services than any other trading bloc in the world. The Single Market is a phenomenal achievement allowing firms that have a national licence to sell their services be they insurance, banking or accounting throughout the whole of the Union. This has to be a good thing for consumers especially as Europe has moved gradually from manufacturing to services. Lesser known is the Single Administrative Document that has enabled goods to be transported with ease across the whole of the European Union eliminating the need for separate national documents at each border point. The harmonization of basic regulations throughout the European Union as a result of the Single Market project of 1986-92 has lowered the costs to businesses and led to far greater competition than could ever have been imagined under a simple free trade arrangement. So in respect of trade in goods and services the European Union is a tremendous success.

When it comes to free movement of capital and labour these are core principles of the European Union that in theory are a good thing. It enables firms to get a better return on their investments and workers the opportunity to relocate to a place where they are better paid than in their home country. In practice, however, the free movement of labour



**Keith Pilbeam** is a Professor of International Economics and Finance at City, University of London. He has worked for NatWest Bank and the Royal Bank of Scotland. He is Secretary General to the European Economics and Finance Society ([www.eefs-eu.org](http://www.eefs-eu.org)) and co-editor of the Journal of Economic Asymmetries. He has published widely in well-known Economics and Finance Journals. He also runs the highly rated website [www.BusinessEconomics.com](http://www.BusinessEconomics.com).



has proved to be contentious and was used by the Brexiteers as the defining issue in the UK referendum. Although I personally favour free movement of labour it is undoubtedly an issue for countries that are net importers of EU labour. In my view, this has been a big benefit for the UK but unfortunately it is not perceived as such by many voters. I do think the European Union could make some reforms in this area, for example permitting agreed annual quotas of EU migrants for each country related to its population size so as to provide some reassurances that one country cannot move wholesale into another country which is theoretically possible as things stand.

There is also a need for the European Union to reform the way it spends its money, agriculture still takes up something like 40% of the EU budget but the sector is less than 3% of the French Economy and less than 1% of the UK economy. This does not make sense when youth unemployment is close to 50% in countries like Greece and Spain – surely the EU has to work in the interests of all its citizens not just a group of powerful lobbying farmers. In other words, Europe needs to reconnect to the needs of the citizens that it serves. Perhaps the only

good thing that will come of Brexit is that it will force the European Union to reconsider how it can reform itself so that it can better serve its citizens going forward. There is a democratic deficit that needs addressing as the elections to the European Parliament attract a far smaller percentage of voters than do the corresponding national elections. The lack of voting cannot be easily addressed, but making sure that the European Parliament is seen to add real value on issues where real common interests and real problems are at stake; such as youth unemployment, environmental concerns, preventing banking and financial crises and ensuring fair conditions of work for employees would be a useful start in helping to improve public perceptions of it as an institution.

In sum, the European Union has done much good, it has made the thought of war between its members unthinkable, it has promoted economic stability, freedom of movement of people and enterprise and it has improved the living standards of hundreds of millions of its citizens. Recognising that you have faults and remedying them through a reform process is a realistic aim and it is a great pity that the UK is unlikely to be part of it.

## Conway Hall Ethical Society

Reg. Charity No. 1156033

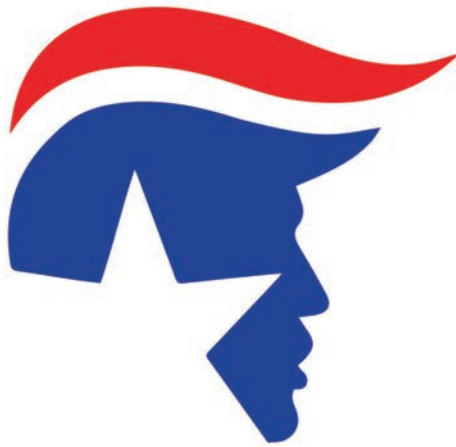
Founded in 1793, the Society is a progressive movement whose Charitable Objects are: *the advancement of study, research and education in humanist ethical principles.*

We invite people who identify with our aims, principles and objects to join our society. The Society maintains the Humanist Library and Archives. The Society's journal, *Ethical Record*, is issued monthly. Conway Hall's educational programmes include Thinking on Sunday, London Thinks, discussions, debates and lectures, courses, and Sunday concerts of chamber music. Memorials, funerals, weddings, and baby naming ceremonies can also be arranged.

**THE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION IS £35 (£25 IF A FULL-TIME STUDENT, UNWAGED OR OVER 65)**

# Cheering for Trump?

Chris Bratcher



Donald Trump's conduct and temperament; his views and treatment of employees, women, Muslims, Latinos, and indeed anyone opposing him, ought to have ensured his electoral rejection, whatever his policies. So, boos all round. He was patently prepared to say anything to achieve office. But I believe he was telling it as it is on two huge policy issues.

## HE'S DEAD RIGHT ABOUT NATO

NATO has been "obsolete" – Trump's word – from at least 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell. Russia couldn't even retain an existing hold over Eastern European states by force; the notion that it might *now* invade them, let alone Western Europe, is fantasy. Charles de Gaulle was right in stating in February 1966 that the changed world order had "stripped NATO of its justification", and took France out. The bogey-man is not

coming. It sells Europe its gas, for heaven's sake. The only plausible dangers to Europe and America are terrorist attacks, against which NATO is no deterrent.

What Eastern European states see as comfort, and politically desirable domestically, Russia sees as a menace. NATO plans to install an American missile 'shield' right on Russia's borders. In response, Russia has announced its intent to deploy surface to air missiles in its enclave of Kaliningrad, now surrounded on three sides by NATO countries. Surprise, surprise, NATO has claimed this 'threat' as justification for *its* installation and existence.

The Treaty's first Article says: "The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their



**Chris Bratcher** is a former Chair and Treasurer of Conway Hall Ethical Society. His jaundiced view of Globalisation and unrestricted Free Trade is in part informed by his time as a former tax inspector where he examined the practices of many of the world's multinationals, and by observing their effects in the gutted towns of the North East, where he now lives.

international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.” Does NATO’s posture and use abide by this?

The International Institute for Strategic Studies estimates Russia’s current annual military spending at \$66bn: a tenth of that of the USA, and barely more than the UK or France. NATO is actually an economic device for tying up Russian resources. Of course the UK military (and ex Defence ministers) holding senior posts in NATO have a vested interest in its continuance. Following Trump’s comments, no-one is going to believe the Treaty would secure American commitment to a war under his presidency were a European country to be attacked. It is a dead duck. The Western states of the EU (except notably the UK and Belgium, where NATO HQ is sited) would rather have a EU controlled integrated capacity, and are moving towards this: NATO will wither in tandem.

### **HE’S DEAD RIGHT ABOUT THE NEED TO CURTAIL FREE TRADE**

What have Theresa May and John McDonnell got in common? They have both repeated the mantra that they wish to protect the UK against the evils of globalisation, *and* that they support ‘free trade’. To quote McDonnell<sup>1</sup>: “This has always been a trading nation and I believe the economic benefits of free trade are well known throughout the country.” {Cobblers – we are now a *consuming* nation that buys in, and the economic benefits are little known up North.} If, by the evils of globalisation they mean, like Trump, the loss of jobs and investment through international business siting or migrating them overseas, that practice is enabled by free trade: the ability to sell products without restriction or tariffs from the base of its choice.

It is an invitation to flood the world with goods that were once – or could be – domestically produced. (Germany and China exacerbate this by being locked into, or maintaining, an artificially low exchange rate.) America’s biggest export market by value is China, yet the amount is dwarfed by its trade *imbalance* with it: \$336bn last year. Free trade can only mean more of the same. The consequence is not rape – Trump’s typically vituperative word – as the

commerce is consensual, but rather something close to economic prostitution; to be followed by the sale of the cat house.

An exporting country may well spend its profits and surplus foreign currency in the importing country by buying assets. The UK government’s policy is to assemble a bunch of carrots to that end. But all too often this foreign direct investment is in brands (like Aquascutum, with closure of the UK clothing factory); not in new businesses, or those with export capability. In November, the Chancellor, accompanied by a Chinese vice-premier, proudly announced “a major opportunity to open up investment opportunities in the Northern Powerhouse.”<sup>1</sup> What was taken up are property developments.

A stick, or measure, is needed to deter mercantilism: the uncontrolled export of goods. It has long been a racing certainty that America will perforce engage in a trade war *on* China this century. Trump has fired the starting gun. He announced that America will abandon the Trans-Pacific Partnership Free Trade treaty, set to be endorsed in Congress. Members – who include Canada, Mexico, Australia and China – accept it is dead in the water.

How might it be conducted? America might attempt in extremis to change China’s trading behaviour by an embargo, enforced by some sort of blockade run from the new bases that America has installed on islands in the South China seas under Obama’s watch. John Pilger’s documentary, ‘The Coming War *on* China’, shown this December on ITV, suggested as much. History shows that trade embargoes transmute into skirmishes and real war. But the sabre rattling is much more likely to end in tariffs.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership deal with the US (of which we were the most enthusiastic EU promoter) is likewise likely to flounder, as America plays even harder ball. If we attempt a free-trade deal of our own (despite the fact that we have never had or needed a trade treaty with the US), I think our weakness will be perpetuated. It is a mistaken idea that we have stuff that US consumers will buy, but purely for reasons of existing minor tariffs or prohibitions, we can’t sell. That ‘stuff’ is likely to be principally services, opportunities for business conducted overseas without meaningful UK employment. What we will import is more service privatisation.



## FREE, OR NOT SO FREE TRADE

But to step back. Some lines are drawn in the sand. Governments enact anti-dumping measures to try to stop the sale of goods at below cost. They impose a levy on them and their cost of shipping and insurance. For example, imports of bicycles from China to the EU suffer a tariff of this kind of 48.5%. It is a bit like saying it's OK that we are getting trashed at cricket, providing you play fair. I say with Trump that we have to alter the game.

Rates of duty on goods coming from outside the EU are on the HMRC website. You would think that laptops, mobile phones, digital cameras and game consoles would attract duty, but, like books, they don't. Currently the UK is in dispute with Apple over its fancy new smartwatch, which has a £49 detachable strap. The watch doesn't attract duty. If the strap is not regarded as integral to the watch, it is an "other plastic" import subject to 6.5% duty: hardly a game-changer.

The alternative to Free Trade is not some blanket imposition of tariffs on all imports, or from all countries. It should take into account the possibility of retaliatory charges on exports. The Far East tiger economies, and Bismarck's Germany, grew manufacturing through selective barriers to imports. That's impossible for trade *between* the Continental European countries, with their umpteen common borders, and the Common Market was born of that, just as much as from idealism.

## A BIT OF UK HISTORY

In the 19th century, huge battles were fought over protectionism. Come 1903, imports of manufactures were growing and Joseph Chamberlain left the Tory Government to campaign for it under the banner of Tariff Reform. He suggested that income from tariffs could provide the means to make social provision. The spectre of higher food prices (despite his proposal to exclude Canadian grain and other Empire products from any levy), City of London opposition, and the consequent Tory party split, made it a lost cause. Now, the UK is woefully weak in exportable goods, other than certain luxury products, pharmaceuticals, armaments and financial services. Finding products to kit out Trade Fairs has been an embarrassment.

What is to be done, other than turn ourselves into even more of a tourist theme park?

## THE CASE FOR MANUFACTURING

The alternative for the UK, like the US, is to substitute home based manufacturing (in the broadest sense); currently rendered a non-starter by low or tariff-free imports. Manufacturing enshrines a measure of permanency in a locality, jobs, *and* export potential, in a way that siting the HQ of a multinational, or warehousing, does not. Trump is right that it is essential to revitalising communities in America – and across Europe, and, for that matter, Africa. The secondary jobs that come with it have a huge multiplier effect. There is also the issue of job satisfaction, individually and as a community. This is why all the economic projections, all the prognostications during the Referendum cut no ice. People take pride in home production, however much it is automated.

*The problem for us*, unlike America, is the relatively small size of the UK market to attract new ventures even with the help of state aid. (That this last is prohibited by the EU if 'advantageous' is a reason of itself to Brexit.)

There is a call for a 'soft' Brexit giving a 'passport' for products into Europe. My topic is Trump's policies, not Brexit solutions, but imports from the EU, such as motor vehicles, will be something that the EU would wish to preserve. Why not insist that one or more new car-making plants, that are, to some degree, determinable by government shareholding, will be sited in the UK in exchange for tariff free importation of other vehicles. Why else would a European car manufacturer site here? Like Goldilocks, some negotiated porridge will go down cold; some will make people hot under the collar, and some will need to be sugared.

*The immediate effect of tariffs* is an increase in the cost of goods, or their domestically produced substitutes, and a fall in demand, because the population can't afford them, or the goods in question are no longer there, with a fall in that virility symbol, GDP, and a consequent contraction in the incomes of traders and their supply chain. Hence the frenzied urgings of the CBI to maximise free trade: their primary concern is throughput. But simply increasing sales does not commensurately increase

jobs. In any event, demand is not there in our saturated home market, because proper jobs, and the income of the many, have not grown.

The hope is that the increases in cost are matched in time by the created spending power of the businesses and communities that produce the replacements, and of the government that collects the tariffs

Following the US mortgage crash in 2008 and the Greek crisis, countries around the world went down the protectionist route. The days of 'laissez faire' are perforce coming to an end. Reciprocity is in. I closed my talk with a case history: Argentina (a much smaller market than the UK). Importers' share of its mobile-phone market was 96% in 2009. By stalling imports, Argentina persuaded Blackberry's manufacturer to set up a plant there to largely replace this. Manufacturers who couldn't relocate took the message that their products could only get

through customs if they invested in Argentina to generate an equivalent value in other, exportable, products: the wine you buy in supermarkets now is in part a result. The head of the business school in Buenos Aires summed matters up by saying that the interventions were a deterrent: "It's a general message for everyone who wants to import that it will be expensive and complicated, and you're better off producing here."<sup>3</sup> I'll drink to that.

- 
1. From John McDonnell's speech given in London on 27 October 2016.
  2. Announced on 10 November 2016 on the Government's website.
  3. Reported in the Economist on 24 September 2011, which gives a fuller account of the policy.

## OBITUARY

### **John Barrett**

**(15 October 1936 – 19 January 2017)**

We regret to report the unexpected death of CHES member John Barrett, after some routine operations. His non-religious funeral was conducted on 20 February at Mortlake Crematorium.

John was born in New Zealand but lived mainly in England. For 25 years he dressed as Dr Watson and, together with Stewart Holmes as Sherlock, inhabited "221b" Baker Street, the Sherlock Holmes Museum to the delight of its visitors. He had also worked as a film extra.

He will be remembered for his jolly nature and ebullient good humour.

**Norman Bacrac**

A THINKING ON SUNDAY LECTURE, 23 October 2016

# The Role of Language in Understanding Sexual Behaviour

**Dr Cicely Marston** gave her talk as part of the 2016 Bloomsbury Festival, which was based on the theme of Language.



**Warning:** this article contains sexually explicit descriptions.

This piece starts with a warning: if you are worried about explicit sexual language, you should consider skipping to a different article. The need for such warnings is one of the features of sex and sex research, and the line between ‘explicit’ meaning ‘precise’ versus ‘obscene’ is easy to cross by mistake. For instance, I helped advise on a survey questionnaire in Uganda that would ask young people whether or not they had ever had sex. We know that young people from many different cultures may not understand exactly what ‘sex’ is, particularly given that ‘sex’ can be interpreted in different ways. To make matters worse, the most commonly used local expression was very vague, roughly translating as ‘moving around in the night’. We wanted to be specific (penis in vagina) but when we provided the rephrased, more ‘specific’ question

to the interviewing team they flatly refused to use it because they considered it too obscene. We were stuck with ‘moving around in the night’.

So using language to try to understand sexual behaviour can bring problems. We still use language for research, however, because sex is not usually observable by researchers and in any case observers would not be able to detect internal states such as people’s opinions about what is happening, whether they are consenting or not, and whether they feel pleasure or not. So what people tell us about sex is one of the only ways we can find out what’s happening at all. Of course, we know individuals may not want to tell us everything or may gloss over certain things that happened to present themselves in a particular light so if we want to know exactly what physically happened,

**Dr Cicely Marston** is an Associate Professor in Social Science at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Her research interests include interdisciplinary work on sexual and reproductive health, sexual behaviour (including coercion), particularly of young people, and community participation in health. She also works with various external organisations, including the World Health Organization, in these areas.



we may find ourselves in difficulties – surveys about sexual practice for instance may record gender differences in reported sexual activity and it can be hard to know to what extent this reflects real differences and to what extent it reflects differences in how willing men versus women are to report what they do.

We have interviewed couples in depth about their sexual experiences and it is clear that two people's accounts may not even be recognizable as being about the same event because of the different things they personally highlight in their narratives. For instance, we interviewed two individuals from a couple and both told a story that involved being caught in a heavy rainstorm, taking shelter in a hotel, then having sex for the first time. Almost everything else in the accounts was unrecognizable – without the key details about the rain and that it was their first sex together, we would not have necessarily interpreted it as being the same event at all.

Rather than to try to find out some kind of 'truth' about a sexual event, then, which as we can see may be problematic, another way to use language is to examine how people construct their identities in dialogue. What we say and how we present ourselves to others reflects something about us. The way we talk and the way people respond to us is affected by our personal characteristics, not just the words we use. The way people talk, then, often draws on shared norms – the things we need to be able to 'read between the lines' of what is said. For example, if we receive a reference for a new employee that says 'John was employed in our organisation for ten years and was always very punctual' but mentions nothing else, we might suspect that John also has less desirable characteristics that the referee does not wish to spell out, or even that the punctuality itself might be somehow problematic.

Another aspect of language that can be useful in understanding sexual behavior is labelling – we label things we need to talk about with others and so things with labels have a social reality although these labels may not be easily applied to individuals' actual experiences. For instance, certain sexual practices have very common names and social significance, but that doesn't mean that other practices don't exist or are not important to people doing them. Some languages or slang from particular sexual subcultures might highlight certain practices that other languages do not

and this is likely to reflect what is socially or culturally important to the users of those particular labels.

One example of a difficult phenomenon to research is sexual coercion. The WHO definition of sexual health includes freedom from coercion. Measuring sexual health therefore involves measuring sexual coercion. This can take account of internal processes (feelings of loss of control, fear, deception etc.) or external (an observer may interpret reports of an event and deem it coercive).

In a study we conducted in Mexico<sup>1</sup>, a girl we will call Blanca told us about her relationship with a much older man. For their first date, he had asked her to go with him to a major religious site called La Villa. She told us the story like this:

BLANCA: *He says to me: shall we go to La Villa? I say: let's go. But instead of La Villa he took me to a hotel and that's where it happened (laughs).*

INT: *And you, how would you describe what happened?*

BLANCA: *Well, look, I didn't want to, you know? I'll tell you a funny story. I didn't want to. He says to me: shall I go and wash? I say to him: yes. And after that, I crawled under the bed because I knew what I was there for, you know? I crawled under the bed. He was looking for me, he says: what are you doing under the bed? I say: oh, it's because I dropped a peso. He says to me: go and wash. I say: yes, and I go and wash and he comes into the bathroom to wash at the same time. I say: no, no what are you doing here? – Just think! – I cover myself with the towel, everything getting soaked. He says to me: I like being with you, I've come to admire you. No, I say to him, get out of here! He says: no, you've got to understand me, I mean, even the first time I saw you I loved you, I found you attractive, I'd already seen you a few times but I'd never introduced myself. Okay, I say, and that was when the lesson began, and that's how it ended. But, just imagine, how funny – crawling under the bed!*

INT: *How old was he?*

BLANCA: *Him? He was 28*

INT: *And you?*

BLANCA: *Guess!*

INT: *You said 15, right?*

This is their first date, she is a virgin, he is nearly twice her age and deceives her about where they will go on

their date. He is alone with her in a hotel room. Had their relationship not continued, it seems possible that she would have talked about this experience in a more negative way.

Blanca tells the story as a dialogue; we hear his voice, and the words she reports directly support the social requirement that the woman be in a loving relationship. They do the work in the story of constructing the relationship as something closer to the socially preferred loving relationship and further from something new and uncertain. In her telling of the story, the final, persuasive remark he makes is: "... even the first time I saw you I loved you, I found you attractive, I'd already seen you a few times", which both lengthens the relationship to include time before they met ("I'd already seen you"), and introduces the crucial component of "love". By using his voice, she implies that his motives were clear and directly stated. She is not interpreting his mood, she is simply being told that he loves her. Her agreement afterwards is immediate: he says he loves her, she consents to sex. The same story could be constructed very differently under different circumstances ("he locked me in a hotel room and forced me to have sex with him"). The construction of the event as positive requires certain parts of the dialogue to be reported, and reference to overarching concepts of 'appropriate' circumstances of sexual behaviour for women. Whether the event was 'coercive' or not is a complex question.

In a different study in the UK, we interviewed 16-18 year olds about their sexual experiences.<sup>2</sup> This produced an example of how examining a label can help us to understand something about sex. One woman told us about her second experience of anal sex with her boyfriend. She told us about the same event in two separate interviews.

[FIRST INTERVIEW] *We were having [vaginal] sex another time and it [her partner's penis] just kind of **slipped** in [into her anus] that way.*

[SECOND INTERVIEW AROUND ONE YEAR LATER] *He just sort of **slipped** in [...] I think he thought it would make it less painful for me. And I think he thought he can make me like it like that.*

At the first interview, this interviewee was ambiguous about what happened, narrating the event as though it were accidental ("it just kind of slipped in"), perhaps reluctant to draw attention to not having been involved in the decision. At the second interview, she was clearer that he had deliberately penetrated her (she may also have spoken to her partner about it between interviews). She presents it in a somewhat positive way ("he thought he can make me like it") but her consent remains unclear. At both interviews, she emphasised how much she enjoyed subsequent anal sex with the same man, and that either of them might initiate it.

The use of the label 'slip' recurred in different interviews with different people in the study. One young man, for example, mentioned a 'slip' in his first interview so in the second interview, the interviewer asks for more details.

[INTERVIEWER] *I think you said [...] in the first interview that there had been a time where [...] you said it [your penis] slipped.*

[INTERVIEWEE] *Well I, I tried, and I said it slipped.*

[INTERVIEWER] *So it hadn't actually slipped? It wasn't an accident?*

[INTERVIEWEE] *No, no, no it wasn't an accident.*

Here the word 'slip' may be used in narrative as a way to gloss over or minimise coercive behaviour. A slip after all could be accidental, so referring to an event as a 'slip' allows the speaker to be ambiguous about what occurred.

When we have stories about sexual events to analyse, we can look for shared understandings implied in the narrative; look at labels (what is labelled and what is not, and how labels are used); look at how speech is reported in narratives; and look at pauses, laughter and hesitation to try to understand some of these nuances. Ignoring complexity and demanding a 'true' picture of 'what really happened' in sex is common. I have tried to show with the examples here that the reality can be complex. Analysing language can reveal some of this complexity to help understand the nuances of sex and society.

1. For more details about this work, please refer to: Marston C. What is heterosexual coercion? Interpreting narratives from young people in Mexico City. *Sociology of Health & Illness*. 2005; 27(1): 68–91.

2. For more details of this example, please see C. Marston and R. Lewis (2014). Anal heterosex among young people and implications for health promotion: a qualitative study in the UK. *BMJ Open*; 4(8): e004996

# Who is Threatening Whom?

I found Masoud Ahmadi's analysis, 'The Question of Iran' (March 2017's *Ethical Record*; Vol 122, no. 2: 13-15) most interesting, but I take issue with some of his arguments.

He makes the sweeping assertion that "For a long time the West has been appeasing Tehran in the vain hope that the so-called 'moderates' will emerge.... The main outcome of this policy has been the carnage that we see today, not only in the Middle East but also in Europe". What appeasement is he talking about? Tough sanctions were imposed against Iran as early as 1995, frequently renewed and expanded by the UN Security Council. It was only in July 2015 that the world powers (including Britain) reached a deal with Iran on limiting their nuclear activities in return for the lifting of sanctions. It is not clear how this "appeasement" is responsible for "the carnage that we see today". In any case it was surely the American and British invasion of Iraq in 2003 which did as much as anything to pave the way for the Middle East quagmire of today.

Mr Ahmadi discusses the coup d'état in 1953 against the elected, moderate and very popular prime minister of Iran, Dr Mohammad Mossadegh. It is odd that Mr Ahmadi does not mention that it was Churchill and Eisenhower who decided that Mossadegh must be overthrown, and who initiated the coup (both Atlee and Truman had opposed it). Mossadegh had wanted to audit the documents of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), a British corporation (now part of BP), and to limit the company's control over Iranian petroleum reserves. The AIOC flatly refused, whereupon the Iranian parliament voted to nationalize the Iranian oil industry. Both British intelligence and the CIA have admitted to their pivotal role in directing the coup which followed. A great many Iranians have never forgiven us for this.

The leaders of Iran today are an unpleasant lot with a repressive social agenda, and are openly anti-Semitic. However, there are certain things which we must keep in mind in order to get the situation into perspective:

(i) Despite the official anti-Semitism, Iran has a Jewish MP, formerly Maurice Motamed and now Siamak Moreh Sedgh, a thriving Jewish community, and about 20 synagogues. The Jewish MP sometimes publically challenges the president on his actions and policies. Ahmadinejad was vigorously scolded, for example, for denying the holocaust, and told that this was an insult to Jews in Iran and everywhere. This compares favourably to most Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia, with whom we are happy to do business. There are also several hundred thousand Christians in Iran, a number which I believe to be growing fast.

(ii) Iran is surrounded by nuclear weapons, for example in Israel, Pakistan, India, US nuclear submarines etc., and also by hostile US bases in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Kuwait and other Gulf States. So who is threatening whom? I can understand Iran's desire for nuclear weapons, although they won't admit to it.

(iii) Although Iran engages in wars by proxy, modern Iran has never attacked another country, and when Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, it was with our encouragement – a war which lasted 9 years, with at least half a million killed. Again, the Iranians have not forgiven America for encouraging Saddam Hussein to start the war, and for supplying him with the weapons he needed.

(iv) In June 2013, Ahmadinejad stood down peacefully after his two terms as president were up, and his arch-critic, the more liberal Hassan Rouhani was elected, defeating Ahmadinejad's faction.

Modern Iran is clearly a many sided creature. We should keep some sanctions and some inducements up our sleeve, conditional upon improvements in human rights. However, I believe that by partially bringing Iran in from the cold, and by talking and trading more with her, we are more likely to encourage the better side of her nature.

*David Simmonds*



# Man-made Climate Change: Is it Trumped up?

In response to Professor Piers Forster's article published in February 2017's *Ethical Record* (Vol 122, no. 1: 5-7), based on the ToS debate 'Man-made Climate Change: Is it Trumped up?'

Dear Professor Piers Forster (respected fellow scientist, but with whom I do not agree but politely have to differ),

I am a professional biologist with very long standing interests and readings on climate changes and their consequences, at least since the first migrations of hominids out of Africa, and in Tropical Agriculture involvement since 1961. Here is an essay I offered as a blog someplace, but it never was even acknowledged. Do you, Professor of Physics/Meteorology, suppose it a load of rubbish?

I know very well that my views are in a heavy minority but do not apologise. The Trump, and apparently, Putin, views on doubt over what some have been taught to regard as certainty about climate may have possible advantages if they were to lead to a radical rethink by the 80th anniversary of Callendar's hunch which has run and run. Here is a summary of the concerns.

1. Callendar, a steam engineer in 1938, began a story that has run and run. He suggested that steam engines by their steam would cause climate change.
2. In 2018 we have a possibly significant 80th Anniversary of the Callendar myth by which we have just enough time if all work together to put that to bed by a final statement of Paris accords that could get the Climate changes of the last millennia and much more recently better understood.
3. Al Gore's "Inconvenient Truth" was a major step in perpetuating the Callendar initiated myth.
4. James Hansen as a 'top thinker' has much to do with the survival and elaboration. Myths survive and get elaborated just as religions have always done. You needed prophets and gospel writers for religions.
5. Geophysics and Solar nuclear physics, as well as atmospheric physics, call for new attention to be paid to my suggestion. Piers Corbyn by drawing attention to solar internal instability, nuclear fusion, radioactivity and volcano-like flares (and related sun spots) is well ahead of most.
6. The Northwards cold current up the South American coast varies in strength from year to year, when

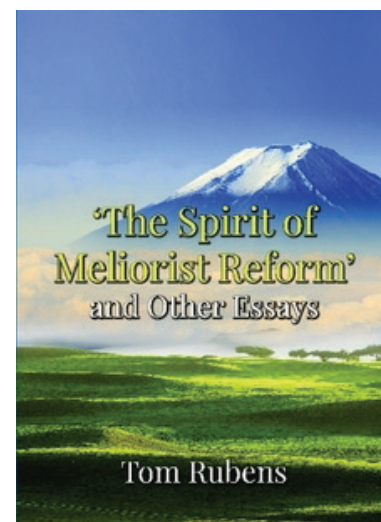
strong and getting to its maximum north it brings the feast of Anchovy catches. The cold current meeting the warmer current reduces the power of the warmer towards the west and into the major southern pacific oceanic water circulation.

7. East to West Air currents follow from changes in water temperature that in turn are due to the convergences of the ocean water streams (i.e. not the reverse as some uncomprehending commentators wrongly supposed). These set up geographically large scale circulation which has anything from droughts to floods as consequences over very wide areas.
8. Any who have seriously questioned the mythology have been branded as 'climate deniers' and given the same sort of disrespect as religious heretics. Time for a change I suggest!
9. My proposal now via this blog is for an international gathering of real scientists especially from Geophysics and Oceanography as well as now mistrusted 'weather' communities.
10. The core of the Sun, and possibly that of Planet Earth (as proposed by some research groups), has continuous nuclear energy generation through fusion, not fission radioactive changes. This is a slant on 'nuclear energy' which is neglected by all but a few. From those molten core masses of our planet Earth white hot magmas moves outwards and power volcanos, earthquakes and tectonic movements of the 'plates' of crust. Sometimes these effusions are relatively fast, usually imperceptibly slow, but have and will continue to create what is called Geology.
11. Italian Physicist and 'expert' in thermodynamics, Alberto Miatello, who has fewer publications than you, has significant people in agreement with his arguments against the Greenhouse myth. I am not an expert in such areas myself, but observe and read the arguments.

I have followed Piers Corbyn's views and solar physics information since 1986. His reports and service have continued in his Weatheraction news distribution which people pay for to this day and are much respected.

Colin Leakey, FRSB

# THE SPIRIT OF MELIORIST REFORM AND OTHER ESSAYS



by **Tom Rubens** (2016) Available from [lulu.com](http://lulu.com) at £8.99 (Kindle £1.99). Info from [tomrubens.co.uk](http://tomrubens.co.uk)

## Review by **Norman Bacrac**

This collection of 40 short essays is Tom Rubens' eighth book on European culture and philosophy. It starts with the titled essay, where Tom defines the utopians as aiming for a perfect society, whereas the meliorists aim more modestly to reduce disorder and injustice and to "produce a social reality which will be an improvement on the previous one". Tom characterises Stalinism as utopian (although it claimed to be scientific rather than utopian), which became dogmatic and totalitarian. He includes as prominent meliorists Karl Popper, Bertrand Russell, Isaiah Berlin, E.M. Forster and George Santayana.

Tom argues "that a genuinely radical and progressive form of electoral politics in this country can only be one which relentlessly challenges the power networks (the fossil-fuel industry, the major banks and ministers in the present government) ... with the aim of completely breaking them." He believes that "the vital need is for a united political front consisting of representatives of all sections of society which lie outside the economic-political power structure." In his essay "The Challenge of Chomsky", Tom hails Chomsky's "unsparing critique of the economic and political forces which...continually shape Washington policy" as an inspiration to writers outside the United States, such as John Pilger.

Tom regards Freud's view that "men are not gentle creatures (but) among whose instinctual endowments is a powerful share of aggressiveness" as an over-statement, an exaggeration, because in

evolutionary terms, non-violent behaviour has always had greater survival value than violent. "The constant triumph of violence would have precluded the emergence of civilisation." There is a deeper tendency toward co-operation and harmonious inter-action, "ultimately traced to the process of natural selection."

Tom Rubens is a physicalist, believing that all physical events, at least on the macroscopic level, are caused and are caused only by other physical events. This is called the 'causal closure of the physical' and goes for the human brain and thus to human behaviour as well as the rest of the world. Mental events either *are* physical events in the brain or *are caused* by them but "are not themselves causes of action." This latter view is called epiphenomenalism.

Tom therefore does not countenance *philosophical* libertarianism, which posits that "human actions, or at least some of them, are totally uncaused, therefore uncompelled – and are, in these senses, free." Such action, if it existed, would, in Tom's opinion, be groundless, inexplicable, morally incoherent and senseless! If thus "determinism is viewed as applying to all human action, moral discourse is not destroyed but transformed from what it has traditionally been." Tom, in the remainder of his essays, explores some of the sensational consequences of this drastic change in how human behaviour is to be viewed. I believe humanists should take this position on board, especially as it renders inoperative theology's 'free will' defence for justifying divine retribution.

# THINKING ON SUNDAY

Start at 11.00 unless specified otherwise.

---

<b>Apr 2</b>	<b>Mensheviks and Bolsheviks 1917–1923</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Dr Francis King</i></li></ul>
<b>Apr 9</b>	<b>The Ethical Encyclopaedia – Right and Wrong in Wikipedia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Andrew Davidson</i></li></ul>
<b>Apr 23</b>	<b>The End of Politics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Ian Dunt</i></li></ul>
<b>May 7</b>	<b>Beating the Hell out of Fake News</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Dr Sander van der Linden</i></li></ul>
<b>May 14</b>	<b>Morality as Cooperation: How Evolution Explains Ethics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Dr Oliver Scott Curry</i></li></ul>

---

# THE CONWAY COLLECTIVE

---

<b>Apr 8</b>	<b>Resistance – a Workshop for Photographers and Performers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10.00 to 17.00 • <i>Led by Grace Gelder and Luke Dixon</i></li></ul>
<b>Apr 12</b>	<b>Camp Henry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 19.45 to 21.00 • <i>Written and performed by Sean Bruno</i></li></ul>
<b>Apr 22</b>	<b>The Testing Ground</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 19.45 to 21.00 • <i>Mark Carberry, Emma Grace, Jade Montserrat and The Conway Collective with Theresa Hoffmann, Maja Laskowska and Roxana Bacian</i></li></ul>

---

# COURSES

---

<b>May 4 - Jun 22</b>	<b>No Gods No Masters – 8 week course</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 18.30 to 20.30 • Eight Thursday evening sessions</li><li>• Presented by Conway Hall Ethical Society</li></ul>
---------------------------	---

---

For ticket prices and other information, please visit [www.conwayhall.org.uk](http://www.conwayhall.org.uk)



## CONWAY HALL SUNDAY CONCERTS

Start at **18.30** unless specified otherwise.

- 
- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>Apr 2</b> | <b>Ensemble Metamusika</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Catoire, Weinberg, Prokofiev and Shostakovich</i></li></ul> |
|--------------|---|
- 
- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>Apr 9</b> | <b>Children Workshop with Alena Lugovkina (flute)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>14:00 to 15:00</i></li></ul> |
|--------------|---|
- 
- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>Apr 9</b> | <b>Lawson Trio</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Haydn, Rebecca Clarke, Cheryl Frances-Hoad and Schumann</i></li></ul> |
|--------------|---|
- 
- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Apr 23</b> | <b>Piatti Quartet &amp; Simon Callaghan (piano)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Turina, Janáček and Chopin</i></li></ul> |
|---------------|---|
- 
- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Apr 30</b> | <b>St Paul's Quartet &amp; Felix Tanner (viola)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Schubert, Debussy and Mozart</i></li></ul> |
|---------------|---|
- 
- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>May 7</b> | <b>Ducasse Trio</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Milhaud, Berg, Arutiunian, Menotti, Shostakovich and Stravinsky</i></li></ul> |
|--------------|--|
- 
- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>May 14</b> | <b>Children Workshop with Darren Moore (trumpet)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>14:00 to 15:00</i></li></ul> |
|---------------|--|
- 
- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>May 14</b> | <b>Gildas Quartet</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Haydn, Janáček and Bridge</i></li></ul> |
|---------------|--|
- 

For ticket prices and other information, please visit [www.conwayhall.org.uk/sunday-concerts/](http://www.conwayhall.org.uk/sunday-concerts/)