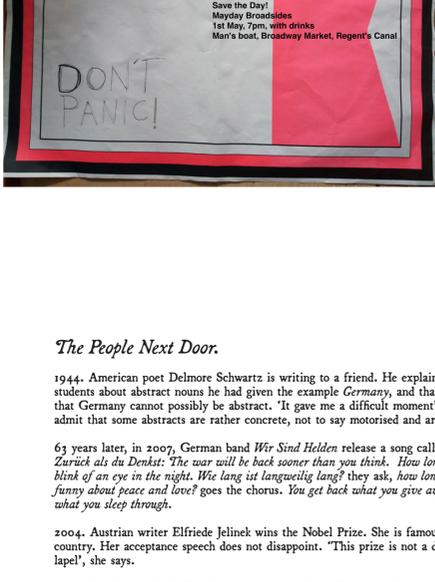


Mayday

broadside



David Lillington
Jo Stockham
Josephine Berry
Mark Waldron
Megan Watkins
Nicholas Stewart
Rose Gibbs
Sarah Jones
Simone Pereira-Madder

The People Next Door.

1944. American poet Delmore Schwartz is writing to a friend. He explains that in trying to teach his students about abstract nouns he had given the example *Germany*, and that one of the students objected that Germany cannot possibly be abstract. "It gave me a difficult moment", he writes, "because I had to admit that some abstracts are rather concrete, not to say motorised and armoured."

63 years later, in 2007, German band *Wir Sind Helden* release a song called *Der Krieg kommt Schneller Zuerst als du Denkst*. The song will be back sooner than you think. How long is 60 years? they sing. *The blink of an eye in the night. Wie lang ist langweilig lang? they ask, how long is boringly long? What's so funny about peace and love? goes the chorus. You get back what you give away, they sing, you get back what you sleep through.*

2004. Austrian writer Elfriede Jelinek wins the Nobel Prize. She is famous for her disdain for her own country. Her acceptance speech does not disappoint. "This prize is not a decoration for the Austrian lapel", she says.

2013. Austrian band *Die Eine Heult* release their first album, on which is the song *Tür Daneben: The People Next Door*. It was written by band member Ulla Rauter. *Are you looking for the hero of the hour? The awakening heroine? That'll be the people next door.* The people next door are vile, have an answer for everything, and are ordering everyone around. You quickly realise this is a song about Austria's Nazi past. But by the end of the song you realise it is really about something else: it's about now, about the current political situation, across Europe.

2016. A Saturday morning in April in Market Place in Nunceaton. Ken Sleeman, a 75 year-old retired history teacher, and someone I happen to know, attacks a UKIP canvasser. "Go away", he says, "you're a fascist and we don't want fascists in this town." Are you calling me a fascist? the UKIP canvasser asks, lamely. "Yes," Ken says, "you are a fascist, and we don't want your kind round here." That's the spirit, I think. No one else has had the courage to say anything. But Ken feels driven, he has to say something, has to do something. Afterwards quite a few people come up and quietly thank him for what he has done.

June 2016. I get a haircut. It's a little place in Kentish Town in which each hairdresser is self-employed. They offer haircuts for £6.50. The hairdresser asks my views on Brexit and tells me she voted leave and now regrets it. "The media didn't tell us anything", she says. She sounds genuinely ashamed. I think she is brave. I give her 12 quid.

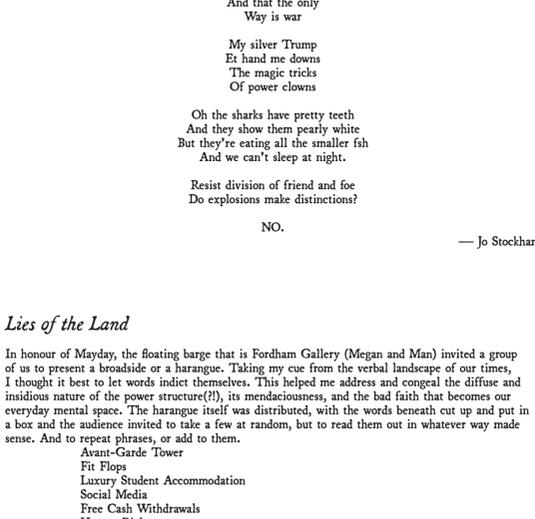
26th January 2017. Alexander van der Bellen is elected president of Austria, narrowly defeating a candidate from the extreme right. The vote is so close the election is run twice. In his acceptance speech Van der Bellen says that his win is a sign of hope for all Europe.

24th May 2016. My German class. The teacher, Tatjana, makes an impassioned 15 minute speech condemning Brexit. She is almost in tears. She is probably not supposed to do this. Clearly she doesn't want anyone in the class to admit they voted leave. But there is someone, James, James is not in class this evening because he is out celebrating. He has put a bet on Brexit and won. Later he will put a bet on Trump and win. He boasts that he is going to put a bet on Marine le Pen. After another class, just before the Dutch elections, I ask if he would vote for Geert Wilders, but he refuses to answer. In class he talks approvingly about populism. When he talks again about his bets Tatjana says, "are you rich?" trying to find a job that will not compromise her. After all her job is to teach us German, she cannot start a political fight, although she makes it clear what her own views are. He is, I think, one of the people next door of Ulla Rauter's song. *Tür Daneben*. One evening after class I attack him. I don't know what to say but like Ken Sleeman I feel I have to say something, have to do something. I ask him if he is a racist. A brief exchange ensues, in the corridor and in the lift. It isn't very satisfactory, and it is stressful, but at least I have done something. I am disappointed with other class members for saying nothing.

Tür Daneben has a refrain: *Wir haben leider nichts getan dagegen. Unfortunately we did nothing to stop them.* The last two lines are, *Wir haben zwar schon gehnnt, doch eben haben wir leider nichts getan dagegen*

we did indeed see it coming, but even so, unfortunately we did nothing to stop it.

— David Lillington



Upon this day
Come what May
We'll play and sing
Jong Un, Jinping

Put in put out
I can't agree,
Shake all about
Speech must be free

The cup's half full
If we can pull
Ourselves together
In Stormy Weather

And counter claims
That truth's no more
And that the only
Way is war

My silver Trump
Et hand me downs
The magic tricks
Of power clowns

Oh the sharks have pretty teeth
And they show them pearly white
But they're eating all the smaller fish
And we can't sleep at night.

Resist division of friend and foe
Do explosions make distinctions?

NO.

— Jo Stockham

Lies of the Land

In honour of Mayday, the floating barge that is Fordham Gallery (Megan and Man) invited a group of us to present a broadside or a harangue. Taking my cue from the verbal landscape of our times, I thought it best to let words indict themselves. This helped me address and congeal the diffuse and insidious nature of the power structure(s), its mendaciousness, and the bad faith that becomes our everyday mental space. The harangue itself was distributed, with the words beneath cut up and put in a box and the audience invited to take a few at random, but to read them out in whatever way made sense. And to repeat phrases, or add to them.

Away! Gardie Tower
Fit Flood
Luxury Student Accommodation
Social Media
Free Cash Withdrawals
Human Rights
Fair Play
Penalty Charge Notice
Box Packer
The Culture Industry
Cool Britannia
Stupidly Simple
Post-Modernism
Care Crisis
Egg McMuffin
Brexit Means Brexit
Feminine Hygiene
Arc of Opprobrium
Social Contract
Economic Community
Right to Roam
Affordable Rents
To be Fair...
Futures Trading
Ethnic Food
Consumer Rights
Free Trial
The Olympic Park
Public Consultation
Carbon Trading
Free Schools
Wilderness Zones
Jamie's Comfort Food
Royal Taster
Fake News
Family Pack
Corporate Manslaughter
The Cloud
Triple Lock of Responsibility
Gastro Pub
Self-Made Man
Urban Regeneration
Animal Rights
Middle England
Mettle and Poise
Corporate Social Responsibility
The Individual
Jamie's 15 Minute Meals
Care in the Community
Internal Exclusion
The Financial Crisis
EasyJet
Axis of Evil
Outside the Box
Man-Made Climate Change
Guide Price
Creative Economy
Family Learning Day
Intellectual Property
Northern Power House
The Vinyl Revival
Party Animals
Coke Life
Public Mandate
Salaried Partner
Hand Relief
Wine
After-Party
Smart Motorway
Fair Trade
Juice Drink
Cheap Flights
Leisure Centre
Jamie's Italian
Collateralized Debt Obligation
Chicken McNuggets
Free Overdraft
Coke Zero
The Caring Conservatives
Digital Rights Management
Innovation Training
Inset Day
Culturepreneur
Collateralized Debt Obligation
Lifetime Guarantee
Controlled Crying
Pupil Referral Unit
Fun Run
Premutual Agreement
Credit Default Swap
Leisure Time
Innovation Hub
Credit Backed Securities

— Josephine Berry

Confession

Should a gentleman wish to make a confession and thus partake of the soothing balm of forgiveness that it must bring, said squire must first commit some crime to which he might later confess. Perhaps he might choose to seduce a shepherdess, and one evening when her sheep are safely tucked up inside their slumbers he can take her for an amble in the dusk, and then, in what he contives to make seem a mishap, he might trip her with his cane and send her sprawling into a clump of angry nettles. At this juncture he might proffer his sweetheart what she, in the gathering gloom, will take to be a bunch of dock leaves to rub against her little blisters, but which will in fact be a thistle or just more nettles, which the gentleman has gathered in his moleskin gloved hands. Later when they are watching Britain's Got Talent from the comfort of her sofa, he can confess to her that neither the tripping up nor the offering of thistle were accidents, and beg the maiden's forgiveness, which she will surely freely prefer considering the disparity in their status. Should she not so absolve however, being a feisty hussy, well then he will have to wait till he sets foot in heaven to enjoy his absolute freedom. For though there are certainly no nettles growing there, the Lord will surely have heard of them, and as he bestows forgiveness he may also kindly allow himself a little chuckle at the falseness of the gentleman's cruelty.

— Mark Waldron

2+2 = 5 (arithmetic of a counter plan)

I had put 440 instead of 400 so it was sold at 20 per cent which is 88 rather than 76. I don't know where I got the extra 40 from. First I was going to ignore the mistake and just say — oh yes thanks — but I wanted to explain about the funding, 440 including what would have been counted, but there were unaccounted others, an added percentage in my head, a sort of — swarm —, then deleted it and just wrote yes sorry my fault.

For various reasons I hadn't sent it for her to forward with the code and hadn't realised they were keeping records of all the codes used so it became fairly obvious that no-one actually had that code, my suggestion that no-one from the group had used it was dubious. I thought about saying I had sent it to — Miss D — but then they had already forwarded it to — Miss D —; also I remembered for some reason before Christmas I had told — S — that I felt sorry for — S — because she was so trusting and everyone lied to her, including me.

I had already made three amendments and was sure they were keeping a list. I don't know why — Miss D — was talking to — S — but he must have got the figures from her.

In the end I sent an email drawing their attention to the code that hadn't been used and saying I would sort it out, so if they hadn't noticed they wouldn't want to look into it any further because they would feel I was already one step ahead, and wouldn't want to admit that they were not automatic.

Initially it was because everyone changed to google docs and google docs save automatically so you lose your original version. Also you can easily save it to the wrong place into a shared folder.

It was when — C — had scanned the email and automatically suggested who to include on the recipients list that — S — had been copied into my email about using her to look for a new site.

In the aftermath I was advised to apologise for "administrative error", which basically means your PA. After that I wrote emails as if they were system-generated — I read a whole legal thing about human error and it looked like it might be a good idea to outsource entirely to the system and then to imply or tolerate latent weakness within that system, in the same way that it might be useful to have a PA with a reputation for making mistakes.

They had changed everything over like I said, and the new cell doesn't automatically move down to the other cells so when I had added 10 or 10 rows the recipient information was wrong and I sent 10 or so addresses the wrong email.

First I deleted it all from sent. Then the 10 or so addresses started replying and I deleted the replies. Then I restored them and wrote a kind of system-generated technical error message then I deleted all of that. One of the 10 had said they had already forwarded my wrong email to — Miss D —, I deleted that. In the shared folders you can tell who was last to access the document but I don't know if — Miss D — would do that far. When the — Ms D's — absconded I unearthed a lot of the archived errors, saying it must have been him, that was spring. I said something about a bad worker breaks his tools, like in songs from the olden days about people who work with their hands.

— Megan Watkins

I will tell you everything. To be in the middle is to be familiar with right and left to be as far, or as near, to the summit and the pit. Of our own person we will say nothing. (But as to the subject matter with which we are concerned, we ask that you think of it not as an opinion but as a work, and consider it erected not for any purpose of ours, or for our good pleasure, but as the foundation of human utility and dignity.) K. takes Lord Bacon's words as his epigraph. The history of logic, he says, is one of cumulative progress. Since ancient times it has not had to take a single step backwards. The boundaries of logic are determined by the fact that it is the science that exhaustively presents and strictly proves nothing but the formal rules of thinking. Logic leads to a philosophy, concerned also with pure forms of thought. And the direction of this philosophy is certain. There is no objective to a limitation on knowledge. It proves the priority of thought to the object: that there is objectively universal we can know. It moves assuredly towards the understanding, no, the knowledge, because it is based on logic, that there is at the root of things nothing. There is no ground. There is no objective. There is no reality, for heaven's sake, worthy of the name. The passing show of phenomena reveal only the ability to draw patterns on chaos. Negation is the pure process of thought, the denial of the given, such that every concept, every idea is not just a misrepresentation but a denial, an active opposition to the truth of how things are. The first term of logic is nothing. How people responded to this beautiful and convincing nihilism is a whole other story of romanticism and revolution, as well as more tawdry and violent forms of freedom and submission. Groundlessness destroyed community, at least the community based on common ground. But the clearing of the universal ground also liberated an idea of freedom, individual possibility, which is its other lasting and revolutionary legacy. For the sake of this freedom we embrace groundlessness, make it our own, must invent it and feel it under our feet. It is, after all, the truth. There is no ground. It is not facts but invention that drive us forward. Belief nothing; admit nothing; expect nothing; accept nothing. Nothing is what we have in common. With no universals to restrain us a discourse of mutual recognition becomes possible. The transcendental illusion, it is said, is both false and necessary: it would be better, if only as a regulative ideal, to think it as true; and no less fleeting, transitory and contingent than any other of our mayday dreams. As nothing we can be anything, and have a future together, and keep alive the idea that there might be justice, as there only is between equals. For now, I can offer you only the feeling of the loss of ground beneath your feet, which is a certain kindness.

— Nicholas Stewart

Welcome to my benevolent feminist dictatorship

Welcome to my benevolent feminist dictatorship. This is it. Here we go. In this new state we will not tolerate sexism, racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, transphobia. And we will detain any sexist, racist, homophobic Islamophobes in The Little Yellow Wendy House. We will cram them with benevolence, kindness and feminism into the little yellow wendy house. And if the treatment of women as hair-coverers is suddenly used as an argument to reject people fleeing from civil war, they will not be tolerated either. They too will join the mass in the wendy house. Feminism will not be used in vain. We will cram them in there for a few days and taunt them with the tricycle. And then we will with benevolence and kindness and feminism cut off their heads, fully aware that the values we claim to be protecting (equality benevolence) are decimated in the process (this will be a self-martyring of the state ethos for the state ethos, a reinforcement of our commitment to feminism benevolence.) IS this clear?

In this new and wonderful benevolent feminist dictatorship we will not tolerate hair things. Hair is asexual, very phallic, very male, but it is made of keratin, a bit like a carrot, and so therefore in some ways, very phallic, very male, but not sexual. Keratin is a protein that protects and spreads across our bodies, key to the structural material making up the outer layer of human skin. This is pure protein which protects our flesh and is a barrier keeping you from me, and this from that. Which might help with sex sometimes, but keratin and all the things that are keratin are not sexual. The hair especially is not sexy, has nothing to do with sex and does not have sex. It MUST be on display. It must not be covered. We will not tolerate, headscarves, or hats, or hairpins. The hair must not be constrained but free flowing. It must fall out naturally and never be cut or always be cut, clean shaven to the quick. Or be braided or plaited or never be braided or plaited because that is sexist and constraining and we are for constraint, we are for freedom.

The legs, the legs however, they are sexual, they are sex, they are sex on a stick and must be shrouded. They are sex sticks. Here in this benevolent feminist dictatorship we like sex, we love sex, but to preserve our autonomy we must not tell anyone, they might get the wrong idea and think that we like them. We do not like them. We might sometimes like their penises, their heads, their minds, but it is unlikely that we like them. Whoever they are: men, women, adults, children. How could we be expected to like them, given the depravity of their upbringing, this awful goddamn sexist depravity that they have become accustomed to. This normalised sexualised normativity. Not in my name, I say. Not in my name. The foot, we are fairly indifferent to the foot in this benevolent feminist dictatorship. "Good god man!" he exclaimed with a smile to the whole class, "you reek of smoke!" — which was true if a touch embarrassing, pointed out as it was by a teacher for whom such things were meant to be taboo.

He sympathized as only an ex-smoker could and asked us were we not permitted to smoke in the common room rather than the woods? — We absolutely were not.

The same Mr Sheard once told us there was a fundamental thing that made us human and invited us to name it. And so we called it out: "consciousness!" "Language!" "stories!", "communication!" "No!" he said, and encouraged us to continue: "society!" "law!", "religion!", "art!" we tried "No, colder" — and so we kept guessing for quite some time, becoming a little frustrated and a little bemused, as he was that we hadn't yet managed to ascertain for ourselves this fundament of our own kind. We ended up guessing ridiculous things.

And eventually, as we were lost, he gave us clues: "What do we all use?" he asked "words?" maybe "Yes, but more generally?" "Language?" "Yes, finally!"

Huge disappointment. Surely he'd been about to share some hidden insight our young minds had been unable to divine. We'd been waiting for the scales to fall from our eyes. But it turned out he just hadn't heard us say it 10 minutes earlier.

The group of smoking boys lost three of their number early, though not as a direct result. Ben was 14 — ecstasy. Paul was 13 — misadventure. George was 19 — overdose.

When George was still alive I went out with his sister Amyralls for a while. They were from a Greek family. George listened to Metal and had a white electric guitar he adored. Ami was two years older and wore unlaiced Doc Martens with a cheesecloth summer dress.

If it is just one thing, it's not language.

— Simone Pereira-Madder