

The *Wednesday*



Weekly Magazine of the Wednesday Group at Albion Beatnik - Oxford

Editorial

Sad News For Oxford

It is very sad to hear that Albion Beatnik Bookstore is closing. I had inside information from the proprietor Dennis Harrison before the public announcement. But that didn't make it less shocking for me, personally, and the Wednesday group. It was the place that welcomed us after our last meeting place closed down two years ago. We soon found the warm welcome from Dennis and the setting of his shop encouraging for the group to continue and flourish.

This was not the first time the group faced been made homeless, since its formation in around 2003. We had about six years in Borders before it closed its doors for good. It was replaced by two supermarkets – Tesco's and Sainsbury's. We then wandered around Oxford cafes. The loss is personally felt in the Borders case and now Albion Beatnik (AB) because in both cases there was an end of a vision and an idea. The loss to culture is obvious.

Borders was a supermarket for food for thought, with huge space for sitting around to browse the books or have a cup of tea in the shop's café or to start a discussion group. It used to run its own programme on philosophy, psychology and talks by authors. It was a revolutionary concept but it was far less than the vision of AB. The latter became a centre for different groups following different cultural activities, such as a writing group, a poetry society, a philosophy group, and a book-reading group. In addition, it organised evenings for poetry reading, films, plays and jazz. It has also had a café.

You felt, when walking in the shop, the energy that was going on in the place and the coming and going of remarkable people talking to Dennis and arranging with him the publishing of a poetry

collection or a novel or discussing his magazine *Sandspout*. Dennis also created the Albion Beatnik Press. All this made the Wednesday group feel that we had, at last, our permanent place, and especially so after we started **The *Wednesday*** magazine.

AB was a unique place for culture and Oxford doesn't have much to rival it. It became an institution that catered for new talents and projects. However, culture sometimes, or maybe always, has to face economic realities. It is remarkable that AB stayed in business for a decade despite the fall of the number of books bought over the years in a town that has its big bookshops and a number of charity shops selling books at competitive prices.

The closure of AB reminds me of a cultural centre that a rich Iraqi architect once established in London in the mid-eighties and stayed open for twenty years. It was called the al-Kufa Gallery and carried out similar activities to AB. The owner, my late friend Dr. Mohammad Makiya who lived to be a hundred, once told me that he sold some of his rare book collection and manuscripts to keep the place open. When the end came, I felt the shame of being unable to provide help. But also, I felt angry that the present Iraqi government and the community in London couldn't step in to ensure the continuation of this institution. I feel the same now. I think some cultural bodies could have come to the rescue. However, Dennis himself doesn't accept help. My only consolation to Dennis is to say that he had a dream and he achieved it in a spectacular way. The cultural history of Oxford has noted his name and AB and no one can change that. Good luck Dennis with whatever new project you come up with.

The Editor

Kant's Moral Philosophy

Kant's concept of morality is perhaps the most famous concept in ethics. He stressed the employment of reason in guiding our actions. Kant's distinctive moral vision is his analysis of the idea of duty. We will examine his concepts of freedom, practical reason and the categorical imperative that form parts of his metaphysics of morals.

RANJINI GHOSH

Antinomy Of Freedom

Kant's famous maxim in his concept of ethics was that 'ought implies can'. In terms of this maxim, the right action is always possible and a person must be free to perform it. Closely interlinked to his concept of morality is the idea of freedom. But in this connection between freedom and morality there arises a problem. Every event in nature is bound by the law of cause and effect. We, as empirical beings, in the universe are no exception to this law, but if we are seen to be also the originators of action then we cannot be part of this realm of causal connections. Therefore, the question that arises is whether we are really free to do our own actions. The perspective of reason sees us bound in chains of causation while at the same time it ensures our freedom as moral agents. Therefore, the antinomy of freedom that Kant refers to is that we are compelled by practical reason to accept that we are free but at the same time our freedom is denied by our understanding that we are part of a natural universe that functions by the law of causation.

Kant gave a solution to this problem which is that we have a freedom which is actually called transcendental freedom. The law of causation only operates in the empirical

realm, but freedom belongs to the intelligible or transcendental realm where the laws of causality do not operate. In this transcendental realm we are bound not by the laws of causality but by the laws of practical reason. We are one thing under two different aspects. We are both a 'thing in appearance' in the empirical world of senses and subject to the laws of cause and effect. While at the same time we are also 'thing in itself', independent of such causal laws. Every moral agent therefore has this dual aspect. Kant admitted that the idea that the moral agent is part of a kind of noumenal reality while being at the same time an empirical being in the natural realm, is paradoxical. The morally free agent is guided by practical reason in his actions.

The exercise of reason in guiding actions is in justifying action and not primarily explaining them. Kant was of the view that deliberation of means to achieve certain ends concerned mainly theoretical principles. Philosophers like Hume had argued that reason had no role in practical matters. Reason was only concerned with means and could not be used to justify the ends of any action. Hume said that reason ought only to be the slave of the passions. The ultimate motive to act or the ends come only from passion. But Kant argued that practical

reason can justify not only the means but also the ends. The exercise of practical reason is an objective exercise because it is based on reason alone without passions and desires guiding actions. But Hume had said reason must be able not only to justify our actions but also to motivate our actions. Therefore, for reason to motivate our actions, its role cannot be confined to merely judging actions should be extended to issuing imperatives. An imperative directs the agent on the grounds of practical reason to act accordingly.

Autonomy Of The Will

Kant's moral philosophy, says Roger Scruton in his book *Kant*, emerges from the amalgamation of the idea of transcendental freedom and the imperative of reason. Any reasoning about ends presupposes transcendental freedom. Freedom is the power to will the end of some action. If we base our ends on some external source other than our own reason then we are not truly free. Because we are transcendental selves, our freedom is based on not being constrained by the causal forces of nature. Kant also has a theory of the will in which he says that when we decide on a course of action on its own basis and not on the basis of our desires, interests or other empirical conditions, then we are no longer subject to the causality of nature but are free moral agents. We choose the end ourselves on the basis of our reason alone. This paradigm of free action is brought about by reason alone. Such action is not a consequence of any empirical causality but arises out of our own reason and will. Freedom then is the ability to be governed by reason.

By autonomy of the will Kant meant the ability to be motivated by reason alone. In contrast, heteronomy is when the will is guided by external causes or causality of nature which are not found on reason alone. Any action is heteronomous that has its source or origin in desire, interest or emotion. A truly autonomous



Kant

agent overcomes his desires and emotions, and as a transcendental being frees himself from the causality of nature and allows himself to be guided by the causality of freedom. Kant said that the autonomy of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws.

Categorical & Hypothetical Imperatives

Kant argued that reason could command the will with two different kinds of imperatives. The hypothetical imperative employs instrumental reason which is of the form: if you want *x* then do *y*. Such imperatives are always conditional. In contrast, a categorical imperative represents a good in itself. It is unconditional. It is not concerned with the consequences of an action. It is the only imperative that can qualify as an imperative of morality. Obedience to a categorical imperative is based on reason alone whereas obedience to a hypothetical imperative is always based on certain conditions.



Michael Sandel

4 In formulating his idea of the categorical imperative Kant gives two major versions. The first one is a universal law which says that we should act only on principles that we can universalise for all rational agents. In the other formulation Kant asserts that we should not treat human beings as means but as ends in themselves. We should not deny other rational agents their autonomy by treating them as means to our ends. The form of the categorical imperative as per the first formulation is that it is universal. It then follows that its content should derive from its application to rational beings who are to be treated as ends in themselves.

The moral law is like a universal legislation and it binds all rational beings equally. The universal law directs that we cannot make a moral exception in our own case. Kant's concept of categorical imperative bases itself on reason alone in guiding our actions. It then requires us as rational agents to abstract

ourselves from our empirical interests and desires that may circumscribe our actions. It is only then that our actions will be based on practical reason alone. In this process of abstraction, I become a member of the intelligible world and my actions are based on objective reasons alone and any rational being could also act similarly. This imperative can then apply universally to all rational beings. Though we are free autonomous beings yet, the only constraint on our freedom is that we must respect the freedom of others.

Moral Intuitions

Kant's theory explains certain common intuitions in the context of morality. His concept of categorical imperative requires that all people are regarded as equal before the moral law and there is a universal duty to respect the lives of others. This concept therefore has certain fundamental intuitions about justice. Moral judgement is concerned not with the effects of actions but with the intentions behind the actions.

In his famous words, nothing can be called good without qualification except a Good Will. A moral agent, in Kant's view is not just any agent bound only by causes occurring in the natural world. A moral agent is guided by reasons. A moral agent has rights, duties and obligations. Anyone who acts in self-interest does not act morally in Kant's view.

A distinction has to be made between action *according* to duty and action *from* duty. It is the latter which has moral value. Kant gives the example of a shopkeeper to explain the difference between duty and inclination. A shopkeeper gives back change to an unsuspecting child for the reason of self-interest – the self-interest being to guard his own reputation. Kant says that such action lacks moral worth. He also thinks that altruism and compassion lack moral worth. He believes that benevolence is only a type of



Roger Scruton

inclination and therefore morally neutral. The worth of the moral agent resides in his ability to resist inclination.

Morality And Self

In Kant's concept of morality, as we saw earlier, there is a paradox of freedom. We are both empirical beings bound by the laws of causality and also transcendental beings guided by imperatives or reason alone. We inhabit the empirical realm of physics and biology and the intelligible realm of free human agency. Kant said that we can consider ourselves from two aspects: as belonging to the sensible world guided by laws of nature (heteronomy) and also as belonging to the intelligible world guided by reason alone (autonomy). Therefore, the whole scheme of Kant's moral philosophy can now be contrasted as follows:

Contrast 1 (Morality):

Duty Vs Inclination

Contrast 2 (Freedom):

Autonomy Vs Heteronomy

Contrast 3 (Reason):

Categorical Vs Hypothetical Imperatives

Contrast 4 (Standpoints):

Intelligible Vs Sensible Realms

If we were only empirical beings then we would not be capable of freedom since our exercise of will would be conditioned by some interest or desire. Categorical imperatives are possible only because we act as members of an intelligible world. We simultaneously inhabit both standpoints – the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom, and there will always be a gap between them which is the gap between what we do and what we ought to do, as Michael Sandel says in his book *Justice* (2009). Therefore, morality is not empirical.

Three Views On Morality

Let us now take a very relevant debate and try to analyse it from the Kantian perspective. We are familiar with the debate around doping: whether performance enhancing drugs should be allowed in competitive sports. Let's discuss what would the Kantian objection be. When I take a performance enhancing drug I do so on the assumption that someone else is not taking it; after all, that is how I will gain advantage. But what if as Kant says my action were to become a universal maxim? What if everyone was allowed to take these drugs? Then the effect of such a drug would be negated. When everyone takes these drugs then everyone is on a par with each other, and thus there is really

no competition if everyone performs in the same manner. We also know that individuals can't make a moral exception for themselves. Hence it doesn't make sense as it contradicts the universal maxim part. When I take such a drug, I am using my body as a means to an end, the end being to win the game. One might say that the point of a game is to win, but actually it is not. The point of a game is to achieve excellence in it.

Let us take the Utilitarian perspective. It would say that as long as the action maximises happiness there is no objection. So, when the audience gains maximum enjoyment from watching players do very well it doesn't matter if they have used performance enhancing drugs. One may also consider whether short-term or long-term effects should be taken into consideration.

The short-term effects being enjoyment of the audience and long-term ones being health issues of the players and the lower standard of the game over the next few years due to prolonged drug-use. So, depending on what effect you choose, the utilitarian perspective will depend on which is in the majority. The libertarian would say that as long as there is a free exchange of goods (i.e as long as there was free choice in the matter) doping isn't wrong or to be banned.

We now come to Aristotle's virtue ethics. He believes that there is an inherent virtue in certain things. Sport for example has a virtue attached to it. When one player uses a performance- enhancing drug he or she lowers the dignity of the game. Even when a player is found guilty, it increases the suspicion on all players and hence every time someone scores well the audience automatically will think that they have used a performance-enhancing drug. This destroys the virtuous nature of the game and the excellence that it requires.

Ethics is not only about how each one of us lives but also how we interact with one another. We can think of the individual in society or from the point of view of reforming society, i.e how society should be organised. Kant's Categorical Imperative says that when we are acting in our own interest we should also act at the same time as if we were legislating for the whole of society. I cannot make a moral exception in my own case. Other people should not be treated as means to my ends but as ends in themselves. Kantian ethics also tells us about the duties we have toward each other.

Kant believed that most of us have some moral convictions and moral concepts like good, bad, right and wrong. But for any of them to have any significance we must have freedom of choice. There has to be some part of us that is independent of the empirical world of matter and motion. We have to be free in the sense of not being governed by scientific laws.

Outside the world of appearances there has to be room for concepts such as free will, rational agency, right and wrong, good and bad. For him the source of ethics is our reason. But the problem in his system of philosophy is that moral thought and moral consciousness operate outside the world of appearances. The question then that naturally arises is that of how it is possible that moral decisions actually have an effect on our real world of appearances. In his moral philosophy Kant has tried to extract the essentials of morality from the pure concept of rationality.

A moral being must also be a rational being and also willing. There has to be a body of principles of action corresponding to the principles of morality and this has to be universally adopted by a community of rational beings. The Categorical Imperative says that a rationally accepted moral rule must be such that everyone can adopt it.

Poem and Artwork by Scharlie Meeuws

'Agamemnon arriving back on Greek soil'

*Agamemnon, King of Tantalus,
Thinking himself invincible,
By controlling fate with his deeds.
Beware, Nemesis will punish his hubris!
Such is the vengeance of the Gods.*





Farewell to Albion Beatnik

AB - the innovative spirit

With a heavy heart and sadness, we say farewell to Albion Beatnik as it closes its doors. We are confident that Dennis Harrison will start a new venture soon, and we will be very supportive of this, whatever it turns out to be. We have always considered Dennis a member of the group and the magazine and this view remains.

In tribute, three writers of The Wednesday magazine have written their impressions of AB for this issue.

RAHIM HASSAN

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The Wednesday Group went to Albion Beatnik for its weekly meeting and I very rarely missed. One thing we noticed every time was that there was always something new, not only among the books but also in the displays. Dennis had a few bookshelves or cases that he moved around the place with different books every week. Some books were used as decorative items, with painting and writing on them. The look

of these shelves was unusual but they were part of Dennis' creativity. The tables are covered with colours and titles of books. I was so proud of the photo of the first few issues of *The Wednesday* pictured on one of these tables. Some of the walls in the dead spaces were also covered with titles and shapes and colours to make them interesting.

Dennis is also creative in turning the shop



Rahim Hassan talking to Dennis Harrison



The Sandspout magazine of AB



A novel published by AB Press

all of a sudden into a cosy room for a certain function: poetry reading, play performances, film and jazz nights. You wouldn't have believed all this could be created within a limited space. Planks from spare book shelves were mounted on piles of books to form a long seat. A bit of carpet was thrown in the front to make the place look grand, the only sofa in the shop enhanced the effect.

The Wednesday discussions couldn't run without tea and coffee and Dennis was a remarkable host. The tea was brewed from different flavours of tea leaves and he always topped the pots up so that we had a continuous

supply. The English Breakfast tea was excellent. The herbal teas and the coffee were not my speciality, but my friends were keen on them and happy with what they drank.

The smile of Dennis in the face adversity is something to be admired. His friendship and witty remarks are to be treasured. His rare courtesy of always welcoming us on Wednesdays and bidding us goodbye will not be forgotten. Thank you, Dennis, for all you've done for the group and for your support of **The Wednesday** magazine since issue zero. We wish you every success with your new adventure.

Farewell to Albion Beatnik

AB –In memoriam

DAVID BURRIDGE

It was a very sad moment when I heard that the Albion Beatnik Bookstore / Café was suddenly to close. This for me was a perfect destination for discussion and thinking. I am reminded that Cafes are traditionally a focal point for debate. One thinks of *Café de Flore* in Paris where the likes of Sartre would hang out and The *Louvre* in Prague where Kafka, Einstein and Franz Werfel would meet to discuss philosophy. I am of course not comparing myself to these thinkers, but why can't even lesser mortals have somewhere to lean back and think?

Most people go to Oxford these days to teem around the Westgate, But I preferred to slip away to the AB, to discuss ideas with the *Wednesday Group*, or wrangle over stanzas with the *Back Room Poets*. Dennis always made us welcome in this homely atmosphere and even accompanied us sometimes on the piano, or was that *Jacques Loussier* slipping from Bach to Jazz, behind the books? Who is going to sip coffee now from the Wendy Copeland mug? Of course it was also a cosy venue for performances.

Dennis' passion for Jazz was given a real outlet here. I am always reminded of reading how Charlie Parker would stand outside the Blue Note Club in New York, practising his amazing saxophone. Well we had Alan Barnes and Greg Abate inside the AB encapsulating the best of jazz.

Many quality poets have performed here. I particularly remember a moving session we did for the publication of the collection *LOVE& LOSS*. A dedication to the great poet UA Fanthorpe by RV Bailey & June Hall. I recall the last time I attended a reading I was able to have a chat with the excellent poet Helen Kidd, who has sadly recently died.

The AB was a cultural cavern, which was sometimes so overbooked that one had to sit downstairs. I recall staring at the ceiling trying to count all the jazz stars pasted there. Of course the AB was just a place which one paid rent for. The true inspiration behind the AB was/is Dennis Harrison; host, impresario, editor, publisher, who I am sure will set up a hive of cultural activity somewhere else and when it happens I will be there.



Professor Chris Norris reading *The Wednesday* in AB



Members of the Wednesday group at AB

Memories of the Beatnik Bookshop

DAVID CLOUGH

It is sad to hear that Albion Beatnik is not going to open again. My memories of the Beatnik Bookshop are haphazard over its decade. Early in the spring of 2010 I bought two books about Anne Sexton's poetry, although I almost left them on a bench along the Oxford Canal walking back to Botley Road. I remember asking Dennis about the ex-Blondie author Gary Lachman and the catalogue Daedalus books, as my early retirement loomed mid-year and the shop had been open about two years. I remember then author presentations on Wyndham Lewis and Bruce Chatwin shortly after I retired. I admit, though, that I was an intermittent attendee.

2012 and 2013 perhaps went by mainly unnoticed, but in 2014 I was more regular as Andrew Hogan was showing his eclectic choices of films which I enjoyed, including Bunuel's *Aventuras de Robinson Crusoe* (1954), or the 1967 TV show *The Prisoner*, or

the strangely similar sixties film *The Village* with its resurrections *a la* Stanley Spenser plus David Bowie's 1968 *Pink Harlequin*, and the film by Alan Clarke starring Bowie of Brechte's second early play *Baal* which was made for ITV in 1982.

I remember buying James Laughlin's *Byways* with its chapters on William Carlos Williams, which left a mark on me. Then in 2015 I discover George Perec and his tiny dolls-house view of the world while trying to read about Edward Casey.

Of course, there was music too with various Jazz evenings and occasional forays elsewhere like free minimal improvisation, and those more gently didactic introductions to the Modern Jazz Quartet and Miles Davis which came a bit later. The Blake talk about Lambeth was in early 2016 and in 2017 I bought a book about the painter Peter Lanyon and Lars Lier's *Exodus*.



inside AB



Advertising the first three issues of *The Wednesday*

The Good Samaritan and Moral Philosophy

Notes of the Wednesday Meeting 31st January 2018

PAUL COCKBURN

We discussed localism versus universalism in terms of giving to charity and our social identity. Paul Cockburn contrasted the approaches of Peter Singer and Roger Scruton on this topic. Peter Singer thinks that in terms of charitable giving we should give money to organizations working to help the world's poorest people in developing countries, as opposed to the poor in our own country. We should give where it will do the most good. There is no sound moral reason for favouring those who happen to live within the borders of our own country. This is a 'global' view.

Roger Scruton opposes this view. He examines the parable Jesus told of the Good Samaritan. In the parable, a Jewish man is robbed and beaten and left for dead on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Two Jewish priests walk by the Jewish man who had been beaten. But then a Samaritan man passes by and takes pity on him and tends his wounds. (The Samaritans were hated by the Jews for historical reasons). He takes him to an inn and gives the innkeeper money to take care of him.

It might be thought that in the parable of the Good Samaritan Christ was telling us to ignore distinctions of ethnicity and faith and to do good to others in an impartial and universal way. Christ tells the story in response to the question 'Who is my neighbour?' Scruton thinks that although the Samaritan ignores the racial identity of the wounded man, he finds himself confronted with a specific obligation to a particular person he finds in need in front of him, so to speak. This is the opposite of abstract universalism, whereby I am expected to treat all problems of all people everywhere as equally significant to me—which in practice probably amounts to my treating them

all as equally insignificant. It is true that if we give to an institutional charity this is more 'hands off' than if we personally actually perform acts of charity as the Good Samaritan did. How do we know our money will be used in an effective way if we give to a charitable institution? We surely want effective altruism, for our money to be used in the best way, not altruism for its own sake.

For Immanuel Kant, there is a principle of pure goodness from which a universal maxim such as 'we should all help those who are starving if we can' could be derived. Kant does not want us to be swayed by our emotions, but the Good Samaritan took pity on the man who fell amongst thieves, he was not just acting out of duty as an automaton.

Kant emphasizes the role of reason in his moral philosophy, but reason seems to lead to utilitarianism, where we do the greatest good to the greatest number of people. We can't help all those who are starving, but perhaps we should seek the most efficient ways to alleviate the problem of lack of food for the greatest number of people we can. Kant seems more in line with Singer than Scruton. Kant takes reason so far that he regards doing a charitable act out of duty (such as visiting someone who is sick) as more 'noble' if we have no particular liking for the person.

In a dramatic situation where we see someone in immediate danger – say we are by the sea-side and see a child in difficulty in the sea – we have to decide to act quickly and use all our faculties; there is probably too little time to assess the chances of a successful rescue rationally; action is needed. The situation changes as it plays out in real time; abstract thinking will not help much. However, impulsive behaviour also has disadvantages.



The good Samaritans parable

Is there a middle way between philosophers such as Kant and Singer and Scruton and Logstrup? (Logstrup was a Danish philosopher who believes the 'Ethical Demand' on us requires a spontaneous loving response to the other). In practice in global terms developed countries distribute aid to poorer countries, and this is seen to be an ethical action to help people in those countries. But the motive for doing this may not in fact be truly altruistic, as lucrative trade for the richer donor country can follow the aid.

Is Scruton's view linked to nationalism? We should help our own or those near us, such as our families: why do we want to interfere in the affairs of other countries? We would then have an international community of stronger nations, and diversity in terms of culture and identity is maintained rather than being watered down in a universalist soup. This approach favours personal direct relations, as opposed to indirect relations such as trade carried out over great distances (and which are governed hopefully by international law). Of course, with the growth of international travel, trade and communication technology it is now easier to have long-distance relationships. But does that mean that cultural differences are overcome, and how close can these relationships be?

There is also a power dynamic of course. Rich countries can call the shots. Even when they are acting in a truly altruistic manner, there is still a power dynamic. As humans, we all live on the same planet, and many of us are interested in what goes on in other countries and empathise with suffering and want to help alleviate it wherever it takes place. But we should not forget to try to improve what is going on in our own backyard, and also in our own lives and daily encounters.

***David Clough adds the following note:
Robert Stern on Kant, Singer & Logstrup***

There was brief talk three weeks ago, by Robert Stern, organised by Oxford Brookes University at Blackwell's bookshop. Stern's attempt to modify or challenge Peter Singer with a combination of Kant and Logstrup, came a week before Paul Cockburn's talk a week later in our meeting about Roger Scruton's similar attempt to challenge it. Both Scruton and Logstrup drew on the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Famine, Affluence, and Morality is an essay written by Peter Singer in 1971 and published in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* in 1972. It argues



Peter Singer

that affluent persons are morally obliged to donate far more resources to humanitarian causes than is considered normal in Western cultures.

Now I had thought listening to Stern that effective altruism saw no distinction between the proximate and distant cases of need, but Paul seemed to think he actually favoured the far away. As the discussion went on arguments started to emerge suggesting that in fact no one saw parallels between Kant and Singer, even that they were really saying the same thing. Perhaps it is a matter of trying to get the West to be more generous etc.

Where Stern said Kant would see the long-distance case as an imperfect obligation allowing some discretion, others in our discussion thought this was even more the case with the near-to-home ethical demand. Partly this is because our emotions or non-rational aspects might get in the way. Maybe it is true that Kant's need to generalise rather be specific is what Stern meant when he said that Kant was inadequate in the near-to-home case, but then there was the idea that it is unrealistically too demanding. In terms of famine appeals, are the distance and reflective relation arguments somewhat over demanding? Does Kant or would Kant see them as such? Big data craves utilitarianism or maybe it's the other way round.

Anyway, some other philosophers still want a particularist approach. If so, Scruton, Logstrup and

Levinas seem to be the philosophers one might turn to. There may well be others readers could name. But I also secretly wondered about the tendency for analytic philosophy to favour abstraction and afterwards kept thinking about themes similar to Rawls' veil of ignorance. We didn't not mention Rawls but the same need to strip away affects and prejudices seemed to be in play.

Stern had argued that we need Logstrup to strengthen Kant's position around the near-to-home, to make him more sensitive to the particular need at any rate. But like Ricoeur to some extent, Logstrup seemed emphasises our power over others rather than simply the other's demand. as Levinas might put it. If so, this could have observed post-colonial aspects. This 'power over' could lead unbridled intervention to not let go when it should. Logstrup contrasts the merciful Samaritan of the Gospels with an overreaching colonial state of the politicised Samaritan who merely generalises his benefit in order to dominate others.

Stern said Singer and Logstrup are best locally where no-one else can act for you. Kant and Logstrup's caution about long distance and abstracted generalisation are also true. There is more distinction than Singer allows because care and philanthropy, charity and duty still need a separate distinctiveness and not get effectively confused or conflated. I assumed Scruton might hold a similar view. But the view of Singer and Parfitt is more along the lines of effective altruism.

Effective Altruism is a philosophy and social movement that applies evidence and reason to determine the most effective ways to benefit others. Effective Altruism encourages individuals to consider all causes and actions and to act in the way that brings about the greatest positive impact, based upon their values. It is the broad, evidence-based approach that distinguishes effective altruism from traditional altruism or charity. Effective Altruism differs from other philanthropic practices because of its emphasis on quantitatively comparing charitable causes and interventions with the goal of maximizing certain moral values. In this way it is similar to consequentialism, which some leaders of the movement explicitly endorse.

The factual, the objective and the true

Distinctions without which there is no philosophy

DAVID JONES

A fact refers to a 'particular' thing. This means that it is not something 'general', as a concept is. A fact occurs at a particular point in time, or a particular point in time and space. It follows from this that the dream that I tell you about, which I had last night, is a fact, unless I am lying. However, it is a 'privileged' fact because no one else has access to it. This is why a dream is sometimes wrongly considered to be only subjective. My personal reaction to the dream (as my experience of that reaction) would be correctly considered to be 'only subjective' in that it is my *reaction* rather than an account of a dream or the fact of having had it, and will also be uniquely verifiable by myself alone.

Relations between ideas may be said to be valid or not valid, but such relations are not facts because, if true, they are true generally, and not true from the observation of particulars, in that their validation is not derived from the observation of particulars.

A truth about an objective condition of the world applies where the condition can be considered to be true independent of any

particular observer, and which to the general human way of thinking would be thought to be the same if there were *no* observers. An example of this might be the conditions of gravity in the cosmos.

A subjective truth may be of two types, *particular personal* subjective and *general human* subjective. My likes and dislikes, and how something affects me, are facts pertaining to my personal subjective. They can be factual and true for me but present no useful grounds for truths about a shared human realm of knowledge. The study of the common features of all normal human cognition will include the general human way of sensing, understanding and reasoning, which together comprise the 'truths' that are within the domain of the *general human subjective*. This will be distinguished from the domain of the *particular personal subjective*.

The human subject is the human observer who observes in a human way and what the human observes is called the object, whether that object of attention is in the outer world or in the observer's own consciousness.

The Wednesday

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Against Plato

Oh Plato tell me how you really see
Your master as he walks the city streets,
And tempts to disputatious rivalry
The citizens of Athens whom he meets.

Somehow you draw your doctrine of ideas
Out of the disputes of your snub-nosed friend,
Though some express contempt, along with fears
His tiresome drawn-out talk will never end.

‘A swindle with big words’ was the harsh ring
Of Nietzsche’s words about your enterprise,
For what can Goodness, Truth and Beauty bring
When you’ve located them beyond the skies?

‘A coward before reality,’ you lied;
The man who really saw things as they are,
While you just stood apart and edified,
Was brave Thucydides, long exiled far.

Edward Greenwood