

# The *Wednesday*



Weekly Magazine of the Wednesday Group - Oxford

## Editorial

### *The Need to be Cheerful*

Last week we mentioned the obsession with philosophy, and knowledge generally. This can take place at the institutional level, i.e. academic work, as well as at the personal level, getting too much involved in thought and forgetting life generally. In both cases one could be cut off from reality and at some point, one needs to be reminded of the big picture, of knowledge in the service of life, particularly the scholar's own life. Scholars need to get away from the gloomy atmosphere around them and adopt a cheerful attitude.

Nietzsche considered such a scholar (or philosopher) an Ascetic. The term 'ascetic' means the turning away from life or being against one's instincts and natural drives. The result may be an accumulation of knowledge, but Nietzsche considered such knowledge harmful.

Philosophers are more prone to such a condition because of the abstract nature of their work. They, sometimes, deliberately get into this situation through weird thought experiments. They might also forget the reality around them and mistake their thought for reality. At this point, the philosopher needs some sort of external intervention in the form of a jest or protest. The Adorno incident in April 1969 in Frankfurt, when female students bared their chests during his lecture, was such a protest (see issue 11 of *The Wednesday*.)

What has brought this back to mind is the announcement of a conference that will take place next March in Amsterdam. It is the Fourth Biennial Performance Philosophy Conference. The title of the conference is: *Between Institution and Intoxication: How does Performance Philosophy Intervene?* The announcement says:

'The conference takes place in Amsterdam in the year of the 50th anniversary of the so-called 'tomato incident', in which a 1969 Amsterdam

audience of theatregoers performed a historic intervention into the antiquated institution of Dutch theatre by pelting the stage with tomatoes. Instead of celebrating this occasion we propose it as an opportunity to inquire into the contemporary utility of these concepts - i.e. beyond their counter-cultural legacy. ...'

I take 'performance' to mean action, but it also means here a new style of philosophy that combines artistic performance such as films, theatre, dance, music and philosophy, either by being based on a philosophical work or expressing a philosophical content through the performance itself.

Do philosophers need to be reminded of the reality around them; someone who will shout 'get real'? I think this could be necessary sometimes. This will be done by a newcomer on the philosophical scene. Sometimes one gets so much involved in a certain debate that one needs to be reminded that there is a different point of view; maybe this view is the commonsensical. There might be a need for a change in paradigm. Thoughts sometime fall ill and a therapy is needed. The medicine comes from nature and a return to non-conceptual resources!

Nietzsche presented the character Mr. Rash and Curious in his *Genealogy of Morals* (GM, I, 14), a kind of performance philosophy. He descends into a dark basement where the atmosphere was suffocating and where bad theology and philosophy are being generated. He shouts from the basement: 'But enough! enough! I can stand it no longer. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where ideals are fabricated -it seems to me to stink of nothing but lies.' The lie here is a lie to life and nature. A discipline could take over the individual's life and cut him or her off from life generally. Fresh air is required. It will be good for the individual and for life.

*The Editor*

# Consciousnism - A Copernican Revolution

**Is consciousness something I have, or is consciousness what I am? In other words, am I a human being (that has consciousness) or am I consciousness (that has identified itself with a human being)? It is in this way, by switching standpoints, that Consciousnism argues for a Copernican revolution in the philosophy of mind.**

**RUUD SCHUURMAN**

[ruud.schuurman@linea-recta.com](mailto:ruud.schuurman@linea-recta.com)

All theories of consciousness suffer from serious problems, e.g. the hard problem, the body-mind problem, the problem of other minds, the distribution problem, the descriptive problem, the combination problem, and so on. You might expect those problems to be solved in due course, but that is unlikely. Some of the problems have been around for centuries yet we are no closer to solving them. At best, we have moved the problem backwards.

All of these problems are based on a shared underlying assumption. The assumption that we *are* human beings that *have* consciousness. In other words, the assumption that consciousness 'as we know it' depends on the brain and/or mind of the human being that we take ourselves to be. It is only on the basis of this assumption that we can ask questions like: How can the brain give rise to consciousness? How can body and mind interact if they are radically different? Do other human beings also have consciousness? These questions do indeed seem difficult to answer.

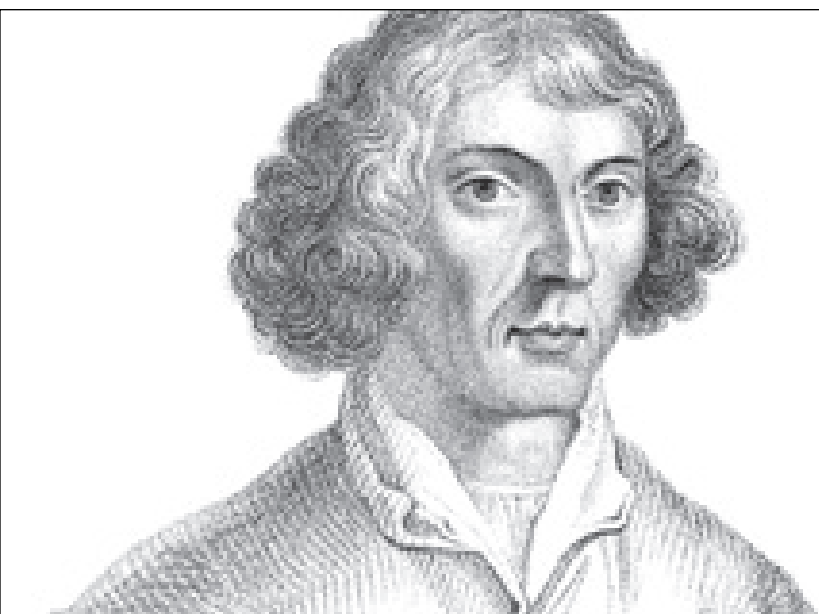
But are they really difficult to answer? What if the underlying assumption that we *are* human beings that *have* consciousness is false? What if it is the other way around? What if we *are* consciousness and *have* mistakenly identified ourselves with the human being?

In that case, the questions are not difficult to answer. Instead, they are either easy to answer or, more often, they turn out to be invalid and thus unanswerable. For example: If I am not a human being but consciousness itself, then the brain and/

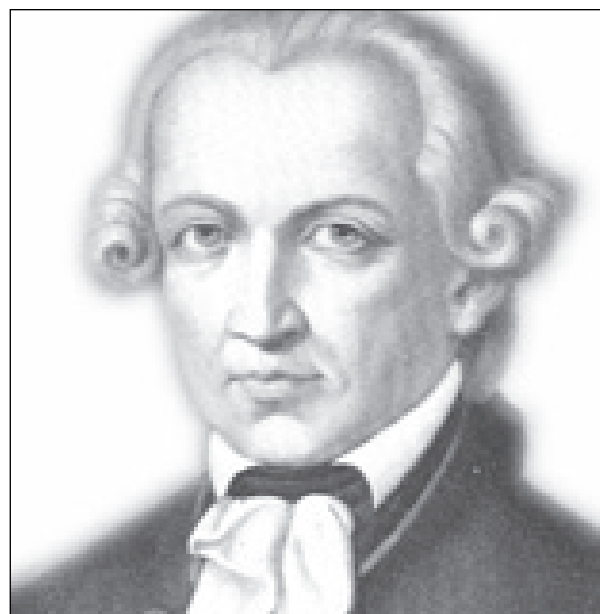
or mind of the human being does not give rise to consciousness. Thus, the 'hard problem' is (dis)solved. If I am consciousness, then the body and mind are both things that I am conscious of, both being contained by consciousness, and not radically different at all. Thus, the body-mind problem is (dis)solved. If I am not a human being that has consciousness, then the problem of whether other human beings also have consciousness is (dis)solved. So, if we no longer take the brain and/or mind to be the necessary condition for consciousness, but we take consciousness to be the necessary condition for the brain and mind, all problems are solved or dissolved.

This is the view of Consciousnism. Consciousnism claims that we *are* consciousness and *have* mistakenly identified ourselves with the body and/or mind of the human being. That all problems are the result of our inverted view of reality; the view that we *are* human beings and *have* consciousness.

Consciousnism does not only (dis)solve the old problems. It also allows us to move forward. For example, in the philosophy of mind, where Consciousnism helps by clearly distinguishing between consciousness (i.e., that which is conscious) and mind (i.e., a functioning of the brain, a sense faculty). This allows us to define the terms and investigate each more fruitfully. It also allows us to move forward in pretty much all other areas of philosophy, e.g., in metaphysics-ontology, epistemology, ethics, and religion, as well as in psychology, psychotherapy, and the natural sciences, but this is not the place to go into that.



Copernicus



Kant

That Consciousness (dis)solves the old problems and allows us to move forward is of course an important reason to consider Consciousness. But Consciousness can also be verified, i.e., shown to be true. Let's look into that now.

[D] The domain of discourse is all. The domain of discourse is totally unrestricted. It does not just include all that I am conscious of but also that which is conscious of it. Consciousness is not a theory of everything (TOE) but a theory of all (TOA). All is wider than everything (i.e., all things) because it includes that which is conscious of everything. Now, let's define the key terms, consciousness and content-of-consciousness:

[df1] Consciousness = what is conscious. This definition may seem obvious, tautological, analytic, trivial, and even circular. However, to overcome the confusion about consciousness, I prefer going back to basics, and state the obvious. If you consider the definition to be circular, please feel free to read 'what is aware' or 'what all else appears to' or 'what I am looking out of' instead of 'what is conscious'.

[df2] Content-of-consciousness = what consciousness is conscious of. Again, rather obvious, I hope. Let us now start the argument itself by stating an undeniable empirical fact:

[1] I am conscious. After all, right here and now, I am conscious. It is self-evident. From [1] and [df1], it follows that:

[2] I am consciousness. This can also be arrived at independently of [1] and [df1]: What I am, is consciousness because it is that without which I could not be what I am. In fact, it is that without which I could not be at all. Consciousness is essential to me. My essence (i.e., being) is consciousness.

It is not unusual to suppose that we are consciousness. For example, everybody who believes in any kind of after-life seems committed to it. But this is not always thought through. Not everyone realizes that, if one is consciousness (or soul), then one must be identical with consciousness and cannot be anything else.

Now, I believe that [1] and [df1] already imply this, but for the avoidance of doubt, let's make it explicit:

[3] I am not anything else (other than consciousness). There are many reasons to believe this premise. Here are some. First. If I am what I am looking out of (i.e., consciousness), then I cannot be anything that I am looking at (i.e., content-of-consciousness). I am like the eye that can see all

except itself. Second. I cannot be two different things, consciousness as well as something else. Third. While all else comes and goes, appears and disappears, I am. I still am the same I. Thus, I cannot be anything else, any of the things that appear and disappear in and to me, any part or functioning of the content-of-consciousness. No, the difficulty does not lie in defending the premise, but in trying to defend its opposite. That attempt resulted in one of the most profound (pseudo-) problems of consciousness, namely that of self-consciousness. (There are respectable philosophers who hold the paradoxical belief that there is a subtle form of self-consciousness, whereby one is conscious of oneself in some other way than as content-of-consciousness. They call it pre- or non-reflective self-consciousness, first-order or immediate self-consciousness, self-intimation, and so on. Consciousness neither affirms nor denies the possibility of such a kind of self-consciousness, but merely denies the possibility of being able to be conscious of oneself as content-of-consciousness. And even philosophers who believe in subtler forms of self-consciousness tend to agree to this.)

Please note that for [3] to be true, it does not matter what the things that I can be conscious of are considered to be. It does not matter if they are considered to be mere appearances, or perceptions of things-in-themselves, or even things-in-themselves. I simply cannot be anything else, anything that I can be conscious of, regardless of its ontological status.

Although [3] may again seem obvious, the implications can be quite controversial. For example, it implies that whatever I can be conscious of, is not what I am. This, in turn, implies that I am not 'my' body (e.g., brain, heart), 'my' mind (i.e., the functioning of the brain), the content of 'my' mind (e.g., thoughts, feelings, intentions, perceptions), or any other part, job, role, possession, functioning, etc., of the human being that I identified myself with, because I can be conscious of all of those things.

From [2] and [3], we obtain the first of the two central tenets of Consciousness:

[4] I am consciousness, and consciousness only.

Where [2] may have left room for me to also be something else, [4] does not. [4] claims that 'I' and 'consciousness' are identical, i.e., that 'I = consciousness'.

Of course, [4] contradicts the assumption that underlies all other theories of consciousness. Namely, the assumption that we are human beings (that have consciousness). All problems in the philosophy of mind are based on this assumption. Consciousness shows that it is the other way around: that we are consciousness (having a human experience). When we adopt this view, all problems in the philosophy of mind are readily (dis)solved.

This simple change in standpoint, from the identification with the human being to the identification with consciousness, is truly a Copernican revolution. As the Copernican revolution corrected an inverted view of reality, so does Consciousness. Where Copernicus showed that the sun does not rotate around the earth, but the earth rotates around the sun, Consciousness shows that consciousness does not depend on the human being, but the human being depends on consciousness. Where the Copernican revolution did not really change anything, neither does Consciousness. Where the Copernican revolution (dis)solved all kinds of problems, so does Consciousness.

I hope you will consider Consciousness. Because of its problem-solving capacity. Because it allows the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of consciousness to untangle themselves and move forward. But especially also because it can be known to be true. And it is good to believe what is true. In more ways than you can imagine. Even in the most fundamental way of setting you free.

- The writer is happy to discuss any issue raised in this article or his previous article in *The Wednesday*, issue 59. Please contact him directly on his e-mail: [ruud.schuurman@linea-recta.com](mailto:ruud.schuurman@linea-recta.com), or send your response to this magazine.

*‘Composition’ by the Italian artist Sara Berti*





## Instinctive Behaviour and Morality

The Wednesday group discussed the following questions: Is all human conduct instinctual? Or is it moral? What are moral properties? If they are natural, then they are of the 'Is' type or facts. But are they? Where are they located? If they are of the 'Ought' type? Where do they come from? In both cases, where from do they obtain their demands? If they are facts, then they could easily be programmed into a machine. But can they? Kant said that we could have all the facts about someone, but we can always say that he 'ought' to do otherwise. Can such 'Ought' be programmed into a machine?

CHRIS SEDDON

Eleven members of the Wednesday group met on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> of September in the lower room at the Opera Café, Jericho, Oxford, to discuss instinctive behaviour and morality. David Burridge presented on the question of whether human behaviour is instinctively determined, building on the ideas of Mary Midgley in *Beast and Man* and contrasting the approaches of Konrad Lorenz in *On Aggression* and Ashley Montagu in *Man and Aggression*, and arguing that although instincts can result in closed patterns of behaviour that are fixed genetically in every detail, open instincts leave gaps for patterns of behaviour to be modified by experience, and in particular culture can enable us to fashion instinctual responses such as aggression to develop moral responses. Rahim Hassan had suggested broadly metaphysical questions on the nature of morality for discussion, and I presented the analysis below based on the concepts of instrumental, personal, and moral values, intended to address Rahim's questions whilst supporting David's practical approach.

6

During discussion it was noted that personal or co-operative reflection can lead to greater independence from raw instinctual responses. It was accepted as important to note whether motivation is simply to take advantage of others or to support the 'we'. It was suggested that character goes beyond merely personal attributes such as gender or class to encompass the moral attitudes of an individual in a unique body with the power to act as well as the vulnerabilities entailed

by personal embodiment. It was suggested that knowledge is not always cognitive, and that creativity in particular is based on open instincts in often non-verbal processes. In discussing genetic inheritance, it was suggested that evolution by natural selection of the fittest organisms through self-replicating 'selfish' genes can and often will result in altruistic instincts amongst social animals. The question of trust and suspicion in a post-modern world was raised and may be addressed in a future meeting.

### Moral Values

It seems to me that philosophical discussions of moral issues are often hindered by quite simple errors in logical analysis - not that a correct logical analysis of the concept of morality settles any really important moral questions, but that philosophers are often distracted from addressing and articulating important moral questions because they lack a clear understanding of the concept of morality. In the meeting of the Wednesday group of 15th August I suggested the following concepts were useful in this subject area:

That some *means* are of **instrumental value** with respect to some *objectives* means: that the *means* make the achievement of the *objectives* more likely.

That some *objectives* are of **personal value** for some *people* means: that the *people* want those *objectives* either intrinsically or because they are of instrumental value with

respect to some other objectives of personal value.

That some *objectives* are of **moral value** for some *people* means: that the *objectives* are of personal value for those *people*, with the additional connotation that the value is great and the people numerous.

I do not offer this as a moral framework alongside other theories of morality, from which one is invited to make a personal choice, but as an analysis of concepts about morality that are (a) more useful than those provided by alternative theories, (b) fit more accurately how people actually think about and act out morality (as opposed to how they think they think about it), and (c) are more coherent than some alternatives.

In my limited experience most logical analysis is much harder and less successful than the analysis of moral statements. I can only account for the widespread divergence from the above simple analysis by supposing that the rhetoric surrounding moral statements, understandably phrased to give the impression that moral values apply regardless of personal values, alongside the understandable tendency in natural language for relative terms to be left implicit rather than explicit, has caused widespread confusion. The following answers are provided as examples of how the concepts above might be used:

### **What are moral properties?**

Moral properties are a relationship between an objective and a person or people.

### **Are moral properties natural, in the sense that they are of the 'is' type, or facts?**

Yes, they are natural in the sense that a statement of moral value is a statement of fact. If the stated objective really is of great personal value to the people implied by the audience, then it is morally good for them, otherwise it is not.

differentiate between the truth of a statement and its relevance. It may be true that an objective is of great personal value to one group of people but not to another, but this fact will have a different relevance to each group.

### **Where are moral properties located?**

Moral properties are located in the exploration of shared moral values and the subsequent exploration of instrumental values that can make their achievement more likely.

These definitions explain both the strength and weakness of moral debate. Moral debate gains its practical nature from the exploration of whether instrumental objectives really do make other objectives more or less likely in practice, hence moral debate is still often necessary even when shared moral values have been established. Moral debate gains its nature of empathy and compromise from the exploration to discover shared moral values. Further moral debate is useless in the extreme hypothetical case when no shared moral values can be discovered.

### **Are moral properties of the 'ought' type?**

Yes, they are of the 'ought' type, but this is still of the 'is' type. A moral statement is a factual statement, albeit one with implicit parameters - usually because the group of people who are supposed to share the personal value is implicitly the group who are being asked to consider the statement.

### **Where do moral properties come from?**

Whether I ought to do something as far as some people are concerned, means that thing is the best means of achieving what those people really value. They might be wrong, for example, if it won't achieve what they think it will achieve. They might also be wrong in another way, if they are confused - as humans can be - and think they really want something which they do not really want.

An important principle of analysis is to Moral values come from shared personal values,

which come from the way we are, so under prevailing scientific understanding, they come from the process of evolution through natural selection modified by social conditions.

### **From where do moral properties get their authority?**

As social animals it is very important for our survival for us to co-operate with our environment, particularly other animals, more particularly with our own species, and even more particularly with those in our own herd. Hence it is important to know our own personal values, to explore shared personal values, and seek practical ways to co-operate in achieving them.

### **If moral properties were facts, then they could easily be programmed into a machine, but can they?**

No, programming is not easy. Even a comparatively simple task such as sending, receiving and displaying or printing this article for you to read has taken literally millions of carefully developed instructions on dozens of computing devices on my desk, in your hand, and on the internet. Practical decision-making is an even harder task, even when objectives are clearly identified and articulated. And identifying and articulating objectives is another hard task.

### **Kant said that we could have all the facts about someone, but we can always say that he 'ought' to do otherwise.**

Kant's categorical imperative is based on the incoherent notion of a maxim that one can (or cannot) consistently will that it become a universal law. It is incoherent because there is no criterion for determining which of several applicable universal laws fits a given particular act. Kant's own examples illustrate that he simply selects those universal laws that have been generalised in the way and to the extent that happens to fit his own values. For example, he suggests that making false promises is

wrong because it would be inconsistent to will the universal law that people always make false promises, whilst ignoring the consistent but at least as applicable universal law that people make false promises only when absolutely necessary. Likewise he selects those universal laws which justify his predetermined conclusions in his other examples: that suicide is wrong on the basis that a certain universal law of self-love could dictate both suicide and non-suicide whilst ignoring an equally applicable law of self-love which differentiates relevant situations; that lazy south-sea islanders are wrong on the basis of the Protestant work ethic; and that not always helping those in need is wrong regardless of the situation.

In practice people do try to express universal laws, but the selection of those laws is based not on some incoherent notion of logical necessity, but on practical expectations that they will reflect the shared values of those involved.

### **Can such 'Ought' moral properties be programmed into a machine?**

Typically, the use of the word 'machine' indicates a device which is entirely subservient to external objectives, so in that sense, machines do not make moral decisions. Likewise, the use of the phrase 'a machine' indicates a device in isolation.

But if the concept of a machine is expanded to include objectives, then such machines could together explore and attempt to meet shared objectives. In a sense machines working on networks already do this, although their shared objectives - things like mutually discovering the maximum practical speed, routes, and protocols for data transmission - are not generally considered great enough for us to apply the term 'moral value'. But there is no reason why machines should not have more general values. The only difference from human values is that ours have evolved and theirs will presumably have been programmed.



# The *Wednesday* BOOKS

## Volume 4 Out Now



We are pleased to announce the publication of volume four of *The Wednesday*.  
The Volume includes 14 issues (39-52). To obtain your copy, please send a signed cheque  
with your name and address on the back for £15 inside the UK or £18 for readers outside  
the UK to:

The *Wednesday* magazine  
c/o The Secretary, 12, Yarnells Hill, Oxford, OX2 9BD  
Please make your cheque out to 'The Wednesday magazine'.

Account Number: 24042417

Sorting Code: 09-01-29

### Sylvia Pankhurst

I

Getting up from her bed, she curses them,  
her naked feet soft on the flags.

She talks in harsh sentences, anger a strain  
on her voice after so many attempts.

Doctors and wardens outside, nurses in white  
move quickly and silent as cats.

They force her to eat; except for the drink by her bedside  
she refuses all food.

She stays true to her vow, untouched by the brutal regime  
that tries changing her ways.

It could have been her, walking in summer-filled gardens  
seeking the shade on her own,

yet harsh winds have forced her to yield.  
She never belonged in this cell.

Force-fed in prison

II

*(Sylvia Pankhurst, the British suffragette, remembers, 1913)*

I flexed my muscles, hurled things,  
when a stranger forced his way into my cell,  
caught me by my head from behind  
in the lapse between speech lozenges,

pushed me down, held me  
by my ankles, knees and shoulders,  
all the way sweet-talking, offering honey drops to suck  
till he had me, where he wanted me to be,

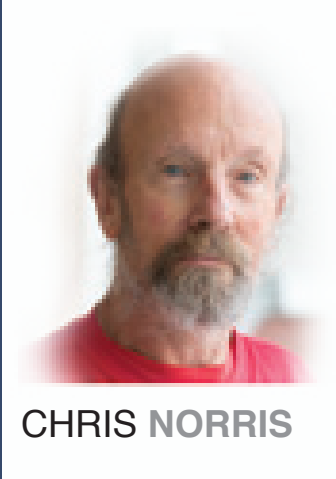


a prisoner on my bed, his fingers between my lips,  
steel forcing my gums open, cut into my flesh like fudge.  
Feeling the tube going down my throat I struggled,  
then thought of Turkish delight, otherwise

I would have been unable to breathe.  
Alone in my cell, I was sick, could not sleep,  
as it went on day after day, relentlessly,  
my belly a factory, a recycle plant, a compost heap.

**Poem and Artwork by *Scharlie Meeuws***

## Crossed Orbits: a Decastich\*



CHRIS NORRIS

(\* ten-line stanza; in this case ten of them with ten different rhyme-sounds running throughout)

One of a dozen new moons discovered around Jupiter is circling the planet on a suicide orbit that will inevitably lead to its destruction. Researchers stumbled upon the new moons while hunting for a mysterious ninth planet that is postulated to lurk far beyond the orbit of Neptune, the most distant planet in the solar system.

The tiny body circles Jupiter on a prograde orbit but at a distance that means it crosses the path of other moons hurtling towards it. Scientists have named it Valetudo after Jupiter's great-granddaughter, goddess of health. But given the impending violence, it may be no coincidence that Vale Tudo, which translates from Portuguese as 'anything goes', is an early form of full-contact mixed martial arts.

Ian Sample, *The Guardian*, July 17 2018



Best focus farther out, seek planet nine.  
It's like Higgs' Boson on a different scale.  
Look sharp for small deflections, orbits skewed,  
Or objects found just slightly out of place.  
No major perturbations we should fear,  
Just errant data, things to normalize.  
Meanwhile Earth takes its course amongst the eight  
'Home' planets; perihelia compute  
As usual; and there's nothing to suggest  
Some smash-up long predestined, just delayed.

That is, till Jove flashed up the danger sign:  
Some parts of this machine are built to fail,  
Go haywire, jump to orbits that conclude  
(As theirs in outer, ours in inner space)  
By self-destructing. Jupiter's so near,  
So moon-rich, we may fancy it with skies  
Like Earth's where night-time patterns constellate  
In ways predictable enough to mute  
Our cosmic fears. Yet one amongst the rest,  
One prograde moon, wrong-foots the whole parade.

Near home again: it's orbits that combine,  
You'd think, in perfect style yet tell a tale  
Of glancing blows, near misses, bits unglued  
In passing, and stage-markers in the race  
To final-act catastrophe that we're  
Soon privileged to witness. No surprise  
If maverick moon and planet should rotate  
Together while the other moons, in brute  
Procession, move the other way and test  
The planet's pull, the moon's lone defilade.

Their paths criss-cross, their orbits intertwine.  
The heirs of Galileo still regale  
Us with new moons or old ones freshly viewed,  
While astrophysicists move on apace  
With theories meant to plot the curves that steer,  
Post-Einstein, astral bodies in the guise  
Of space-time deformations. These equate  
To no old zodiac yet may just suit  
The fretful gazer, like the lover stressed  
By viewing moons prograde and retrograde.





## Poetry

The long view helps: Jovial and Saturnine  
May be at odds, but on a larger scale  
Where distance guarantees their mythic feud  
Stop safely short of any face-to-face  
Encounter. It's a trickier matter here,  
This planet whose moon-retinue defies  
What filial law and gravity dictate,  
Except that one lone moon whose prograde route  
Presages doom. Not always heaven-blest,  
Those satellites whom gods do most to aid.

Who's then to judge which moon-path's out of line?  
Who'll say 'this track runs true, and must prevail'?  
How seek out the astronomer so shrewd  
Or orrery so perfect as could trace  
The whirling dance in which they persevere,  
Those moons, lest some slight mis-step jeopardize  
The whole routine? 'See lust become love-hate',  
So Dante mock-laments, then puts the boot  
In good and hard on God's instruction lest  
Francesca's plight place morals in the shade.

No wonder it was moons that knocked divine  
Authority for six and left a trail  
Of broken idols way back when the clued-  
Up scientific types chose to embrace  
The evidence on show each time they'd peer  
Through Galileo's telescope. Their eyes,  
Thus undeceived, required they contemplate  
A universe whose motions would confute,  
Once and for all, those doctrines long impressed  
On servile minds by God's own truth-brigade.

What of these convolutions, yours and mine,  
These zigzags of a crazy comet's tail  
Traced out each time some fluctuating mood  
Or unexpected fall from mutual grace  
Inscribed our sky? Such happenings, we fear,  
May momentarily reveal our enterprise  
To rest on shared propensity to skate  
'Clean over night-events that blaze or shoot  
Too fierce or fast, as if at the behest  
Of those who live by star-charts custom-made.

So long they fought to save God's grand design,  
His all-things-prograde show; fought tooth and nail,  
The Churchmen did, to quell the ferment brewed  
By Galileo's moons though, such the pace  
Of science-growth, they smashed the crystal sphere  
Once and for all. Things turned out otherwise  
With sentients, like us, condemned to wait  
Till next time round to figure what's afoot,  
Whether some closest-shave survival test  
Or some last-minute orbital glissade.

Prograde and retrograde: so Byzantine  
That psycho-sphere that we, its adepts, fail  
To trace those crossed ellipses that elude  
The cosmos-gazer's eye. Here it's a case  
Of epicyclic swerves that interfere  
Chaotically with every shrewd surmise  
And leave us at a loss to calculate  
Survival odds. No matter how astute,  
Your astro-reckoners can scarce have guessed  
What impacts rock the inner moon-cascade!

## *The Wednesday*

**Editor:** Dr. Rahim Hassan

**Contact Us:**

[rahimhassan@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rahimhassan@hotmail.co.uk)

**Copyright** © Rahim Hassan

**Website:** Currently unavailable

**Published by:**

The Wednesday Press, Oxford

### **Editorial Board**

Barbara Vellacott

Paul Cockburn

### **Correspondences & buying The *Wednesday* books:**

c/o The Secretary,  
12, Yarnells Hill,  
Oxford, OX2 9BD

*To obtain your copy of the  
cumulative volumes: one, two,  
three or four, please send a  
signed cheque with your name  
and address on the back  
£15 for each volume  
inside the UK*

*or £18 for readers  
outside the UK:*

*Please make your cheque out to  
'The **Wednesday** Magazine'*

**or pay Online**

**Account Number:**  
24042417

**Sorting Code:**  
09-01-29

## *Out of The Window Long We Stared*



Out of the window long we stared,  
Hope lessened with departing day,  
And the anxiety we shared  
Grew to dismay.

At last Death's messengers arrived  
To tell us what had taken place,  
The leap our son had not survived  
From the cliff face.

And now that day will never go  
That brought what memory distils,  
The knowledge no one wants to know,  
The news that kills.

*Edward Greenwood*