

# About this issue

Orthodox British philosophical theory is feeble and emaciated; it feeds on itself and becomes still thinner and weaker. The Radical Philosophy movement is originally a protest against this debility; and the criticisms we have made over the five years of our existence have also been explorations of alternatives to the self-imposed starvation of the analytical regime.

The explorations have been made in several directions. In the first place, there are hidden or suppressed trends within British philosophy itself: both 'non-philosophers', such as Wordsworth, Owen, Wollstonecraft or Coleridge, Morris, Ruskin, Wilde or Shaw, and 'philosophers' like Green or Bradley, McTaggart and Collingwood. Thinkers like these at least recognised the existence of a world outside 'philosophy' and attempted - always earnestly, but not always with success - to relate their thought to it. The article on John MacMurray in this issue represents the first attempt in the pages of *Radical Philosophy* to excavate some British philosophy in this neglected and repressed tradition.

The Radical Philosophy movement's attention has on the whole been attracted abroad rather than towards alternative traditions in Britain. The article on Husserl and Phenomenology in this issue is a response to a widespread need for an introduction to what is arguably the major movement in continental philosophy this century - a movement which has certainly been open to the same charges of conservatism and 'academicism' which are often made against analytical philosophy, but which has also lent itself to applications outside a purely 'philosophical' field. It is a significant comment on British philosophy and British intellectual life in general that the phenomenological point of view has been, in recent years, attended to by sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists rather than 'philosophers'. We hope the article in this issue will be the beginning of a wider attempt to digest the phenomenological tradition.

Of course, the Radical Philosophy movement has explored, and must continue to explore, other alternative traditions besides the British past and continental phenomenology. (For instance, there is the continuing RP study project on dialectic - see inside back cover for details.) But at the same time, it cannot be content with this sort of browsing in foreign and second hand bookshops. For much of what is obnoxious in British philosophy would be untouched by such importation or excavation: philosophy may be concerned with abstract theory, but it does not take place in thin air. It occurs - as the 'Philosophy from Below' supplement to RP15 showed - in local conditions of exploitation and subordination. The institutions of knowledge and of power can only be understood as parts of a single system. This recognition is at the root of much of Michel Foucault's work; and he applies it to prisons in the interview which we translate below. But it can also be applied to philosophy: here too the theoretical forms can be analysed as expressions of the power relations which they maintain and on which they depend, of the functions which they serve in society, and specifically in the processes of education. The report on recent investigations into philosophy teaching in France (which is part of a counter-attack against a technocratic state inter-

vention in education akin to those being contemplated at present in Britain) may suggest new ways of understanding the state of British philosophy.

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# Radical Philosophy Festival 1977

This year's Festival will be held 22-25 April in Bristol, co-ordinated by Bristol RPG. The Festival's theme will be 'The politics of philosophy': an examination of the conditions and effects of knowledge within the co-ordinates of social power.

Bristol RPG invites proposals and offers of contributions. Among those which have already been made are an invitation to representatives of GREPH to discuss their work (described elsewhere in this issue of RP); women in/and philosophy; a consideration of the work of Foucault on knowledge and power; the history, practice and effects of 'English philosophy'; the rise to power of philosophy of education; the politics of philosophy of science; and the strategic possibilities for developments outside, and against, Academic power. We are inviting representatives from such organisations and journals as History Workshop, the Conference of Socialist Economists, the Society for Education in Film and Television, Critique, the Centres for Marxist Education, etc, and teachers and students of courses on Womens Studies and Black Studies, to discuss their respective initiatives. In addition to this main theme it has been suggested that a series of introductory sessions be run on individual philosophers and/or philosophical movements. We shall do our best to lay on facilities for anyone wishing to run workshops on other topics.

We are planning extensive festivities as well: for instance the 'Derelicts' rock band for Saturday night, a theatre group, an exhibition of feminist art, poetry readings, films etc etc.

The Festival's format will be flexible, allowing for different kinds of sessions: informational, workshop, formal presentations of papers and discussion, as well as plenary sessions.

Bristol RPG will organise accommodation, arrangements for food, a creche and fare-pool. (Publicity material will be available later.) It will be a great help if everyone registers well in advance. The registration fee for the weekend (which includes admittance to the bop on Saturday night) is: £1.50 for students and claimants (£1 if registered in advance) and £2.50 for teachers and employed persons (£2 if registered in advance).

For further information and suggestions, offers etc from local RP groups, write to:  
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