

our kind of society people are taught to completely obey their parents simply in virtue of biological status, which by itself is no guarantee of wisdom. Injunctions from whatever source should only be considered reasonable if they are means to some rational end and this is something not at all determined by mere authority. The family as constituted at the moment then, is the prototype of all later kinds of irrational authority (Let's not forget that Goebbels was a firm believer in family authority). We are being trained to be nice, decent collies who will obey someone simply because he whistles and his name is "teacher", "boss" etc - the confusion between "someone being called 'x'" and "being 'x'" sets in and we accept as an element of nature something magically brought into being by man himself and that in a way no less weird than any of Humpty-Dumpty's word-into-things extravaganzas. Thus the influence of the present family set-up goes far beyond making the disturbed type of situation in the families of schizophrenics possible. It is right at the root of the reification made possible by an authoritarian society. Authoritarian, that is, in as much as and so far as it is an economic structure in which the producers of wealth do not participate as controllers of that wealth. But it is clear, having said that, that we must therefore primarily argue the other way round. That is, the present family set-up is only made possible given the present societal set-up. This involves taking a political position fundamentally opposed to the capitalist "status quo". Not to do so is to drop the

family into a social void and thus create for the family a fashionable individualism which is so abundantly met with in relation to theories about the particular person, e.g. disturbed families from the most deprived parts of the working-class cannot be fully understood save in terms of ideas of respect defined in relation to their chronically exploited status. This example shows that one would have to go into the appallingly truncated rôle of the woman in a sexually non-egalitarian wage-structure (and the rôle of prostitution); the rôle of violence; the rôle of army recruitment, the rôle of gambling and drinking and so many other things. One would have to tie all this together with the desperate desire of someone from this background to be something, and the ways in which this identity search can end in what Blake would call "chaotic non-identity" (i.e. schizophrenia), and often "success" where "success" means pretty dreadful adaptations to bourgeois society (such as joining the paratroppers to torture people in Ireland, Aden and Vietnam; prostitution, etc). But all this clearly demands, as said above, a revolutionary stance which is not just *not* evident in Laing, but ultimately, by an emphasis on sheerly personal insight, he in fact does succeed in dropping the family back at the theoretical level into the no-horizons trap which the present society has so cruelly locked it up in. Class-division shows up the cosmic callousness of pantheistic mysticism. The state is not the veil of Maya. The Laingian stance is ultimately a safe revolt which can only reinforce the power of the pimps and Blimps.

# TEACHING PHILOSOPHY - TO WHOM?

## Roger Waterhouse

Many of the people who count themselves radical philosophers either are, or aspire to be, professionals. They would agree that professional philosophers should recognize that they are agents in a particular socio-historical context, and would accuse the orthodox academicians of obscuring this, mystifying their students, and effectively shoring up the bankrupt capitalist system. At this point they usually turn their attention to doctrine, and either launch into a critique of prevailing orthodoxies, or expound the alternatives. These are important exercises, and I do not in any way wish to deride them; but I do want to draw the attention of radical philosophers in another direction, because the theoretical discussion *within* philosophy can provide only part of the answer to the question, 'What should the professional philosopher do?'

What he does do a lot of the time, and will continue to do, is teach. But the question, 'What should the philosopher teach?' admits of no simple answer even when the internal theoretical considerations are sorted out, because it is unanswerable in vacuo - we must first decide, *To whom?* This is the question that I want put, and put in its proper context - namely, the present and future work situation of the professional philosopher.

First, a few facts which tend to be forgotten when identifiable groups of professionals get together:

- 1 The largest group of students taking 'philosophy' as part of their course are found in Colleges and Institutes of Education. What passes for philosophy on many of these courses may well be derided by university academics - but it should not be ignored.
- 2 The second largest group are students in universities. Although in general university

courses tend to be quite highly specialized in subject terms, the vast majority of these students are not taking specialist philosophy degrees - philosophy is merely a *part* of their course.

- 3 The third, and at present much smaller group, are students in Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology. Hardly any of these are specialists in philosophy, and few take the subject as a major part of their course.

I rehearse these well-known facts because there is a tendency to overestimate the importance of, say, getting a Hegel and Marx option added to an M.A. philosophy programme - as far as the consciousness of the masses is concerned we may as well forget it!

Second, some general features in the context of higher education within which we work. Like most other advanced capitalist countries we have (for very good economic reasons) been moving away from a higher education system which produced a few graduates for the heights of power, a larger number of engineers and middle managers to keep the wheels of industry turning, and a small army of workers in schools to turn out factory fodder to appropriate specifications. This process, which has been transforming both the structure and the nature of higher education, has been recognised at least since 1944. Its progress is staked out in a long series of Government reports which have usually been more effective in summing up the stage reached than in influencing the future direction of the process. Lest we forget that philosophy too is involved, it might be interesting to compare the number of people who make their living by it today, with the number in, say, 1946.

As with any long-term process, it has become a way of life. We are used to expansion, because most of us have always lived with it. We notice the

structural innovations, but tend to overlook the real qualitative changes which occur. Quite apart from the supposed purposes of higher education as a whole, it is my belief that the role of philosophy within it *cannot* be the same when 30 per cent of the age group go into full-time higher education (a situation which even the Department of Education and Science now envisages as being reached in the mid 1980s), as it was when only 3 per cent did.

Next, the institutional framework. As a social group, professional philosophers are university based - a reflection both of the recruitment policies of Colleges of Education, and of the relative under-development of the Polytechnics. The homogeneity of this base, and consequently of the orientation of the social group, is likely to change.

- 1 The Department of Education and Science anticipates that there will be about 180,000 students in Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology by 1981. This represents a massive increase in the state sector of higher education - several of the larger Polytechnics will have 9-10,000 students by the end of the period.
- 2 The DES expects that the bulk of the increase in student demand will be for places in Humanities and Social Science. There is already considerable over-provision of science and engineering places, and recently there has been a marked fall-off of applications for business studies.
- 3 Most of the Polytechnics run a degree, or degrees, in Social Science: many of these contain a philosophy element. Student intakes to these courses will expand enormously.
- 4 By far the biggest expansion, however, will be in the Humanities. Few Polytechnics run degrees in Humanities at present, and the staff base is usually weak (there are some notable exceptions). This expansion will bring about the sprouting and rapid development of philosophy 'departments' in a number of Polytechnics. The courses to which they contribute, however, will often be very different from the single/joint honours type; and the organizational structure will not resemble the university faculty/department.
- 5 The expansion of the Polytechnics is already affecting the Universities (at the time of writing - December 1972 - the Government has already delayed for two months the announcement of the Universities' Quinquennial settlement) in ways which highlight the extent to which the state now controls the whole of higher education. The private sector is manipulated directly via the University Grants Committee, and indirectly through student grants. At the moment the state sector is under considerable pressure to accept a worsening of staff-student ratios: I think it is only a matter of time before the same pressure is applied to the private sector. (1)
- 6 The Colleges of Education are trembling in anticipation of the biggest shake-up they have ever had. Within the next fortnight Margaret Thatcher will pronounce her judgement upon the James Report (on the Education of Teachers), and plunge this half of the State sector into decline. The DES has decided that there is an over-production of teachers (note that it controls the demand for, as well as the supply of, teachers). Also it is undeniably true that many students go into Colleges of Education not because they want to teach, but because they can't get in anywhere else. As a result, the James recommendation of a two-year diploma in Higher Education will be a cheap way of satisfying student demand, and the Polytechnics selected as the main locale. The

1 This has now been confirmed in the Government's White Paper.

Dip.H.E. will be a *general* qualification, non-specialist in orientation (not specifically for teachers), modular in structure and admitting great flexibility in the types of student programmes it allows for. Philosophy definitely has a role to play here, and one very different from that which it has played either in the Colleges or the Universities - but what it will be is an entirely open question.

In short, the next decade will see a broadening of the institutional base of professional philosophers, to straddle both the state and private sectors of higher education in a more extensive and coherent way than at present. At the same time, the pressures of state control will be felt more severely in both sectors as its financial investment increases to match the increase in student numbers. The state sector will change almost out of recognition, with the Polytechnics becoming large-scale state universities, and a new breed of second-class students (on the Dip.H.E.) making their appearance. Philosophy certainly has an important role to play in the new courses which will be developed in the state sector, but it will *not* be in the training of other teachers of philosophy, nor even in the teaching of students specializing in the subject.

In these circumstances, to concentrate our thinking on what philosophy ought to be taught to those who are *really* into the subject is a major error of strategy. No matter how impeccable our theoretical writings or teachings on Marx, it represents a retreat into the ivory tower. We ought even to doubt the value of frontal attacks upon the current orthodoxies, at a time when their institutional base, if not actually being undermined, is at least being out-flanked.

I have not really faced the question of teaching what and to whom, but merely tried to indicate the context in which I think it must be put. In case there are readers inclined to draw more conclusions than I have from the state of affairs outlined, I ought here to enter a caveat about a possible conclusion which might be drawn - namely, the conclusion that such an expansion of student numbers must inevitably broaden the class-base of the student body. If we are thinking in terms of an extension down from the haute bourgeoisie to the petty, perhaps - but there is no evidence that there will be any significant increase in the proportion of working-class students in Higher Education. In fact the proportion could actually fall: the DES has clearly decided to dampen demand for places by clapping a two 'A' level entry requirement on the Dip.H.E. This is a higher requirement than that operated by many Colleges of Education at present, and will of course have the effect of keeping the children of workers out.

If we really want to affect the class-composition of the student body, then an all-out attack on admissions policies must be launched - and in particular on the vicious policy of pre-selecting for interview on the basis of (often, predicted) 'A' level grades. I suspect that the chances of success are much higher in the Polytechnics than in the Universities: one Polytechnic (North East London) has officially adopted a policy of admitting those 'best able to benefit' rather than those best able to achieve. But perhaps the only really effective policy would be a quota system along the lines adopted for black students in the States.

If Radical Philosophy is going to be radical in action as well as in theory, it must break away from its orientation towards the academic elite (be they never so pure doctrinally) and especially from a concentration upon the educating of professional philosophers-to-be. It must succeed where analytic philosophy has always failed - in exciting the non-specialist, helping him make sense of his world, and giving him something to live by. There is a lack of good polemicists, and a surfeit of myopic nit-pickers: but then, the nit-pickers have had control of the institutional base - up to now.