is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring itself in question. The clarity that we are aiming at is indeed complete clarity. But this simply means the philosophical problems should completely disappear." [PI, Sec.133]. Wittgenstein makes it quite clear what he was doing. 'The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense and of bungs that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language.' [PI, Sec.119].

This negative (or 'critical' in the Marxian sense) philosophical task of uncovering or unmasking bourgeois philosophy is made abundantly clear when Wittgenstein said, 'Where does our investigation get its importance from, since it seems only to destroy everything? ... What we are destroying is nothing but castles-in-the-air and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stand.' [It, Sec.118].

Wittgenstein conceives his philosophical task to be helping those who are obsessed by philosophical problems to achieve complete clarity, so that they are no longer tormented by those questions. Philosophy, in this sense, 'leaves everything as it is.' [PI, Sec.124]. Once this clarity is achieved, once the mental health is recovered, they can go on to do other things. Like psychoanalysis, therapeutic philosophy can help afflicted individuals gain sanity. However, like psychoanalysis too, which can be of only a very limited use because it fails to deal with the underlying social causes of mental illness, Wittgenstein's therapeutic philosophy can only have a limited function because it does not deal with the social causes of the philosophical disease. It would only be fair to point out that Wittgenstein seems to be aware of this when he said, 'The sickness of a time is cured by an alteration in the mode of life of human beings, and the sickness of philosophical problems can be cured only through a changed mode of thought and of life, not through a change experienced by an individual.' [PI, p.57]. Wittgenstein's medicine was, in the end, impotent against the philosophical sickness of the time. His goal of dissolving bourgeois philosophy could not be successful. As Marx and Engels pointed out long ago, '... all forms and products of consciousness cannot be dissolved by mental criticism ... but only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations which gave rise to this idealistic humbug: that not criticism but revolution is the driving force of history, also of religion, of philosophy and all other types of theory.'

Notes


2 Compare this with Marx: 'Man is in the most literal sense of the word a noam politicon, not only a social animal, but an animal which can develop into an individual only in society. Production by isolated individuals outside of society - something which might happen as an exception to a civilized man who by accident got into the wilderness and already dynamically possessed within himself the forces of society - is an absurdity as absurdity as the idea of the development of language without individuals living together and talking to one another.' A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Chicago, 1904, p.268.

3 The German Ideology, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964, p.90.

This article is a slightly edited version of the first chapter of Trevor Pateman's forthcoming book, to be published by the Harvester Press in paperback and hardback in Spring 1975. The editors of Radical Philosophy are grateful to the Harvester Press for permission to print.
For to cut words out of one's vocabulary must be one can't know whether you like it or not, but having tried controls me. only affect others and oneself in the new social using it. The generalisation which permits the created (artificially, one could say) can affect the human character of language. For in my experience in the new social relationship thereby to make it more difficult for quite a few men to un-selfconsciously use such expressions as 'chick' or 'bit of stuff' in referring to women. Previously, the use of these terms was taken for granted, and their use could be seen simply in terms of drawing on the resources of the vocabulary, where 'the vocabulary' is seen as an objective store of words to be drawn on as and when needed. Whilst the general reification of vocabulary into an entity outside our control may be maintained, the use of 'chick' and 'bits of stuff' can be no longer seen in the neutral way just characterised. Many men have been made aware of the fact that the use of such expressions is actively depersonalising, and that this is something for which they are responsible. But what are the effects of giving up the use of such offensive expressions? Certainly, it does not follow that in giving up the use of such terms a man ceases to depersonalise women; he may continue doing it in other ways. So do the effects of giving up such words exhaust themselves just in the giving up itself, or do such small acts have wider consequences? I think they do, and I shall try to show how.

Suppose, then, that the person who gives up using 'chick' or 'bit of stuff' has undergone no fundamental change of heart. He still has a fundamentally depersonalising attitude to women. (Equally, a person with a fundamentally human relation to women might use depersonalising terms simply through failure to reflect on their meaning). Such an unreconstructed chauvinist as I am supposing may still have an effect on his hearers, if they notice the absence from his speech of the common terms for women and they may be affected by their understanding of the reason for this absence, even if the speaker is not. Further, the speaker may be inwardly transformed as a result of giving up depersonalising practices. This is an old idea: Pascal recommends a procedure of adherence to outward ritual as a means toward inner faith for the person who wants to believe in God but can't. But how could an outer change affect an inner attitude, that is, a general orientation to the world? It seems to me that it can because the change in outward practice constitutes a restructuring of at least one aspect of one social relationship, and that experience in the new social relationship thereby created (artificially, one could say) can affect the 'inner' change. Crudely, if you haven't tried it, you can't know whether you like it or not, but having tried it and liked it, you can try it again wanting to.

So to cut words out of one's vocabulary must be one of the better ways of generating a generalised awareness of the human character of language. For in my act that I can control language, I have stopped acting as if language necessarily controls me. In summary, then, it is not unimportant that a person who uses 'chick' or not important that he stops using it. The generalisation which permits the above analysis and the conclusion just arrived at can be stated as follows: that every act always involves doing things for which you did not do my work or my job. Of course, such phrases can have a non-refined and positive use, as when a worker uses them to describe the demands from those who exploit him for greater 'involvement' in his work, that is, demands for higher productivity and, hence, higher profits. But much of the time, such phrases are not used like this. Some political developments are working against the taken for grantedness and, hence, the naturalisation or reification of meaningful acts, and it is by reference to them that I can answer the questions with which this short discussion began and illustrate the central assumption which I stated above.

Consider, then, that one of the small effects of the rise of new women's ill-change movements. He has been to make it more difficult for quite a few men to un-selfconsciously use such expressions as 'chick' or 'bit of stuff' in referring to women. Previously, the use of these terms was taken for granted, and their use could be seen simply in terms of drawing on the resources of the vocabulary, where 'the vocabulary' is seen as an objective store of words to be drawn on as and when needed. Whilst the general reification of vocabulary into an entity outside our control may be maintained, the use of 'chick' and 'bits of stuff' can be no longer seen in the neutral way just characterised. Many men have been made aware of the fact that the use of such expressions is actively depersonalising, and that this is something for which they are responsible. But what are the effects of giving up the use of such offensive expressions? Certainly, it does not follow that in giving up the use of such terms a man ceases to depersonalise women; he may continue doing it in other ways. So do the effects of giving up such words exhaust themselves just in the giving up itself, or do such small acts have wider consequences? I think they do, and I shall try to show how.

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This discovery was slowly made, and I am sure that its application is far from complete. But however incomplete, the possible unity of knowledge (as theory) and everyday life (as practice) had to be discovered because formal (i.e. school) education systematically forecloses the awareness of this possibility. Certainly, it doesn’t realise the possibility. Formal education equates knowledge with a range of subjects, thrown up haphazardly in his­tory, and parochial history at that. A first effect of this equation is to inhibit people from realising that they know a great deal which school has never taught them: Everybody is a geographer and everybody detests Geography, and in doing so fails to recognise that they already are a geographer. Geography is then a directionless, disorienting knowledge. A second effect is to obscure the usefulness of knowledge. Whilist Everybody recognises that reading, writing and arithmetic have a utilitarian value, he does not see that this could be true of other ‘subjects’, because the present structure of their teaching bears no clear relation to human needs. Ivory towers may never have existed, but the alienation of which the term is a symptom certainly does. Third, because subjects are made and taught as theories of an object not of a practice, they further obscure the possible useful­ness of the object. This does not change the ideological function, and the uses to which the sub­ject is put may contradict its own theory. Thus, whilst economics is presented as the neutral theory of an object - the economy - outside of and not including the researcher, it can be and is given a non-neutral application as the theory of a practice such as 'managing the economy', i.e., managing other people. And the theory may be useless for certain economic practices, certain ways of operating on the 'object', in which case its claim to neutrality falls.

The effects of the equation of knowledge with subjects is evident in the stereotyped critical opposition of everyday philosophy: experience counter­posed to theory, practical knowledge to book learning and so on. The academic researcher is as affected by the equation as anyone. There may be and often is a vast disparity between his professional and his everyday work. (I use ‘everyday work’ to refer to the subject; and ‘philosophy’ to the alternative).

3. Philosophy as a subject

I studied Philosophy as an undergraduate and graduate student. In Philosophy as a subject, one of the things you do is read Great Books, or — more frequently— bits of Great Books. You read a bit of Locke’s Essay Concerning Human Understanding dealing with ‘the Problem of Universals’. In doing so, you fail to discover the following: why Locke wrote the Essay; what his Problems were; how he thought his book might be useful (see his own Preface) how his treatment of universals fits into his overall approach or paradigm; how he presented the structure of Freudianism that I have derived my own theory of the descriptive relation of theory and practice. In the following two sections I contrast one area of knowledge, P/philosophy concerned with second hand skills and on the other as theory and everyday practice. (I use ‘philosophy’ to refer to the subject; and ‘philosophy’ to the alternative).

4. Philosophy as theory and practice

In contrast to doing Philosophy as a subject, I want to indicate a number of everyday activities which seem to me paradigmatically philosophical and with which a conception of philosophy as a theory and a practice can be generated. These paradigmatic activities are already engaged in by almost everybody; they might well be done more frequently, systematic­ally and self-consciously for reasons which the remainder of this book will try to display.

Consider the following minimal list, comprising four everyday activities:

- pausing to think;
- querying the truth or reasonableness of an assertion;
- answering ‘I don’t know’ when you don’t know;
- asking ‘What do you mean by the word “X”?’

It will be said that this list is trivial. I shall try to counter this charge by bringing out the sig­nificance of these trivial acts in the rest of this section. The points made below will be returned to throughout the book.

- pausing to think

To speak ‘without thinking’ is usually, though not necessarily, to utter a conventional, that is, predictable, response. The exact form of words may differ from person to person in the same context, but the meaning remains invariant. To speak without thinking implies unconsciousness of what one is saying, its status, and the very fact of speaking. In Orwell’s theory of Newspeak, duck-speak is the ideal type of speaking without thinking. Basil Bernstein has a paper in Class, Codes and Control on hesitation phenomena as indices of the verbal planning
involved in using social-class correlated restricted and elaborated codes. Bernstein speaks of hesitation as being a condition of education and structural selection in verbal planning and thus for greater appropriateness between the speech sequences and their referents. Quite aside from the social-class/code differences with which Bernstein is concerned (and the significance of such differences has been challenged: see Coulthard), dominant in the culture in which I live is the demand that differences has been challenged: see Coulthard), dominant in the culture in which I live is the demand that quickness, namely, the premium on quantity. Academic success is measured by how much articles are produced. No matter how thoughtless they may be, so long as no one chooses to hold them up for ridicule, all such articles count.

- querying the truth or reasonableness of an assertion

In many situations, to let an assertion pass without challenge is to tacitly endorse the truth or reasonableness of the belief it expresses. Though it may not imply that you share or agree with the assertion, to fail to challenge where you do disagree may suggest to the speaker that you do not know how to challenge the assertion, and this may be enough to convince him that his position is irrefutable.

Of course, there are often conventional reasons for not challenging an assertion with which you disagree and sometimes they are good reasons. There are unwritten, context-specific rules of conversational etiquette which, for example, keep families from becoming scientific battlegrounds. There are also therapeutic situations in which listening to the patient without challenging him is a condition of successful therapy, though the therapy may however involve getting the patient to challenge his own assertions. But there are important considerations about the appropriateness of all these rules, the circumstances in which they should be overridden and the implications of (for example) therapeutic situations. Further, as indicated above, it is not the case that people always challenge assertions even when the conventions give them the right to do so. Rather than ask for clarification, they resent the speaker and uncritically treat any such word as unnecessary jargon. In consequence, the introduction of words not in the vocabulary of undergraduate textbooks makes supposedly educated people feel threatened. Rather than ask for clarification, they resent the speaker and uncritically treat any such word as unnecessary jargon. In consequence, the introduction of words not in the vocabulary of undergraduate textbooks makes supposedly educated people feel threatened. Rather than ask for clarification, they resent the speaker and uncritically treat any such word as unnecessary jargon. In consequence, the introduction of words not in the vocabulary of undergraduate textbooks makes supposedly educated people feel threatened.

What do the above four activities have in common that makes me want to call them 'philosophical'?

1. Philosophy students are specially instructed in asking questions about the meaning of words, but this does not always produce a good result. For the question can cease to be asked as a genuine one, as an expression of a desire to understand. It comes to assert plenitude or authority, and not only to ask a question. The failure to challenge an assertion may sometimes be taken to confirm it and strengthen the conviction with which it is held, a general policy of not challenging assertions serves to invalidate them and their utterers, especially when a mechanism operates of tacitly converting claims to knowledge (which must be true or false) into expressions of opinion (which are neither truth nor illiteracy goes to vast lengths to cover up their weakness which is to be held responsible. It is significant when people give an answer when they don't know, because they create an illusion of knowledge, which at the collective level may function as a real obstacle to understanding.

- asking 'What do you mean by the word X?'

In a society in which knowledge competes with wealth as the supreme conventional value, ignorance becomes more and more difficult to admit and puzzlement is no longer an admirable state of mind. The illiterate go to vast lengths to cover up their illiteracy, and more and more people claim fictitious 'O' and 'A' level successes; some actually buy a PhD from a box number in Private Eye. To an assertion containing a problematic word if it were used to respond with a request for clarification; you assume that you ought to understand and thus conversations can go on in which key words are bandied about in different senses. It is not only in this case that people feel threatened. Rather than ask for clarification, they resent the speaker and uncritically treat any such word as unnecessary jargon. In consequence, the introduction of words not in the vocabulary of undergraduate textbooks makes supposedly educated people feel threatened. Rather than ask for clarification, they resent the speaker and uncritically treat any such word as unnecessary jargon. In consequence, the introduction of words not in the vocabulary of undergraduate textbooks makes supposedly educated people feel threatened. Rather than ask for clarification, they resent the speaker and uncritically treat any such word as unnecessary jargon. In consequence, the introduction of words not in the vocabulary of undergraduate textbooks makes supposedly educated people feel threatened. Rather than ask for clarification, they resent the speaker and uncritically treat any such word as unnecessary jargon. In consequence, the introduction of words not in the vocabulary of undergraduate textbooks makes supposedly educated people feel threatened. Rather than ask for clarification, they resent the speaker and uncritically treat any such word as unnecessary jargon. In consequence, the introduction of words not in the vocabulary of undergraduate textbooks makes supposedly educated people feel threatened. Rather than ask for clarification, they resent the speaker and uncritically treat any such word as unnecessary jargon.
The conception of a philosophical practice can itself be subsumed under a more general conception of communicational practice as concerned with promoting (1) the conditions for and actuality of 'appropriate' reciprocal emission and reception of messages and (2) the adequacy of the codes used in such messages. Thus, for example, one could have - and does have - practices concerned with the expression of feelings. The psychotherapy of neurosis is an obvious example of helping someone find and use a code appropriate for what it is that they wish to express but have been stopped from doing. Thus, if a wish gets expressed in a recognizable hysterical symptom, it must be translated into a code intelligible to the patient. Only in this way does it become operable - e.g. can catharsis take place.

Such practices need not be carried on by professionals or in separate and watertight compartments; the psychotherapist can also be a philosopher. Perhaps he should be. In this book, I shan't confine myself just to the development of the theory of a philosophical practice, which is why I use 'communication' rather than 'philosophy' in the title of this book.

Of course, both the existing and my proposed everyday philosophical practice inevitably perform functions other than the promotion of reason and truth. A more enterprising stance is that practised by Feyerabend. I have suggested, quite precisely whether one could engage in it without inevitably doing other things which contradict the philosophical impulse toward reason and truth. Especially, can the enterprise avoid becoming one in which they hold to ideology. In any case, this book refocusses the problem of consciousness in a communicational perspective. The most important point I should like to make is that my work has nothing to do with the pressure of political impulses. I do not now know what it would be like to write a 'disinterested' work.

By 1968-9 I read most of the available work of Herbert Marcuse and, reading back I see that many of the ideas worked out in the chapters which follow derive from those of One Dimensional Man and the essay on Repressive Tolerance. In particular, there are the Orwellian themes of the 'closure of the universe of discourse'; the themes of lexical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic pathology in the uses of language entirely dominating the psychotherapist can also be a philosopher. The psychotherapist can also be a philosopher. I share Feyerabend's position. But this does not entail that one abandons the pursuit of useful knowledge; only that one will pursue it in many different ways, the development of which would only be stunted by the laying down of rules. I no longer believe that all the obstacles to revolutionary change are ideological, even when ideological has the very broad sense it has been given in recent Marxist work, for example, in Althusser's essay on the ideological state apparatuses. And I think my project can escape the charge of idealism (in the Marxist sense). For I am not going to say that the world can be changed by converting the majority (or even the most zealous minority) to the ideas which derive from them and the action to which they then proceed to act. What I shall say is that unless certain channels of communication are open, and used in certain ways, within the groups capable of bringing about social change, and unless certain forms of communication between rulers and ruled are stopped, disrupted or combated then radical and revolutionary groups will not be able to expand their active base among the relevant groups, nor will organised large scale action be possible. This has nothing to do with improving the 'dialogue' between rulers and ruled. That dialogue can only be broken off as of no use to the ruled. What it does have to do with are differences between revolutionaries and 'ordinary' people in cognitive and linguistic behavior and also in some of which differences make the former ineffective and serve to maintain the latter in exploited and oppressed positions, and all of which are obstacles to revolutionary social change.

5. The Politics of this Philosophy

By 1969 I thought I was a revolutionary socialist and was a graduate student in search of a thesis topic. I was engaged in student politics where the key issue was the University's complicity in imperialism, living for a while in a North London commune, trying and failing to do some community work, and doing some adult education teaching. I believed that the material conditions were ripe for a socialist revolution and that the system was held together by little else but bourgeois ideology. But in daily life I was day to day in contact with people who were not for the most part self-conscious revolutionaries, my intellectual interest focused not so much on structurally related features of ideological thought, and my means of transmission, but more on the hold which ideology had on individuals or, equally, on the way in which they held to ideology. In this context, it was unsurprising that my research supervisor, Professor Richard Wolheim, should suggest that work on my thesis-to-be-written should proceed under the title 'False Consciousness'. Of course, since I was a PhD student, I meant to get on with a conceptual rather than a substantive analysis, and the impossibility or emptiness of doing such a thing is one reason why this book exists and not a thesis shelved in the Library of the University of London. In any case, this book recasts the problem of consciousness in a communicational perspective. The most important point I should like to make is that my work has nothing to do with the pressure of political impulses. I do not now know what it would be like to write a 'disinterested' work.

In 1968-9 I read most of the available work of Herbert Marcuse and, reading back I see that many of the ideas worked out in the chapters which follow derive from those of One Dimensional Man and the essay on Repressive Tolerance. In particular, there are the Orwellian themes of the 'closure of the universe of discourse'; the themes of lexical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic pathology in the uses of language entirely dominating the psychotherapist can also be a philosopher. The psychotherapist can also be a philosopher. I share Feyerabend's position. But this does not entail that one abandons the pursuit of useful knowledge; only that one will pursue it in many different ways, the development of which would only be stunted by the laying down of rules. I no longer believe that all the obstacles to revolutionary change are ideological, even when ideological has the very broad sense it has been given in recent Marxist work, for example, in Althusser's essay on the ideological state apparatuses. And I think my project can escape the charge of idealism (in the Marxist sense). For I am not going to say that the world can be changed by converting the majority (or even the most zealous minority) to the ideas which derive from them and the action to which they then proceed to act. What I shall say is that unless certain channels of communication are open, and used in certain ways, within the groups capable of bringing about social change, and unless certain forms of communication between rulers and ruled are stopped, disrupted or combated then radical and revolutionary groups will not be able to expand their active base among the relevant groups, nor will organised large scale action be possible. This has nothing to do with improving the 'dialogue' between rulers and ruled. That dialogue can only be broken off as of no use to the ruled. What it does have to do with are differences between revolutionaries and 'ordinary' people in cognitive and linguistic behavior and also in some of which differences make the former ineffective and serve to maintain the latter in exploited and oppressed positions, and all of which are obstacles to revolutionary social change.

6. Rationalism, conservative & radical

Perhaps I can make my position clearer on a number of issues raised so far by outlining what I take to be features of an implicit theory of Establishment
rationalism and by stating criticisms and alternatives, in particular criticisms to show how the theory can't or doesn't work in practice for radicals and revolutionaries, though it tells them that they can use the procedures it specifies to achieve their ends in politics.

Here is a list of features of what I take to be establishment rationalism:

- that everyone is interested to discover the T/truth
- that T/truth will out in the dialectic of argument
- that everyone can contribute to this argument
- that where the T/truth is practical, men will act upon it to bring about the situation which accords with their needs, interests etc and that if only they are a majority there are no institutional obstacles to their bringing about this accord.

I shall examine each of these features in turn, but first I must indicate what are the different meanings I attribute to 'Truth' with a capital T and 'truth' with a small t.

- Truth and truth

I reject the position that there is a single Truth in favour of the idea that there is no Truth, that T/truth is relative. Thus I adopt a relativist position. I use 'Truth' to refer to absolute Truth, and 'truth' to refer to truth established relative to a given set of conventional rules - rules which may always change and sometimes are, incomensurable and intimately unjustifiable by reference to any higher order set of ground rules.

I have defined a practice of philosophy in terms of the promotion of reason and truth, and this is consistent with my relativism because the injunction 'pursue truth' and my assertion 'there is no Truth' are made at different levels.

Whilst I do not believe that there is an absolute Truth, it is clear that - of necessity - all societies have conventional rules for assigning truth to propositions, and when I urge 'pursue truth' I use 'truth' (without a capital) in this conventional sense, but it may then be further objected that this position is a rather conservative one for a supposed radical alternative. If there is no Truth, why not throw away conventional logical rules and language, as do surrealists, dadaists and schizophrenics? Would this not be more revolutionary?

In practice, responses to this objection are ad hominem. First, that surrealists, dadaists and schizophrenics have never been able to build up a political movement, or even convert people to their way of life. Second, the possibilities of 'system' should not in this area be underestimated. Consider the following two instances of changes which might be effects through restricting oneself to the rules which conventionally define rationality and truth:

At the level of isolated truths, consider that a person may at one moment express a belief in the supposed radical alternative. If there is no Truth, why not throw away conventional logical rules and language, as do surrealists, dadaists and schizophrenics? Would this not be more revolutionary?

In summary, I think this memory example does illustrate how part of the knowledge processing mechanism can be challenged in Chalmy. However, the critique which follows seems to me to be independent of a decision between absolute and relative T/truth. Readers who reject my personal relativism are not in consequence obliged to reject the critique which follows.

- the interest in T/truth assumption

Texts like J S Mill's On Liberty tend to assume that 'men' in general want to know the T/truth. Mill argues that if some ran amok with this notion because they are believed to have found the truth then because they are believed to be wrong. But is this assumption plausible? That is, is it a guide to reality? As evidence against the plausibility of the assumption, consider how there are not only situations in which those in power suppress information about themselves, but more widespread phenomena of disregard of one's own logical standards (irrationalism properly speaking), large scale self-deception, and even simple lack of curiosity: people do not want to know and in extreme cases shut themselves off to an extraordinary degree: they switch off the TV when the news comes on, they don't read newspapers, they taboo (like the Army) political and religious discussion. In short, they try not to think about things.

If people do not want to know, there is little point in trying to conduct with them rational argument leading to positive conclusions at least until the necessary preliminary task of explaining and overcoming the 'negative orientation' towards knowledge has been accomplished. My own feeling is that not wanting to know is closely connected to feelings of powerlessness, then people can be explained by the real powerlessness most people experience. The desire to know may, symmetrically with this situation, only become established as people discover the possibility of changing the world in changing it, in the discovery of their own strength and the recognition of repressed
desires. It is not knowledge which makes people feel free; it is more likely that we say that freedom makes people want and need knowledge. It is not always necessary to eliminate the cause in order to eliminate the effect; not all situations are amenable to rational argument with reasonable people. For example, to come by a belief irrationally — i.e., by ignoring one's own cognitive standards — does not entail that one is not now amenable to rational argument with reasonable people. After all, to come by a belief irrationally (as opposed to non-rationally) is to ignore rules which one possesses and the authority of which one in some sense acknowledges: this is perhaps why people make great efforts to rationalise after the event beliefs they have come by irrationally. Similarly, self-deception can only occur in people who have a commitment to being reasonable but where reasonableness is over-ridden by a conflicting force, usually the prospect of pain: knowledge is avoided because it threatens suffering. In cases where the suffering cannot be mitigated or removed, I don't see why knowledge should be defended at all costs. For example, it seems to me a defensible position not to tell people that they are suffering from incurable diseases. But in practice, I think we avoid knowledge in cases where the suffering is eliminable. For example, if we reify the social order — that is to regard it as unchangeable and inviolable — we may avoid knowing about its defects. And even if we don't reify society, we may still avoid knowledge — and is this justifiable? One could pose a general question in these or similar terms: does Bad Faith have any rights? That is to say, in what circumstances if any is the avoid­ance of knowledge to be treated as legitimate, that is, free from sanction? My own position is that where another person's refusal to know affects the prospects of my happiness and freedom, I have a right to try to make him know. That is to say, I can legitimately impose sanctions upon him for his refusal to know, though only — of course — if those sanctions are effective as a means to getting him to know.

— the 'T/truth will out' and free access assumptions

If people don't want to know, truth will out in argument purely by chance. Even if they do want to know, it only seems plausible to think that the truth will out if everyone who has something to say can say it. Here I share the classical liberal position. But in that position it tends to be assumed that because everyone has the legal right to speak the condition of access is fulfilled. But quite aside from the existing multitude of legal, quasi-legal, and convention­al impediments to free speech, the assumption based on legal freedom is clearly unrealistic, espe­cially in the age of the mass media. What is required is that everyone with something to say can actually say it, effectively as well as without fear, and this means that the media of communication must be open and available and not only that a vast number of sanctions must be got rid of.

In Mill's On Liberty what strikes me forcibly is the relative insensitivity to the vast problem of the social distribution of the possibilities of contribut­ing to debate and discussion. This cannot be put down simply to his having written before the age of the mass media, which have forced an awareness of this problem upon us. In my opinion, the omission results from the peculiar ideological nature of Mill's pro­ject: Mill's interests were particularistic: he wished to defend the freedom of thought and expression specifically of intellectuals in opposition to the masses (by which he means the middle classes), in order that the intellectuals could have a directing role in public affairs. But Mill couched his partic­ularistic interests in universal terms; yet a properly universalistic treatment would require much closer attention to the problem I have indicated. To achieve some sort of equality of access to means of communication requires political action of a sort which may mean that the desired situation cannot be brought about independently of much broader social change; for example, can the question of access to the means of communication be separated from questions about media ownership and legal constraints on the freedom to broadcast and receive? I think not. Prior to any such radical changes of ownership and control being achieved, one has to ask what can be done in a situation of inequality of access to maximize the possibility of truth emerging. Many radical students came to the conclusion in 1968-70 that the denial of freedom of expression to individuals and groups and disrupting the workings of certain media, might be the most effective means of maximising the possibilities of reason and truth prevailing. This position is only paradoxical if it is assumed that the necessary background conditions for free and equal debate are fulfilled. The radical argument was meant to cope with the situation in which they are not.

Finally, let me note that there are situations in which because of cognitive or linguist depriva­tion some people can't have anything to say on some sub­jects, just as skill deprivation means that some people can't say effectively what they want to say, and are thus even more clearly excluded from the Great debate out of which Truth is supposed to emerge.

— the unity of theory and practice assumption

It is difficult to prove that, where someone knows how to satisfy a need in a situation where there appears to be no conflicting, overriding need, failure to act to satisfy that need is to be explained in terms of weakness of will or apathy. Isn't it usually the case that the person estimates the probability of success relatively low and the risks of things going unpleasantly wrong relatively high and thus acts irrationally, does not act. This is the idea which lies behind the claim that the workers have much more to lose than their chains.

But what would you say of a person who prefers a situation of present misery to action he knows would probably bring about a better situation with very little risk involved? I can think, for example, that though he knows what is required, he does not know how to go about it. Again, might it be that the desire for security is so great that he has what he calls 'high risk aversion', but might not such an aversion eventually become pathological — that is, dysfunctional for his survival? You have to take risks to avoid risks. Even where some 'men' do act to transform social reality, other 'men' may oppose them and even though a minority, may be more powerful. If on no other ground, the conven­tional theory of rationalism founders on the brute fact of class society.

In summary, what I have tried to indicate in this section are some of the ways in which philosophical, educational or political work which based itself on the four assumptions listed at the beginning of the preceding discussion would founder, simply because reality does not correspond to the assumptions. On the other hand, what I have not done is to counterpose reliance on history to reliance on Argument. Rather, I have — if indirectly — tried to indicate the sort of space in which a philosophical, educational or political practice could operate effectively. In Marxist terms, I have been trying to find a path between the opposites of voluntarism (the establish­ment and activist positions are voluntarist ones) and mechanism (historical inevitability). The third thesis on Feuerbach which I quoted remains the constant signpost to such a path.

7 Concluding remarks

These opening sections should indicate some of the main areas and themes of this book and some of the reasons why I think them important enough to write about. The reader will already have noticed that my style of argument and writing leaves many impres­
ions, gaps and unanswered questions. Some of these are deliberate gaps in the argument I am making for the structure of this book. They are deliberately there. I believe in trying to create a 'open' discourse which the reader must criticise, contribute to, engage with and interpret as she is reading - and not just afterwards. I don't want her to be confronted with a Final Solution to a given problem which she can forget, confident that somewhere it exists, or which she can memorise for an exam.

It is also true that in trying to work outside a subject, I assemble by discourse from concepts and techniques out of different disciplines. In this process of cutting and splicing (doing a job as an amateur, using whatever happens to be around) I only hope it is something useful I am creating and not a myth, for Levi-Strauss tells us that myths are created in the same way as I am working.

There are, of course, non-theoretical reasons for the structure of this book. There are my own intellectual limitations, and laziness. There are the facts of daily life, too, such as that this chapter was drafted in between knocks at the front door from members of a village Youth Club, bringing in what they have scavenged for their jumble sale. I think it is important to avoid doing without such disruptions of daily life, at least, most of the time.

Notes


3 'Vous voulez aller à la foa, et vous n'en savez pas lo chemin ... apparences de ceux qui ont été lisés comme vous, et qui parient maintenant tout leur bien... Suivez la manibre par où on a commencé; c'est en faisant tout comme s'ils croient, en prenant de l'eau bénite, en faisant dire des messes, etc. Naturellement même cela vous frit croire et vous abîmer,' Pascal, Pensées 233.

4 But note the following from Denise Riley's comments on a draft of this chapter: 'About the effects of the women's movement. You say that "fewer men can now unselfconsciously refer to..." etc. But I don't think that's true. In my experience precisely the people who talk about "chicks" and "bits of stuff" go on doing so, because women's liberation consciousness doesn't reach these areas and these people... You say "he may lose more of his chauvinism in giving up "outward" chauvinist practices than is entailed by that giving up alone" and you quote Pascal. But what do you base that supposition on, apart from a natural and excusable optimism? I feel the forms of chauvinism or any other social nastiness are endlessly changeable and can endlessly recuperate any inroads. That's my pessimism. So it happens that because of where I am socially/politically, I don't end up in the "chick" box but being called "feminist" or even "an unsung mother" can function in ways that are more sinisterly reductive. And arguments against the idea of role-reduction aren't easily acceptable in the way that arguments against "chick" are. So I don't accept your generalisation, "every act reproduces or subverts a given social institution, which means that every act is political"; but then that's a wide and familiar generalisation which you could have reached from many other places.'

3 Going to the lavatory can be full of meaning. See Paterson, A., The Rivers of Song: Schizophrenia, Family and Sacrifice, Penguin, London, 1972, especially Chapter 8. David Riley wrote 'I think you've missed the main point, which isn't the etiology of what's "natural", or whether or not some learning has been involved in it: It's more important that "the spontaneous" and "the natural" are both extremely and transparently bourgeois categories. Look at who uses them and who has used them (e.g. which manufacturers of Hitlerjugend ideologies or shampoos...).'


7 Denise Riley corrects me: 'Rhetoric is, classically, the art of organisation of verbal material, and so could include reading - and would have, in its original scholastic sense.'

8 The themes of this and the following paragraphs recur more fully in my 'The Making of a Course Critical' in Hard Cheese No. 2, May 1973.


10 Both Carole Pateman and Denise Riley have queried the truth of this assertion. Perhaps, then, what follows is merely self-criticism.

11 I use 'mythic' here in the sense it has in Roland Barthes' theory of myth, as roughly equivalent to connotation. (See Barthes, R., Mythologies, Jonathan Cape, London, 1972, second part, 'Myth today'). The opposition denotation/connotation is forcefully criticised by Baudrillard, J., Pour une critique de l'economie politique du Signe, Gallimard, Paris, 1972.

12 See, for example, Breuer, J. and Freud, S., Studies in Hysteria, translated by A. A. Brill, Beacon Press, Boston, 1964.

13 See Pateman, T., 'Sanity, Madness and the Problem of Knowledge' in Radical Philosophy 1, Jan 1972.


The following two quotations are from Extra-Territorial: 'But one ought not to forget the profoundly disturbing increase of actual illiteracy on the world
The root cause of our troubles and disasters...

To the Editor, MIND

Sir.

On the 6th of April of this year the British Institute of Philosophy came of age. Founded under the late Lord Balfour, its Council has been throughout composed of leading representatives, not only of philosophy, but also of science, of politics, and of industry and commerce. For twenty-one years the Institute has been active in promoting the purposes for which it was founded - to serve as a link between philosophers and the everyday world, and to spread such general understanding as can be reached of the universe in which we live and of man's place in it. There have been continuous courses of lectures for students on the various branches of philosophy and popular addresses on fundamental issues, drawing large audiences and evoking discussion. Local branches have been formed in several cities. Philosophy, the quarterly journal of the Institute, contains articles by writers of distinction on the great philosophical questions, as well as reviews by specialists of the important new books on such subjects, published in this or other countries. The journal enjoys a considerable circulation outside the membership and beyond our own shores.

There must be great numbers of men and women, in all walks of life, who recognise that our age is a time of intellectual and moral confusion, and that this is the root cause of our troubles and disasters. Some may take refuge in a passive and futile pessimism; others may be tempted to plunge into some desperate kind of revolutionary action, more likely to make things still worse. To build up a body of positive, instead of merely critical, thought, as a base for well-considered constructive action in the sack of morals, of politics and of economics is the only right course. In this a leading part should be played by British philosophy, which has won much distinction in the past, and may render still greater service in the future, in formulating thought and linking it with action. But an organisation is needed to furnish a platform for discussion and to disseminate ideas. The British Institute of Philosophy is such an organisation. What is now necessary is a reinforcement of its numbers as a means to reinvigorating its action.

Yours faithfully,
SAMUEL (President)
W. D. ROSS (Chairman)
LINDSAY OF BIRKER (Deputy Chairman)

from Mind, October 1946