

symphonies, which so often submit to the imposed falsehood of a 'socialist-optimist' programme, nevertheless stand up as authentic creations of the suffering artist, voicing an imminent critique of dominant ideology through the sheer imbalance and rebarbative crudeness of their structure. In these interpretive matters, where aesthetics meets with the phenomenology of social consciousness and its tangent, compromised forms, Merleau-Ponty's observations have great critical power and a quality of sympathetic fairness, besides, which is lost to the structuralists with their techniques of denunciation.

Of course one has to recognise, before claiming Merleau-Ponty as an aesthetic philosopher, that his formulations at their most suggestive often touch upon the unsayable and, in practical-critical terms, the unusable. Thus he requires (*Prose*, p90) that, in reading creatively, we allow 'the words ... to be enveloped in that haze of signification that they derive from their particular arrangement, and finally, that we let the whole work veer toward a second-order tacit value where it almost rejoins the mute radiance of painting'. Again we find Merleau-Ponty specifically praising that second-level accretion of meaning which Barthes denounces as the privileged domain of bourgeois mythology. His description is beyond the usual ambit of practical critical method, though no more so than its negative counterparts in the prolix theoretical writings of the literary structuralists. More importantly, it offers a positive, appreciative account of literary meaning and value, where structuralism, according to its philosophic lights, performs an essentially negative act of formal deconstruction. Not least because they engage creatively with this depressed condition of the current 'human sciences', these texts of Merleau-Ponty (in their clear, unfussy translation) are a joint event of some importance.

Christopher Norris

## Radical Education

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# NEWS & REPORTS

## Letter to Readers

'The financial crisis is becoming less acute' - so we reported in the last issue. Nevertheless, it remains desperate. Our increased cover price (50p since the last issue) may help, but it may also hit our sales. Remember that students etc can get the magazine for less: 35p if they buy from one of the 'local sellers'. But obviously shops must charge the full cover price - and even then, we do not make any money out of the shop sales. We are also going to be extremely vulnerable to the new postal rates. So please do all you can to get us new readers and new subscribers. Become a local seller; buy a subscription for a friend; make sure your library has a subscription ... etc etc

In theory, the Radical Philosophy Group and the magazine *Radical Philosophy* are different entities, with different addresses etc. In theory, the Group co-ordinates local organisations, runs meetings and conferences and has responsibility for the magazine. The organisational forum for the Group is the 'Open Meeting' which takes place three times a year, about the middle of the university term. (See *Winter 1973*, p48) The idea was, in other words, that the meeting should run the magazine; what now happens is precisely the opposite. A satisfactory solution to the problem of the relationship between the Group and the magazine has not yet been arrived at.



Mihailo Markovic, one of the signatories of the document printed on page 1, has spent the last few weeks in England. One of our readers reports the following conversation with him.

I wanted to know what he thought of English and American philosophy. I asked him if he thought the formalisers, like Quine, or the common sense people, like J L Austin, were reactionaries by omission, because they avoid important sorts of problem, and in the case of the latter school, because they have contempt for theory.

'Philosophy always has this double task. On the one hand it has to do something for its time and the historical situation in which it emerges. And English philosophy does not do anything in that respect, that's why some people consider it reactionary.

On the other hand of course, philosophy has a lot of time at its disposal, and you begin to work on a project which will be completed a century later. So I think what analytical philosophers are doing is a very important beginning which has to be continued. All philosophers can learn from them.'

Markovic turned to logic when the wave of Stalinism hit Yugoslavia in the early 50s when he graduated. He read A J Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* and thought it 'exactly the extreme opposite of whatever I believed.' But clarity (though not enough) was the weapon to turn on the Stalinist ideologues. So he went to London and studied with Ayer to prove his mettle, and to find a few more weapons too.

The influence of Ayer explains why Markovic's writings are intelligible to the hard-boiled analyst. He sees himself as a mediator in a second sense. For while Stalin caused him to turn to logic, he caused others to flee to a humanistic existentialism. Markovic says his most important work has been the attempt to fuse these responses. He wants to mediate between the search for clarity and the concern for the important questions, like what is exploitation, what is alienation.

I wanted to know what he thought about the future of philosophy, about its relevance to non-philosophers. Did he still read Marx as he does living philosophers? He said, 'Great philosophers always try to contribute to the betterment of social life. That's why they build up projects about what man is, and might be. In contemporary philosophy no-one has expressed this idea better than Karl Marx. Marx is still a contemporary philosopher you see.'

Paul Feyerabend teaches philosophy at the University of California at Berkeley, and has for the past year been Visiting Professor at Sussex University. His book *Against Method* was recently published by New Left Books.

Gabriel Josipovici teaches English literature in the School of European Studies, Sussex University. He is the author of several novels, plays and radio plays as well as a book on literature, *The World and the Book*. A collection of his plays and stories, *Mobius the Stripper*, was recently published by Gollancz.

Bob Eccleshall teaches in the Department of Politics at Queens University, Belfast.

Sonia Kruks teaches philosophy at Central London Polytechnic and is writing a thesis on Merleau-Ponty.

Louis McTurk is a pseudonym.

John Krige is a graduate student at Sussex University.