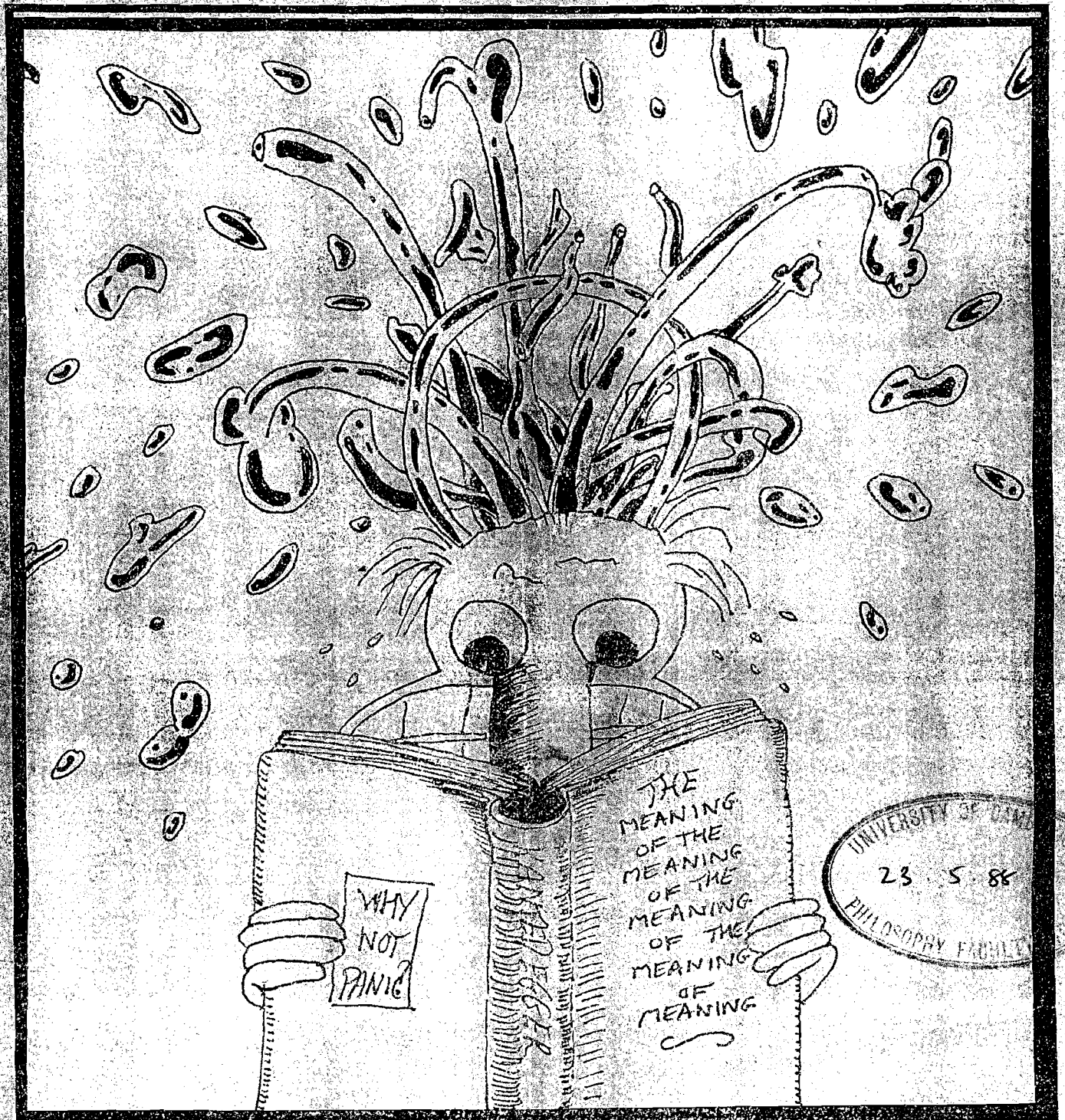


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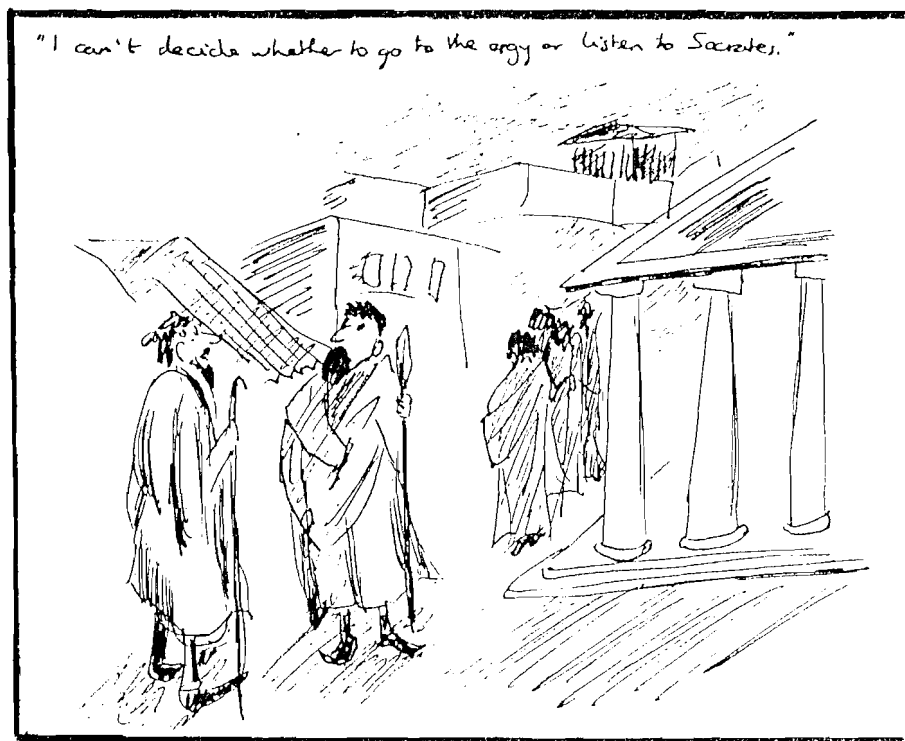
1988 EDITION

30p

17.5.84

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EDITORIAL

Anyone who read last year's edition of Pv-P will notice in what follows a certain recurring theme. Criticism of the study of philosophy is the favourite topic, and why not? Little, if anything, of it occurs within the syllabus. So Pv-P gives us a chance to air our views -but perhaps this opportunity should be included within the course itself.

The Cambridge obsession with the analytic approach was high-lighted and questioned by last year's editor. The point is still very much worth making that it is only AN approach, and that the syllabus should include some discussion of its merits and faults, as well as alternative approaches available. This edition contains articles criticising the analytic approach and getting away from it.

A further problem that alot of people seem to feel strongly about is the method of teaching philosophy at Cambridge. Without a doubt the availability of a supervisor's sole attention for an hour each week is a benefit to be envied. But it seems that, apart from this, students are just expected to get on with philosophical thinking on their own - as if it were something that just comes naturally. There can be few other universities that adopt such a "laissez-faire" attitude.

Any introductory textbook will tell you that philosophy is all about "the art of wondering". And anyone considering the study of philosophy must have experienced this at some time about some question. But to take on the full philosophy syllabus and maintain a healthy glow of "wonderment" throughout is more than most can manage. And what happens when you lose this essential ingredient? -stale, boring essays that you don't want to write and you don't want anyone to read.

Surely it is at this point, where our ability to wonder philosophically breaks down, that something should be done. It goes without saying that good seminars would help to overcome some of these problems. Certainly many students reading philosophy at Cambridge feel they are carrying out their studies in complete isolation - unaware of what others are doing or thinking. Most people find that their own company is not very philosophically stimulating when faced with an essay on Russell's Theory of Descriptions. No wonder we are prone to getting stuck and bored.

Well, having had this chance to throw in our own criticisms, we'd like finally to thank everyone who has contributed in any way towards this issue (in particular, Don Anderson, for knowing all about word processors). We hope you enjoy the material we've collected. If you disagree violently with anything we've printed why not edit the magazine for next year? -Its all yours.

Janet Anderson, Corpus
Laura Susijn, John's

Editors, April 1988



WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WAY PHILOSOPHY IS TAUGHT AT CAMBRIDGE? - ALMOST EVERYTHING.

As I understand it, the structure of the philosophy tripos, in barest form, is as follows: a student signs up for a more or less defined diet of philosophy (more in the first two years, less in the third); he is fed that diet in two ways: by lectures (which, while not quite optional, are not quite required either and, to extend the metaphor, as a means of learning, are not unlike an intravenous drip - the patient is in body passive) and supervisions (which are required - a fact that might surprise some - and which, as a means of learning, are not unlike the bottle feeding of calves destined to become veal); in neither case is there any real structure to the teaching; at most very vague topic headings are pursued (e.g., under Ethics, Part II, "The paper will include, besides central questions in Ethics, questions in the Philosophy of Mind....- I jest not!). While uniformity of a sort is guaranteed by lectures, there is no uniformity at all in supervisions (for not only are different topics assigned, but different reading lists are provided for similar topics); even where there is uniformity there is not continuity - often a student only sees the same supervisor four times in a year (and that applies only to students who realise that supervisions are required - one can only guess at numbers here). Even when there is uniformity and continuity, the system is inherently unfair, because there is nothing to say that what is taught is going to be on the examination, nor that who does the teaching is going to set it; and, on top of all this, nothing a student does for the first two years really counts for anything, everything rests on the final year (or, more accurately, the final week and a half).

It might be felt that on spelling things out in this - admittedly tendentious - manner, I could simply rest my case.

More must be said, however. There would be nothing wrong with the way philosophy was taught at Cambridge if the desired goal was to produce narrowly-educated, utterly self-sufficient individuals, who were particularly good at philosophical journalism and who (for a variety of no doubt good reasons) do not desire to know exactly what they are working towards or how well they are progressing (of course, in not knowing the former, it is impossible to know the latter).

But there are good reasons for thinking that this is not a desirable goal; and hence something is rotten in Cantabrigia.

Given that the vast majority of philosophy students will (if, unlike me, they have any sense) leave academic life, knowing only about a dozen areas in philosophy is going to be, at best, marginally useful. Now of course this parochialism of education would be easy to defend if the students had learnt about these topics in ways that enabled them to learn quickly and creatively about other (useful) things (like leveraged buy-outs, for instance). But learning philosophy at Cambridge does not take this form, because the mode of teaching does not facilitate it. For example, not only does the Cambridge philosophy student get no formal training in working with others (which 99.9% of jobs require - academic life being on the whole the exception), they are skilled almost exclusively in writing four sides on questions which require (at least) four books (e.g. "Discuss the relation between justice and equality." - an actual exam

question!). And I used the word "exclusively" advisedly, for students are effectively spoon fed the questions and the books (including page numbers) such that they do not learn (grand) skills like how to decide for themselves what is important and relevant to a topic or (pedestrian) skills like how to use a library properly.

Now it must be said that some students become very adapt at the quick essay. But there is little comfort in that for them; for they have no idea what other students are doing (who, despite what might be said, they are being compared with) nor whether what they are doing is going to be relevant to the paper they must sit at the end of it all. They could hardly be blamed if they came out of it thinking (unlike the rest of the world, or, perhaps more accurately, unlike the real world) that all work goes on in a kind of black hole, where all that counts is the explosion at the end. And even if utility is to count for nought, the whole set up is unfair. People should not be expected to learn in black holes, nor should they be judged solely on how well they explode at the end of it all.

Well, enough said. What should be done? Philosophy at Cambridge ought to be taught as it is at Cambridge....Massachusetts, though of course with a dose of Old World flavour (notice the "u" in flavour). For a start, philosophy should be taught in conjunction with related subjects like politics and economics, mathematics and physics, psychology and computing science, and so on. Secondly, lectures should be made compulsory, on the condition that they are worthwhile (i.e. not just well taught, but focused on topics that students will (not just may) be tested on). There should be fewer topics taught, and those taught should be covered more thoroughly. Questions should be encouraged, both of those giving the lecture and those listening

to it or, better, participating in it. There should be a sure set of readings and essay topics set for supervisions; not so tightly as to constrain those supervising but tightly enough to benefit those learning. They should be run in conjunction with the lectures. Supervisions, which would be given every second week (to allow time for proper research and thought, as much for those supervising as those being supervised), should consist of four people discussing things together for two hours. All work done by a student should count towards his or her final mark and marks for each year should be averaged to give the overall mark.

The astute reader will have noticed that I have left the case of graduate students out of my polemic. This is not because graduate students are not "taught", and hence do not fall under the question I began with (though it may be that they are unteachable); rather it is because the matter is all too painful to talk about.

The captious reader will (I hope) note that I said, in answer to my question, "Almost everything" - for, when all's said and done, one couldn't be taught by a nicer group of people.

[P.S. It is perhaps only fair (however undermining to my argument it might be) to point out that my experience of the Cambridge system is entirely second-hand, as is my experience of the real world. But think of these points as being made from a transcendental perspective!].

Roger Scott-Douglas
Girton

THE POVERTY OF PHILOSOPHY

This is a polemical piece, and as such the distinctions and arguments it presents will be simple and perhaps crude, but do, I feel, have an urgency which enforces the necessity to "publish" them, that they may be of use.

The classic distinction of Analytic and Speculative philosophy, with the respective Anglo-American and Continental locations, serves initially to give defining characteristics to the sort of philosophy belonging to the Analytic tradition, predominantly pursued at Cambridge. The ambition of Analytic philosophy here is to offer tight, rigorous arguments, to define carefully, to analyse painstakingly and to approach philosophical problems methodically. This is an ambitious programme and on the part of many philosophers, an act of faith. If any method will solve traditional philosophical questions, it's implied, this will.

The price that is paid for this, however, is a lack of imaginative resourcefulness, self-enclosure and narrowness. Nozick's "Philosophical Explanations" (Oxford 1981) overtly sets out to answer "big questions", but within the tight Analytic framework. It is an instructive book, because it attempts to operate in an area where Analytic philosophy doesn't usually go. The final chapter is headed "The Meaning of Life". We're given classifications of different senses of "meaning". The point is pursued by asking how these different senses of meaning can satisfy an overriding ambition of finding "meaning" in life itself. This chapter is, in effect, a brave admittance of defeat, and of limitation. Deconstructing and dismantling traditional humanistic terms, it ends up with a sort of intellectual "powder". Although the demolition has been done effectively and efficiently,

positive construction cannot be embarked upon. It is a somewhat odd example like this that shows how the critical and criticising strategy of Analytical philosophy only goes so far and fails to proceed on to the greater responsibility it implies (and seems to need) of solutions.

This is an easy point to make, but it is one that becomes more striking and insistent the more modern philosophy one reads. Oddly, the critical destructiveness of its method never actually extends to itself. Philosophers show little doubt that their philosophical procedures and tools can do what they want them to do. There is no consciousness of limitation. This connects with the point made above that Analytic philosophy is ambitious, even if it eschews the grand speculative designs of Hegel and Co.

Philosophy is usually carried out in a kind of cultural, academic vacuum. Other areas of knowledge -historical, political, scientific- are rarely invoked. And despite all the interest in Wittgenstein and in his renewing sensitivity to language, its use and operation, little interest is shown in finding out other strategies by which to carry out an inquest into language. An example here would be the use of anthropological information in connection with the Wittgensteinian problem of "private languages". It seems that, purely historically, any theory of any language concerns a community. This is plotted out quite straightforwardly in C.L.Barber, "The Story of Language" (London 1962), and at more detailed length in A.Martinet, "Des Steppes Aux Oceans" (Paris 1986). The mind-body problem too needs more detailed information from neurology and physiology. This sort of knowledge has direct bearing on connected philosophical problems.

Analytic discipline is defensible, therefore, only if positioned in a broader curriculum where its extremity may be compromised by information from other disciplines. The need for a greater awareness about the enclosure of philosophical argument and discourse is necessary. If one placed a discussion of free-will in theological terms next to one in modern philosophical terms, one would notice immediately the difference between these types of discourse; the kind of pressure exerted on certain key words and their uses, and ultimately the very different ways that these types of enquiry pursue their initial problems and how they modify and satisfy us in their sphere.

If philosophy has eschewed the grand, systemizing designs it had in the 18th and 19th centuries, it certainly hasn't eschewed the idea of being on the right path to "truth". But being on the right path to truth would involve consideration of all conceivable types of information relevant to a particular problem - especially word-history, sensitivity to grammatical organisation and the history of the problem itself, (cf. Whitehead's consciousness of the importance of history in "Process and Reality", (Cambridge 1929)).

A final necessary addendum to the above concerns teaching. This seems a problem in Cambridge because philosophy here, unlike elsewhere, is studied on its own, unaccompanied by other subjects. The rectification of the above "faults" or limitations will come only through a broader curriculum and through expanding the boundaries of what is taught. It would also be helpful if teaching were carried out not in one-to-one supervisions, but in slightly larger groups of two or three. This would create a greater sense of communal endeavour and reduce some of the isolation people feel when doing philosophy. A more particular point is that no lectures on method are given at the commencement of Part 1A. Method remains a shadowy form in the distance, about which no-one seems willing to supply information. The initial confusion felt on starting to study philosophy, although often productive, could be made less irritating by including lectures that are purely and simply about procedure and method.

K.Brown
Gonville and Caius

"I have tried too in my time to be a philosopher; but, I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in."

Boswell's Johnson



A FIRST ESSAY

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

This is the very first essay I wrote in Cambridge as a philosophy undergraduate. "So what," you may ask, "is there any reason for a first essay to be published in Pv-P?" Well, its easy tone and playful style seem to prove that I had expected it would be fun to study philosophy in Cambridge. Also, it seems that there were some original thoughts in it. Now, of course, I know that it is universally accepted that no-one with a sense of fun could ever become a philosopher. Still this first essay seems to show that before I began philosophy I did have this attribute to some extent. But please don't think this means I now have no sense of fun at all. Studying philosophy has had its effects on me; though I don't yet talk all the time in premises and conclusions.

Anyway, if this essay proves that there has been a single person in the history of philosophy who decided to study it in spite of having this absolutely disadvantageous quality, then it is a document extraordinary enough to be published in these pages.

WHAT MAKES IT TRUE I WAS IN AMSTERDAM YESTERDAY?

There is a Hungarian saying which goes something like "I feel like a worm stuck in wood," probably referring to the high degree of discomfort a woodworm has to experience all its life. The saying provides an excellent description of my feelings now that I'm starting to write my first essay for my supervisor about the problem in the title that couldn't arouse very much enthusiasm in me. In vain have I read all the chapters in the books of those philosophers of fame my supervisor suggested to me. Also I have to write it in English, me who am not much of a writer in my mother tongue. So here I am, the worm stuck in the wood I chose: stuck in philosophical studies in Cambridge, having to write an essay every week! Oh by Jupiter! (I wouldn't say 'God' for fear of its being like the sign of some commitment in a philosophical controversy about Him). How can I begin? What should I write? When will I have produced 2000 words (which is the amount I ought to put out now)?

I have to prove that I was in Amsterdam yesterday, though I really was. The simple facts are these: I crossed the Austro-Hungarian border at noon the day before yesterday, in my 16 year old Zaporochets car (Russian make) and arrived in Cambridge this noon.

Anybody who knows Zaporochets cars, on hearing this, would think he knows why my supervisor wants me to prove I really arrived in Amsterdam by yesterday afternoon: it is simply incredible if you have a car of that make. His not asking me to prove that I've even come as far as Cambridge today shows that he doesn't want me to prove what seems to be an impossible feat.

Now my real difficulties in proving it come from the fact that he is a philosopher. Were he a detective inspector, I should just give him the names and addresses of my friends in Amsterdam I visited there, and that would do the job. They would testify to the truth of the fact. But he is a philosopher, so he probably wants me to do it in a completely round-about way, making use of expressions like

"the spacio-temporal reality of my personal identity as concurrent with the corporeal existence of witnessing individuals," (Oh, this has been tiring, I can't give more examples), and reason deductively, and declare that though the theoretical occurrence of my individuated Amsterdamerredness may be a strong case from the Russellian point of view, it is just a weak one by Ayerian standards.....Oh no, I simply can't do it! You see I'm just going to study philosophy, I've still got a little common sense. Maybe I'll be quite good at it in a year or two, but now, well, now I only might try to find some common sense proof.....

Well, how to begin? First I think I have to make a distinction between the truth for myself of my having been in Amsterdam yesterday, and its truth for others. As for myself, the truth of the event mainly comes from the fact that I know because I remember quite well that I was there. Now that much is just not enough for a philosopher. So I have to add that I've always known that 'I am I, unbelievable as it may sound to some philosophers still making their space-time worms. But really, I'm quite honest about it. I remember knowing I was I as early as the age of two. I've got some memories from those times, and I even fancy that I've got some earlier ones. I remember being carried (by my mother, probably) in my swaddling clothes. Now a very interesting characteristic of these memories is that the self-consciousness I remember in them was the same as it is now. I know that many things have changed in me and with me: I know things I didn't know then, I knew things I've forgotten since, I have feelings I didn't have then, I am ashamed now of many things I did, etc. Still there is something that has gone on completely unchanged, and that is myself, an innermost self, to whom, I feel, everything has just happened as if I had only watched things happening to me and around me,

like someone handling a game-machine: in some degree I could control the events that came upon the screen of my machine, but ultimately I've been just a watcher of the screen, the things happening there couldn't really reach my innermost personality to affect it. The earlier the memories I try to invoke, the more pronounced this feeling is. Also the feeling that my innermost self was the same as it is now, is more pronounced. I was the one who, for example, very proud that I was already so old, first went to school at the age of six, the same I, I remember, as the one who is writing these lines now. I can't detect any change either in the awareness, or in the person who I was and am aware of as myself.

So, for me at least, the knowledge that I am I, and have been I since I can remember, the knowledge of my personal identity, is a given one, that needs no proof and can't be proven, I guess. And if it is given for me, then the knowledge of his continuous unchanged personal identity must be given for everybody else, though he may not care or, for some reason, may want not to know it. To sum up, for myself it is this given knowledge of a constant myself which makes it true that it was me who was in Amsterdam yesterday, or, the other way round, I am the same person as the one who was aware of myself in Amsterdam yesterday as being myself. Of course, I left out of the account the role memory plays in the thing, but its inclusion would make the matter too complicated for me.

Now for other people the question is more complicated even in this way. They either have to rely on my or someone else's account of my visit yesterday in Amsterdam and believe it or not, or they may actually have witnessed my being there. In the latter case they had to recognise me as myself when they saw me. This was made possible for them by their own knowledge of their own

innermost continuous personalities which enabled them to recognise other individual persons as beings like themselves. They recognise another one as a person, that is an innermost himself like their innermost themselves, because he has the characteristics which they have as persons: an outer material body, some even more outer clothes of textile (these latter ones very often, but not all the time), and the capability of interchange of thoughts with them. They also recognise another one's individuality, i.e. which one of the many living persons one is. People usually do this first by seeing that one is in the sort of clothes and that has the sort of hairstyle that one is more or less supposed to have, then by that one's face matches the picture they have of it in their memories, that one's movements are his way of moving the parts of his body, etc. So they recognise one's body. Now comes the assumption which they have drawn from experience, but which some philosophers still (or already) don't seem to know, that as long as a person lives (and now I don't bother to find out what it exactly means to live), he has the one and same outer (or material) body, (though some parts of it may be replaced, from false teeth to transplanted hearts). As soon as they are sure the body is a certain one's body, and it lives, they take it for granted that one is there, too.

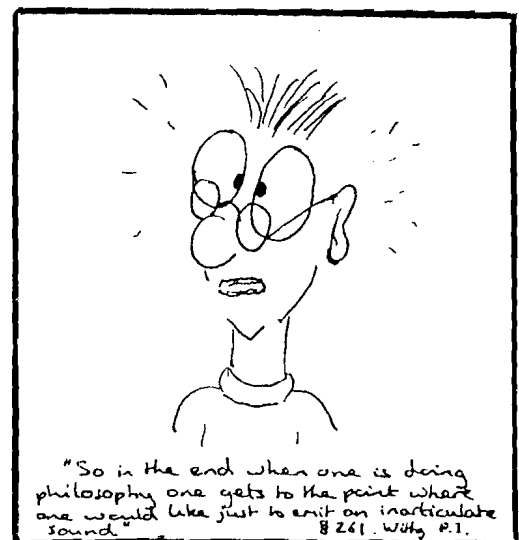
Now, of course, this makes it very true for them, but not infallibly true. As they were themselves and not me, they couldn't have the same awareness of myself as I had. They had to rely on the characteristics of my outer (material) body and clothes for assuming that my individual person was there. But as you may have learned from many fanciful films, detective stories or comic books, it is not very difficult to adjust a person's material body and clothing to make him look like another person's body and clothing. And that might have happened

yesterday, too. Someone else, not me, may have turned up in disguise, pretending to be me. My friends in Amsterdam, thinking (mistakenly) that I am not at all the sort of very important person to induce anybody to put on my looks and pretend to be me, might have been taken in and may now falsely think they met me yesterday.

That just shows that you can never be sure, you can always be mistaken, however firm the truth might seem to you. For that reason the wise course to take I think is to make as sure of the truth as you can and stick to it, but always be prepared for being shown that you are mistaken. This, by the way, applies not only to other people's thinking it true that I was in Amsterdam yesterday, but to my thinking it true, too. Why, I may just have dreamt it, or be mistaken about it in some other way, which I am not going to investigate now, as I feel I have written about 2000 words (Thanks God!)

Well, I am afraid my supervisor won't be happy about this way of establishing the truth of my having been in Amsterdam, just as much as an inspector wouldn't be. And that means there are at least three of us who are not happy about this thing at all.

Lorant Benedek, Trinity



JOSEPH MELIA SOLVES SOME OF PHILOSOPHY'S MORE ANNOYING PROBLEMS



SOLUTION TO XENO'S PARADOX:

THE PROBLEM: An arrow is shot at someone. To reach the person and hit him it must first reach and pass the half-way mark. But it cannot reach half-way until it has first reached half-way to the half-way mark. And so on, ad infinitum. So the arrow never even begins its flight, motion is an illusion and the lucky person never gets shot (and, indeed, never could be shot it seems).

THE SOLUTION: Aim the arrow at twice the distance past the person, so that when it reaches the half-way mark, you've already got him - no problem?

HOW TO DERIVE AN "IS" FROM AN "OUGHT",
VIA "MUST", IN LESS STEPS THAN SEARLE:

OUGHT
 BOUGHT
 BOUGH
 COUGH
 COUCH
 OUCH
 MUCH
 MUSH
 MUST
 MAST
 MASK
 ASK
 AS
 IS



"For man, the unexamined life is not worth living."

Socrates

**A FEW EXTRACTS FROM
"THE PHILOSOPHICAL LEXICON"**
(Edited by Daniel Dennett)

bambrough, n. (1) a rare and umbrageous tree in the shelter of which all philosophical perplexities can be charmed away.

Where the bread fruit fall
And the penguin call
And the sound is the sound of the sea
Under the bam
Under the brough
Under the bambrough tree.

bertrand, n. (1) A state of profound abstraction of mind and spirit; a trance. "He went into a bertrand and began to babble about the class of all classes which are not members of themselves.
(2) The state of a person who suffers from delusions (e.g. as of one who doubts that, when he sees a table, he sees a table) or has visions (e.g. of the present King of France).
(3) A state of linguistic amnesia, as of one who believes that "this" is a proper name and "Plato" a description.

davidsonic, adj. of speed: minimum forward velocity required to keep a research programme in the air. Superdavidsonic, of research programme for which this speed is zero. Hence, davidsonic boom, the sound made by a research programme when it hits Oxford.

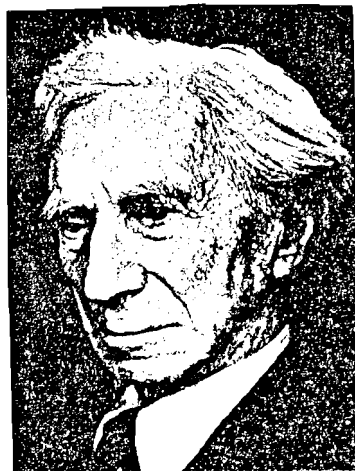
kripke, adj. Not understood, but considered brilliant. "I hate to admit it but I found his remarks quite kripke."

ludwig, n. A small beetle that looks exactly like an earwig, but is invisible.

moore, v. To try to win an argument by taking something out of your pocket.

nagel, v. To sense, vaguely, that something crucial but ineffable has been left out of the account. "No sooner had I completed the proof that the robot was conscious than I was beset by a swarm of nageling doubts."

wisdom, n. A state of clarity and understanding so complete and exhaustive, yet also so detailed and complex, as to be totally incommunicable.



MYSTERY

There is a single mystery. I shall call it reality.

We men and women, finite creatures, have a language with which we create models of the world. We can explore this language when using it, but in a general sense language has been given to us. Nature is a model of the world. Man and woman are models of ourselves. The concept of language is a model of our relationship with the natural world. I cannot help using a language.

When developing a model of the world we use several devices, such as causal links. But nothing in reality, in the world as it is, can be understood linguistically in its full scope. So, even if we need language, we should not think that it gives us absolute knowledge of anything. It is not true that reality can be broken into separate units of analysis just because we create models of separate "things" linked causally with each other. We all sometimes feel the dissatisfaction of being able to pick among several theories to tell us how, but never why. The question of why can not be solved with a description, even if it is a dynamic description with multicausal explanations. When we ask why, and why again, we require a whole meaning to everything.

Now, in our picture of the world we should include human agency. Within a causal model, human subjectivity becomes determined by other factors, because we want to include ourselves in the picture of the world. So freedom, a concept we develop when having the need to choose, is relative to our point of view. If we are interested in a model of the world without ontological gaps (we can call it nature) then we lose that freedom: even our perceptions, desires and beliefs are caused by something else.

But do not worry, because reality is bigger than our models of it.

And what is the relationship between reality and our models of it? Well, we can "feel" and "trust" reality, we can "image" it, give it names and figures. But all this is valid only as far as reality stands it, we can not determine reality from our finiteness. Reality is going to say everything.

Reality is not nature, nor human subjectivity. Reality is bigger than the sum of them, and is undetermined by any of them. It is more than language - so it is a mystery. Language can express reality, not by virtue of its own power, but only because of its capacity to "open" itself to reality. Nothing created with language by the power of language is able to satisfy us.

Thus an ethical system uses models of the world in order to operate, but it remains mainly concerned with listening (i.e. feeling reality and acting accordingly). To believe in absolute principles is a form of vanity, an idolatry. We have seen such beliefs are relative to historical contexts. But even in their diversity they show a common attitude, and a way to reject it. When we discover that language only talks about language, we fear the void.

It is like thinking that we can not understand our decisions and choices by appealing to our biological nature, to our social context or to our soul: because there is nothing in language able to satisfy our sense of commitment. Even the concept of reality, as a sheer concept, is rubbish.

Joan Pau Rubiés i Mirabet
King's

HUMAN SCIENCES AND NATURAL SCIENCES: TOWARDS A THEORY OF LANGUAGE

It is usually very difficult to explain where the difference between human and natural sciences lies. We can detect two conflicting interests: on the one hand, we are all aware that the practice of these two kinds of sciences is indeed different. Natural sciences seem to be more effective in solving practical and concrete problems, which leads us to believe that its methods are more reliable and its results truer than those of human sciences. Our society gives natural sciences a different sort of credibility, and that is reflected in the efforts of research stimulated by powerful institutions such as the State and in the distinctive general status of the academic work of each one of the branches. However, it is difficult to accept the philosophical consequences of the view that natural sciences are more "objective" or "truer" than human sciences. At least it is clear that human sciences try to answer some questions to which natural sciences are deaf, and that these questions are sometimes far more interesting than those which a mere technique of solving practical problems can offer. It is true that natural sciences also provide us with an image of the world which might answer some of these "interesting questions". However, this is because the natural sciences, as well as the human ones, operate on philosophical assumptions.

This last statement has many important implications. First, only to the extent that we have some philosophical assumptions can we answer the crucial questions. Second, it seems that such assumptions can not be proved with logical arguments from within the very sciences which are based on them; that means, we should not say "the natural world exists because natural sciences -

which are based on the assumption of the existence of a natural world - show us the existence of such a world". Third, some sort of philosophical approach seems to be common to natural and human sciences, and perhaps only when we understand what it is they have in common will we be able to see clearly the source of a very deep division. It is quite childish to pretend that both sciences are the same. But that human ones - such as sociology - are a bit defective because they are less mature, and that they can improve by imitating the good methods and principles of their "older" sisters. This belief is based on a poor knowledge of the history of sciences. It is only within a specific Western culture that such a distinction has occurred, and it is only here where the very important tradition of human sciences has been forced to occupy a new model of "objective sciences" and to accept their philosophical principles as the only good ones. This has not worked. But rather than concluding that for some special reason human sciences are inferior to natural ones - a sort of handful of opinions which cannot be tested as opposed to a kind of real knowledge which can be verified - I suggest that the whole set of philosophical principles of all sciences can be - and already has been - revised so as to understand what is happening. It is precisely from the criticisms to which some beliefs related to human knowledge and Western modern sciences have been subjected that a new theory of language is appearing, connected to what has been done in art, literature and philosophy, as well as in human and natural sciences themselves.

There are two common theories which have tried to explain the main difference between natural and human

sciences in correspondance with the current distinctions of modern philosophy. As a consequence, they have failed where these general distinctions have been found to be defective. So, it has been argued that natural sciences can find general laws, while human sciences must be reduced to the description of historical events. Scientific laws would imply a superior level of abstraction, allowing causal explanations, predictions and verifications as opposed to the particularity of humanistic disciplines. Against this opinion many historians and social scientists have sought to prove that they could find laws and causes as well as biologists or physicists. That has probably been a bad strategy. It seems to us that it is the very distinction between general and particular, law and event, explanation and description that that needs revision. The structure of the human mind, which enables us to develop a culture as a language with both adaptive and expressive functions, offers the possibility of constructing models of reality. These models are limited in as far as human capacity for language is limited (but language here is not only verbal language). Now both "laws" and "events" are linguistic tools. Furthermore they cannot work one without the other. In all forms of knowledge there is a combination of these functions, which are both relative to a culture and its limits. It is always possible to find "laws", but it is not always useful to our purpose to deal with our needs or hopes with such generalisations. there is nothing in laws -nor in events- which should be considered as a criterion for truth, because in any case truth does not depend on the tools we use to find it or to express it.

So, a culture offers us a tradition, a set of "linguistic tools" within the limits of our natural possibilities, and we can use and even

change these tools according to our purposes: social strategies, biological needs or aesthetic and religious motivations. I do not want to be exhaustive here, but simply to point out that it is not the language itself, but our purpose when using it in a particular context, that can give a validity to our generalisations or to our resistance to accept them. There are many possible ways of "talking" about things, that is to say of dealing culturally with them, and a description may satisfy someone as a sufficient explanation while someone else, probably with a different background and interests, would consider a deeper answer is needed. So we can develop several levels of language, and even a language of language (such as a theory of science), but this does not mean there is a truer knowledge in one of these models than in any other. We can think that a causal link is a superstition, or that a scientific hypothesis is considered good only because we do not yet have proof of its falseness. However, that does not mean we cannot use it with profit. One might even think that the very proof that a theory is false is impossible, because that proof must be found within a cultural system previously defined and historically relative. The language of natural sciences can be defended for the purposes it serves, not for its objectivity. The capacity to solve practical problems does not endow a language with the status of truth, because "solving practical problems", such as building a bridge, is a criterion that can be produced and valued only within a particular culture and from within a language that is smaller than reality. Thus nothing should prevent the development of alternative languages. Many of them already exist, often doing things that the language of laws and events cannot do, and among these we find the historical narrative and the models used by human sciences.

It is in close relationship with this distinction between law-like versus particularist sciences that a second major philosophical distinction has been damaging us. It is the one between subjectivity and objectivity. There are different ways of using these concepts, but now I will simply focus on the crudest one of them. According to such belief, human intellectual knowledge can be qualified as more or less objective (that is to say, less or more subjective) depending on its degree of autonomy from a particular perspective. An objective knowledge would correspond to a set of beliefs developed using a method or process defined with specific criteria so as to ensure that we can reach the best possible representation of truth, or the most reliable account of reality. A subjective knowledge, on the contrary, is seen to refer to the most primitive representation, dependant on a very limited and particular point of view, and vulnerable to prejudices, emotional states and irrational impulses. Reason, logic and abstract thought are the usual criteria used to determine which among a varied range of possible points of view are best to follow. These criteria are usually associated with a causal, mechanical and deterministic image of the world, and with the belief that human knowledge is like a picture or representation of reality. That is because reality is ordered and simple (i.e. there is a single reality which can be defined, given the means), and the human mind has the capacity of understanding it, at least partially. Thus, predictability and practical success become the criteria for objectivity, and they can be reached using the right, rational method.

Many aspects of this theory have been criticised and modified, but the main distinction between objectivity and subjectivity is still to be found. We can briefly summarise some of the major criticisms to the idea of

objective knowledge. It has been argued that the criteria by which we consider one way of thinking (i.e. one culture, one language) better or more rational than others already depends on a subjective perspective. So, it would appear that all forms of knowledge are equally relative, and that any criteria developed in order to value them cannot be independent of this relativity. Even the very distinction between different cultures, or the idea that cultures depend on a historical development which produces a particular social context, are again a product of our own tradition, and only within such particular tradition is it possible to defend the universalisation of these beliefs. So the first criticism draws our attention to the diversity and relativity of cultural modes of knowledge, including among them the western scientific tradition. It questions the existence of a universal rationality able to evaluate alternative models of the world as better or worse.

Another line of criticism attacks the very idea that a mental representation is something like a picture of the world as seen by a central subject. This brings out another dimension of the distinction between subject and object, that which constitutes the modern theory of knowledge. The cartesian self-conscious subject has widely criticised, but so also have the inductive theories which believe in a "naked eye" and a process of observation and classification as the major constituents of an objective knowledge able to defeat all sorts of prejudices. The development of these questions around the subject is too complex to be contemplated here, but it has brought us to a philosophical investigation which questions the whole process of knowledge and the status of reason and the human mind in it. The different answers to this question constitute alternative

theories of language and reality in which the concepts of subject and object appear as inextricably intermingled, or otherwise are wholly rejected.

Not only have the process of knowledge and the status of the subject -the creature which has mental representations- been doubted, but also the very concept of reality. The validity and universality of the natural world creates big problems. The distinction between an object and a subject has usually implied both a subjective epistemology and a naturalistic ontology. It is through the exploration of the difficulties of relating one to the other that both elements have required revision. Even the idea of a mechanical world is being questioned by those who defend undeterministic, or at least dynamic, models of explanation. The idea of causality falls together with the idea of the mechanical world. It is discussed whether there is such a thing called nature which can be considered real. It is no longer a problem of what man is, how we relate mind and body, how we ensure that our models of the world are right or how we deal with the abyss between how things are and how they appear to be. Attention is now focused again on the very basic activity of knowing and the very question of reality.

The idea of objectivity has usually been applied to natural sciences as an ideal which can be reached or, at least, approached. It would be said that natural sciences offer the truest account of reality (as identified with the natural world) because they follow a rational method which enables us to test the alternative theories with controlled experiments and to choose those that work better, providing us with a reliable model of the order of the world. In order to do the same, however, human sciences would need to solve at least two problems: first, the difficulty of keeping a distance from

the present ideological interests which affect the process of investigation, interfering with the desired objectivity; second, the difficulty of finding laws relating to human cultural behaviour and historical development while handling the ticklish question of free will. If human agency is going to be explained by "scientific" and "objective" models which include causes and general laws, then a shadow of determinism threatens to ruin most of the ethical values of Western culture. The other alternative, to leave men as free agents within a non-free mechanical world, using the argument that mental events escape physical laws, tends to open a gap between culture and nature (the subjective world and the objective one) so that the picture is broken. In that case, human sciences are no longer scientific and "true" as natural sciences are, and man and woman become a mystery in nature. On the other hand, it is evident that deterministic models in the human sciences are not successful enough to predict behaviour like those of the natural sciences do.

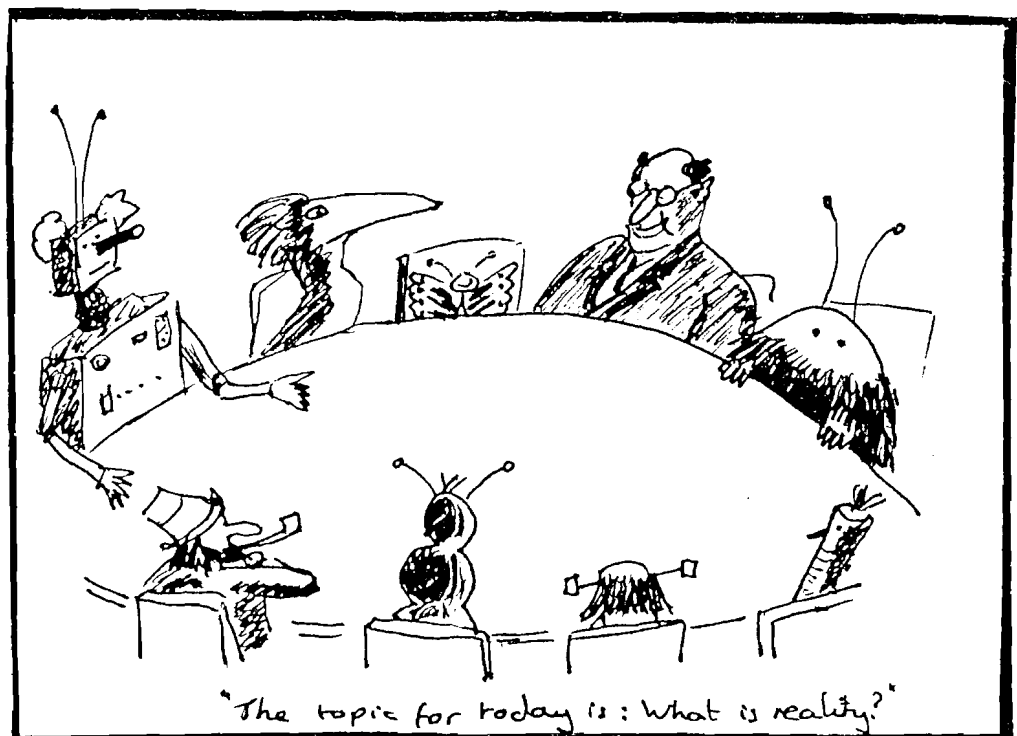
By now it is becoming clear that those models used by natural scientists are only relatively valid, and that they tend to evolve toward non-deterministic, dynamic theories (open systems) in order to represent more complex problems and answer less simple questions. It is also clear that natural sciences, just like the human sciences, are affected by the circumstances and subjectivity of the investigator. As for the problem of free will, it seems to me that human agency can be analysed and explained using models, as natural events are. However, we should know why we do this, what our purpose is and whether determinist theories are useful to reach it. Because if the questions are different, or the material more delicate, then a strategy other than copying methods, which have had limited success elsewhere, is

advisable.

Here the key is to recognise that all sciences and other human forms of knowledge work as a language which produces models of reality. These models are not supposed to be true but, rather, useful and interesting in a particular context. In fact, we can assume that reality always evades these models in one way or another. A model always simplifies, but the degree of simplification that we require varies according to our purposes. In the case of natural sciences we can work quite successfully with causal and deterministic models, because we can answer some simple questions with only a few main variables. And this can help us to build a strategy when dealing with such practical problems as eliminating a virus. We require a

lot more from human sciences because here we are hardly satisfied with simplified versions -so many things are involved that in order to reach a good theory we need to take account of every detail. It is not that natural laws exist, whilst human or social ones don't. Laws are models. The problem is simply that the questions we put to human history are more ambitious than those we direct at natural history; thus many more variables need to be considered. Perhaps the best solution lies in remembering that there are other possible languages, and those we cannot find in tradition it is possible to develop anew.

Joan Pau Rublés i Mirabet
King's



A HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO PHILOSOPHY

This Summer I spent a fair amount of time travelling. Being a sociable sort of chap, the many hours of hitching lifts provided ample opportunity to converse with lonely lorry drivers and company reps. This year, however, things were different. I was a "graduate"! Whether the imposing certificate on my wall proclaiming this academic milestone is to have any practical benefit in the job market has yet to be tested, but for a lone hitch-hiker it prompts a new dimension in cross examination with Joe Public. For three years I've been able to pass over the initial "You at college then?" with a brief affirmative and a little light chat about student life. This year I derived some pleasure from being able to say "No, I graduated last year". Given this premise the ensuing conversation now tends in a different direction.

"Oh, what subject?"

"Philosophy". Brief silence. Apparently awed.

"Where does that lead you then?" A good question. Where exactly has a degree in philosophy led me? For the present it has led me into the ranks of the unemployed, although largely as a consequence of my own volition.

"Not many jobs in that then, are there?" asserts Joe Public. I witter on briefly about the possibilities of further academic research or a career in broadcast production, referring to the politics side of my degree. Philosophy is briefly marginalised to an academic skeleton in the cupboard of my education: a word to be whispered or spoken quickly in the hope that it won't be picked up.

This may sound as if I derived no benefit from a philosophy degree, as if it is something I regret. Not a bit of it. "The best thing I ever did. Ought to be compulsory for every student." I tell the already converted with genuine conviction. Philosophy

lecturers and graduates nod in agreement. The task, then, is to articulate this conviction. What is to be gained from a degree in philosophy? If I can't come up with a convincing answer then Joe Public will be full behind the ranks of government ministers ready to axe all such "irrelevant arts subjects", and with some justification.

"Benefit number one", I assert tentatively, "you get to read some great books. Everything from those Greek guys right through the Renaissance to modern existentialism "

"Why didn't you do English at university, then?" asks Joe Public. We overtake a truck labouring up a hill. Love, fifteen. Philosophy graduate to serve.

"Benefit number two", more confident this time. "Philosophy above all subjects ought to enable me to clarify and articulate my conviction in its usefulness and in anything else for that matter. If the structured study of language games, syntax and semantics can't put you one up on most graduates, then what can? Greater skills in oratory, argument, interview technique, etcetera." Fifteen all.

"Wouldn't you have done better to do linguistics or law or something?" asks Joe Public, shifting the company car into overdrive. Fifteen, thirty.

"Benefit number three. Studying philosophy enables you to get a better grasp of the world around you." Thirty all. No problem.

"My nephew did physics at university," remarks Joe Public, into the fast lane, foot firmly on the floor. "If you want to find out about the real world why didn't you do physics?" Thirty, forty. Some skillful play required by philosophy graduate.

"What's all this 'relevance to the real world'?" Even a cursory glance at the first year reading list puts the philosophy student ahead in

questioning the very concept. Surely a greater understanding of this weighty problem is a plus for philosophy. Deuce.

"What does it matter?" asks Joe Public, already pre-empting third year study on the later Wittgenstein, levels of reality and practical ethics. "If we all went round thinking that nothing would get done, I mean, I've still got to drive this lorry". Advantage Joe Public. Philosophy graduate serving to stay in the match.

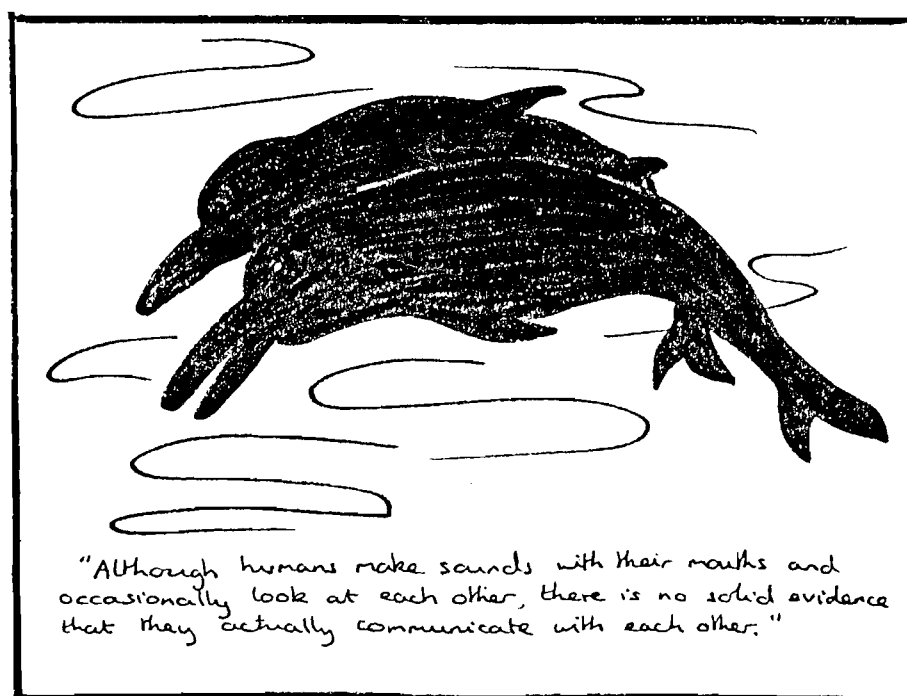
I ponder the score, consult my pocket-size copy of the "Philosophical Investigations" and consider asking why we're playing this game in the first place. Fearing loss by default, I decide to carry on within the existing language game.

"If you do philosophy as part of your degree you can learn alot about problem solving in general. You get a fair idea of useful approaches and methodologies which enables you to tackle a variety of situations. Most jobs for arts graduates give you all the specialist training you need anyway. So a philosophy graduate

probably has a broader ability to tackle new problems and handle apparently abstract concepts." We rally this one across the net for a few minutes. Line judge considers briefly then calls "in". Joe Public considers an appeal to the referee but reluctantly concedes the point. Deuce.

Philosophy graduate now ponders strategy for the closing stages of the game. Two options. Firstly, defensive play: allow Joe Public a few smashes at academic philosophy, stand well square and counter with considered backhand strokes. Alternatively, engage in advanced technical play utilising extensive reference to weighty philosophical tracts. Delay in either case proves disastrous. Leicester Forest services, Joe Public heading off the M1. Rain stops play. Philosophy graduate devises equitable solution, gives Joe Public an enrolment form for the Open University, Department of Philosophy, and retires to ponder the outcome over a cup of coffee.

Mark Priestly



LIFE AS LITERATURE

Both that Nietzsche was an existential philosopher and that he took the aesthetic as fundamental to his existentialism is captured in the title of this book. Nehamas has taken the model of literature and literary practice to underlie the major points of the whole of Nietzsche's thought and, in particular, the response that Nietzsche struggled to put forward in the face of nihilism.

Nihilism is the view that nothing is worth anything: it is the denial of all value. It is a view to which Nietzsche takes us frighteningly close in his undermining of religious, moral and romantic values. However, there remains the aesthetic point of view and, it seems, such value does not make the metaphysical demands on which the others foundered.

Our conceptualizations of the world are highly anthropocentric: features we take to be unproblematically objective are actually the features a man-made schema historically cemented, by which we divide up what is actually a chaotic universe. Thus we give up our essential freedom to interpret the world in a myriad of conceptual schemes. This is not to say such freedom, even if recognized, is easily exercised: one knows how difficult it is to forget "the film of the book" when one comes subsequently to read "the book", so it is obviously a monumental task to break out of an inherited way of seeing the world.

Here then is the basis of the literary analogy: the world is a text and interpretations of that text are embodied in a way of life. But if only we could attain sufficient power to see that text in radically new ways, in effect, to create new texts, then we could live our lives as literary characters in artworks of our own making - life as literature.

This is hardly a philosophy to be either explained or discarded in three

short paragraphs, but for one whose point is its personal applicability, there are questions whose asking a filling in of details would only postpone.

Do we actually have the freedom that Nietzsche requires? Pace certain tendencies of modern literary criticism, surely the world-text is far from featureless, even for the most extreme anthropocentrics. Doesn't the fact that the world appears highly individuated point to some intrinsic individuation, even if it's not where we thought it was. How could even the appearance of features come from a totally featureless world?

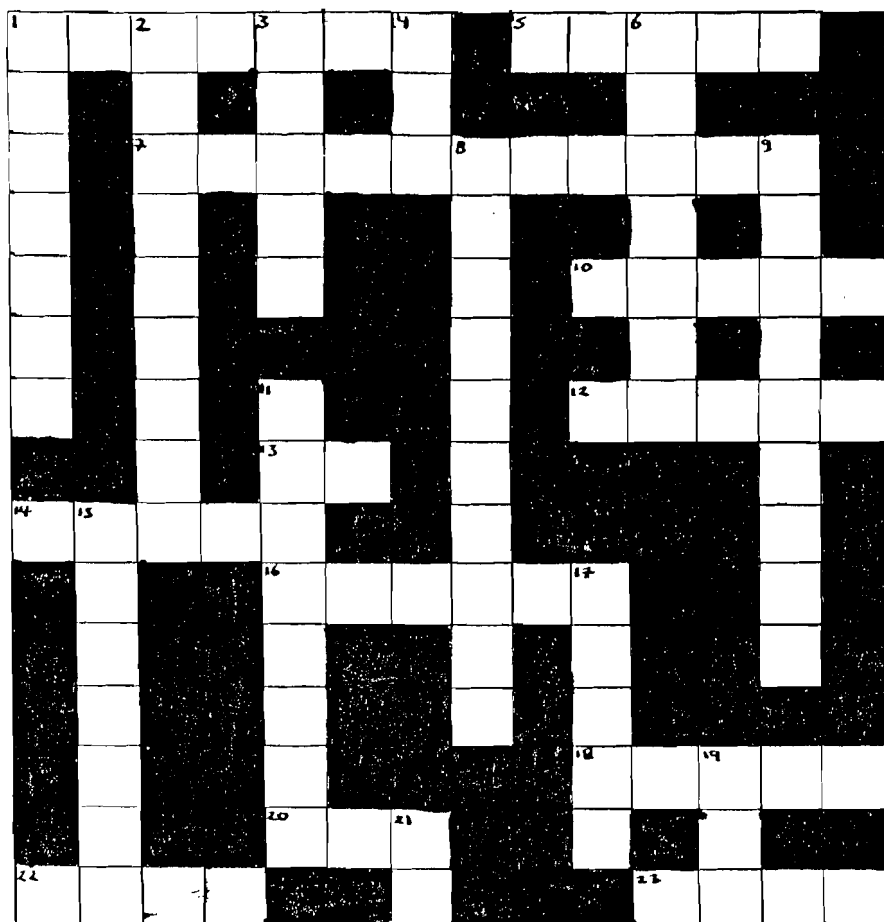
One of Nietzsche's famous characteristics was his love of power: he even suggested a definition of beauty in terms of it. How can a world made beautiful by aestheticism avoid the abuse of power (for example manifested in the at least alluring figure of Don Giovanni)?

Thirdly, to create a work of art out of ourselves and our world requires us to be artists. Yet one of aesthetics basic convictions is that there can't be rules for producing art (as there are recipes for baking cakes). How do we do it?

Nietzsche's attempts to answer these questions deserve lifetimes of re-reading. Nehamas has produced a sophisticated overview that would be difficult to surpass in 200 pages. But it must be urged that the partiality of his interpretation skips lightly over the hardest problems.

Simon Innes
Corpus Christi

IMPOSSIBLY DIFFICULT CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Semi-precious but existential (7)
5. Possible Logic in the Polish notation (5)
7. It's fairly tenuous but it's all there is (7,4)
10. A sceptical argument (5)
12. Moebius had one - let's hope it doesn't catch on (5)
13. Is it philosophy? (2)
14. Philosophy was born from it (5)
16. Opposite of 8 Down (6)
18. Sets don't have it (5)
20. If it is most real, then it is not (3)
22. Comes in duplicate to perplex (4)
23. Every good critic should have a few - says Eliot (4)

DOWN

1. The Absolute violinist (7)
2. A windowless monad (9)
3. Aristotle's form of life (5)
4. et non (3)
6. Encyclopaedic philosopher with a literary bent (7)
8. Opposite of 16 Across (10)
9. A certain ambiguity in the concepts of reflection (9)
11. The universe is made up of them (8)
15. If synthetic, it is usually fairly universal (1,6)
17. Physics no longer talks of this as a separate entity (5)
21. Novel-type (2)

José Bermudez
King's

Floppymouse

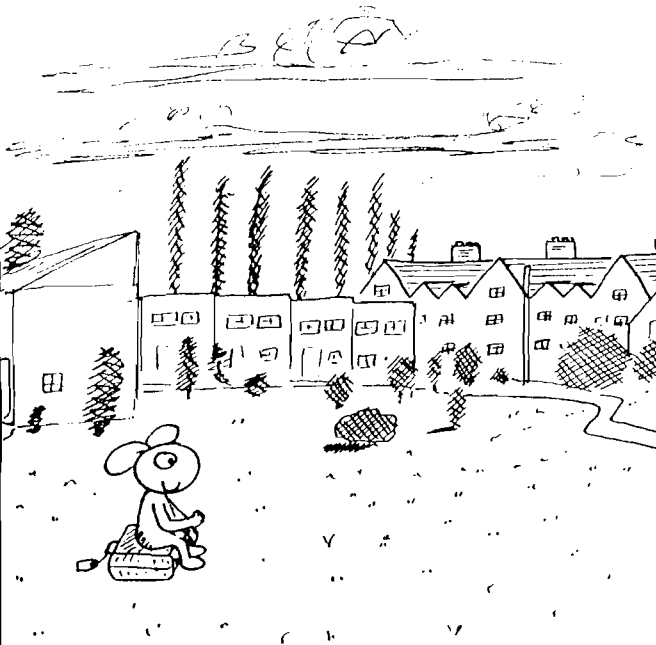
at Cambridge

I IS CALLED FLOPPYMOUSE
COZ I'VE GOT BIG FLOPPY EARS

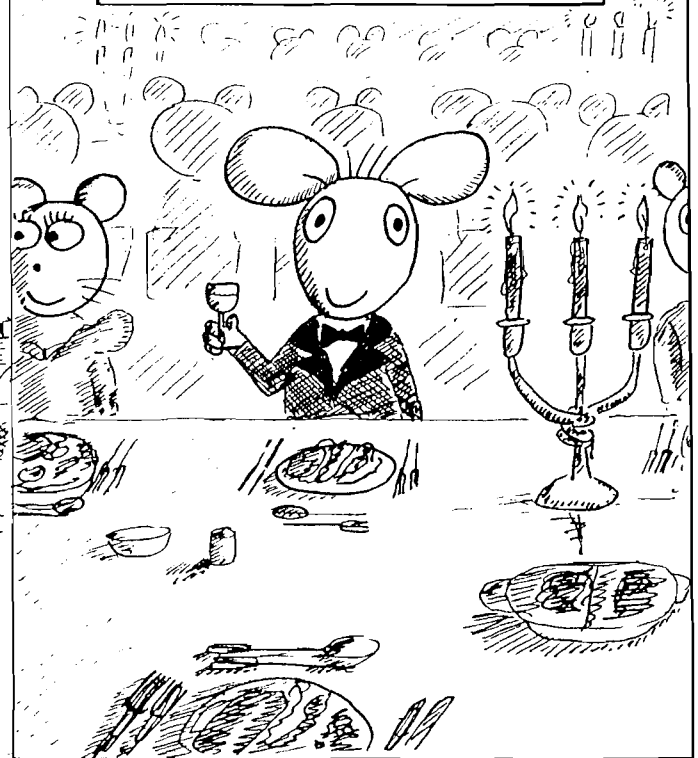


© STEPHEN REDBURN 1988

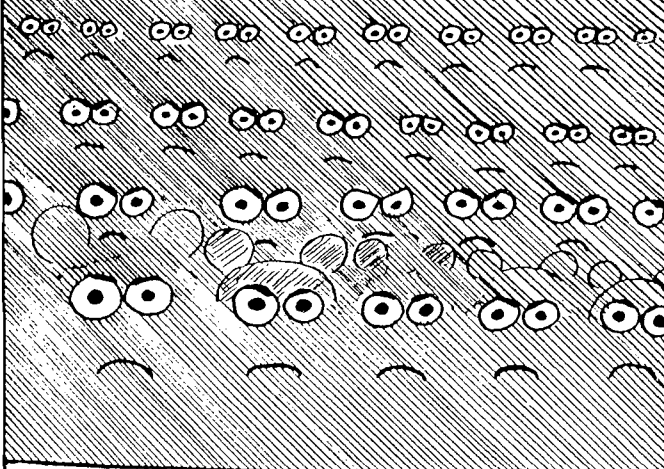
AFTER TEN YEARS IN THE SORDID WORLD
OF INDUSTRY, FLOPPYMOUSE ARRIVES AT
ST. EDMUND'S MOUSE TO BEGIN A NEW
LIFE IN ACADEME.



HE SOON FINDS THE CAMBRIDGE
WAY OF LIFE TO HIS TASTE.

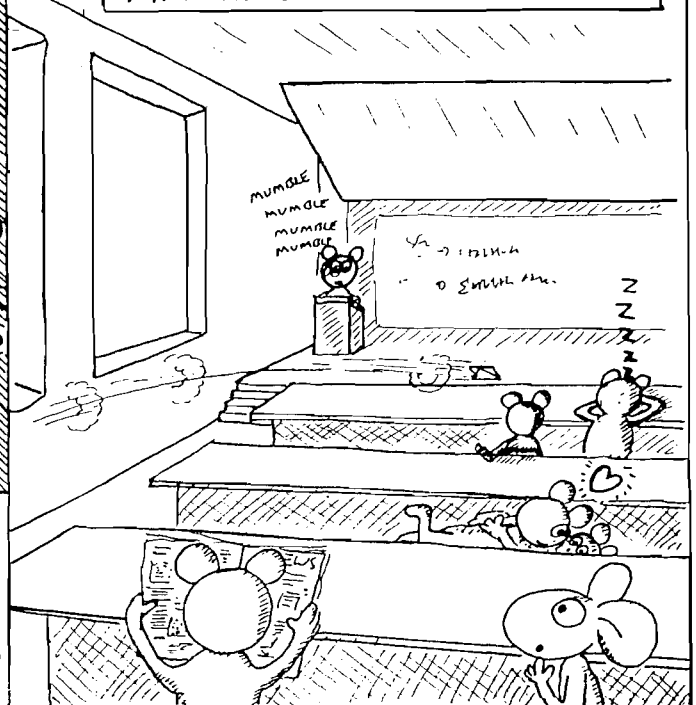


SOON THE LECTURES BEGIN.....
THIS IS WHAT THE LECTURER SEES



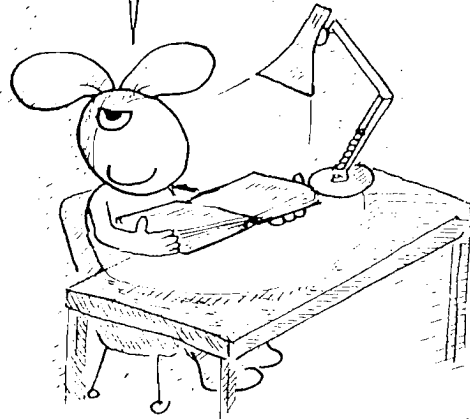
NOTE: DURING A 50 MINUTE LECTURE
ONE STUDENT IS PERMITTED TO SHOW
A FAINT FLICKER OF COMPREHENSION
FOR UPTO 1.5 SECONDS. (THIS WAS INCREASED
FROM 1.3 SECONDS BY
UNIVERSITY STATUTE IN 1873)

AFTER A BREAK OF A WEEK OR
SO (CAUSED BY THE ODD ESSAY CRISIS)
FLOPPY RETURNS TO LECTURES TO
FIND HIMSELF ALMOST ALONE.



FOOLISHLY, FLOPPY TRIES TO READ
RUSSELL'S "PRINCIPIA" BEFORE BED.

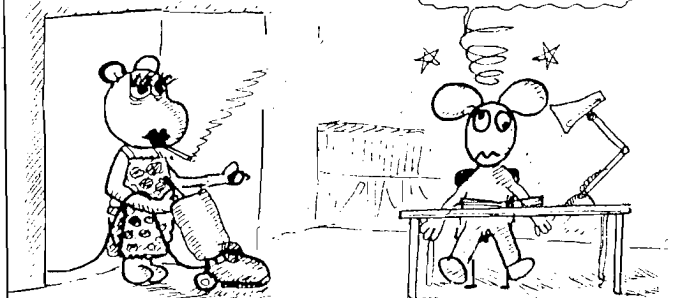
I'LL JUST SWOT UP ON
A FEW PROPOSITIONS
BEFORE COCOA.



NEXT DAY....

DO YER ROOM LUV?...
OH DEAR!

DAAAAAAA...



AND SO TO ADDENBROOKES...

GASP...IT WOZ THE SQUIGGLES



SO PLEASE, PLEASE, WHAT EVER YOU DO,
DON'T TRY TO READ ANY LOGIC BOOKS
LATE AT NIGHT.

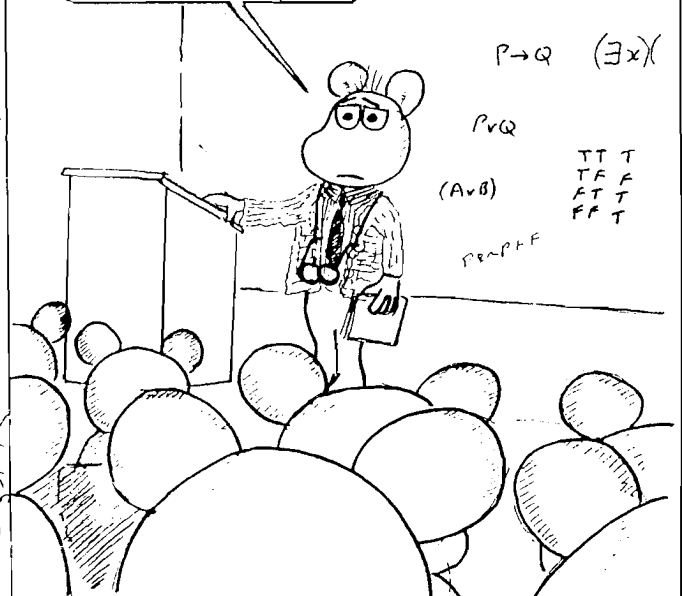
$P \rightarrow Q$ $(\exists x)$

$P \vee Q$

$(A \vee B)$

T	T
T	F
F	T
F	F

$P \rightarrow Q$



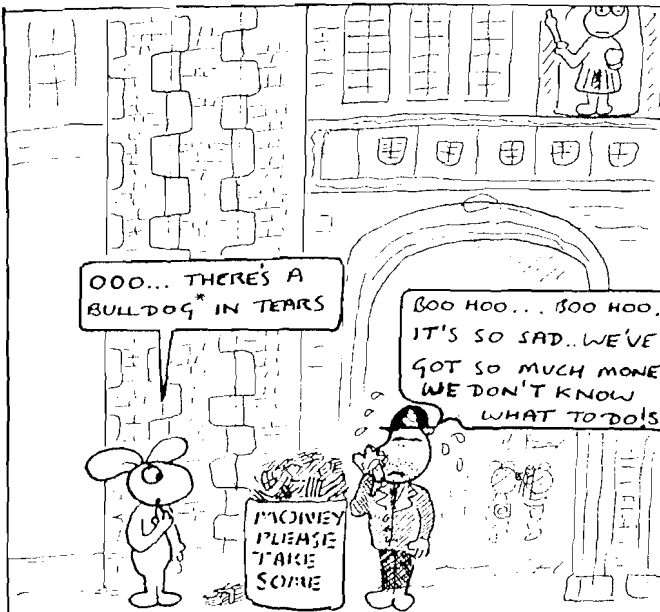
I HEAR SOME GUY AT CAMBRIDGE FREAKED
OUT WHEN HE READ SOME CRAZY BOOK
BY A COUPLE OF KOOKS CALLED ALFRED
NORTH WHITEHEAD AND BERTRAND
RUSSELL OF COURSE I DON'T KNOW
WHAT ITS ABOUT.. WHO CARES...



I'VE BOUGHT THE FILM RIGHTS AND AN
OPTION FOR A T.V. SPIN OFF... WE'LL SHOOT
IT IN TECHNICOLOR, SCOPE AND....
I'LL GET THE L.S.O. TO PLAY THE MUSIC...
AND MISS LULUPOP, MY NEW..ER..DISCOVERY,
WILL PLAY THE LEAD.

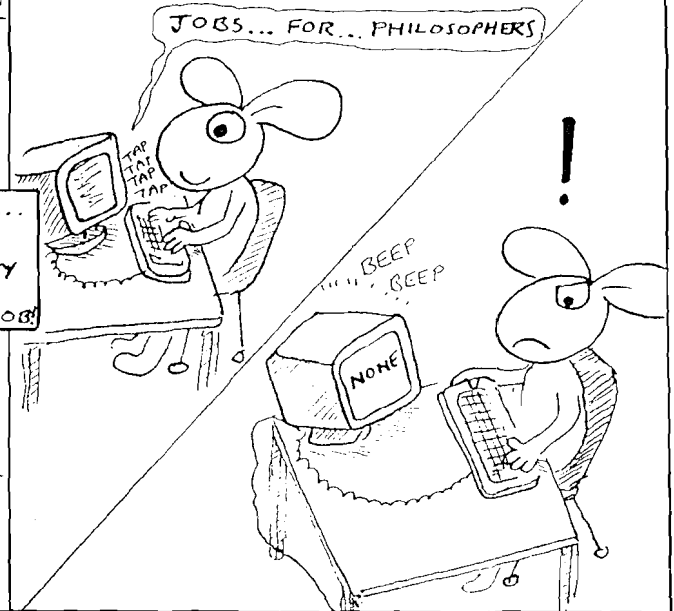
GEE HONEY, DO I GET
TO WEAR A SWIM-SUIT
IN THIS MOVIE?





* A TERM MORE COMMON AT THE OTHER UNIVERSITY.

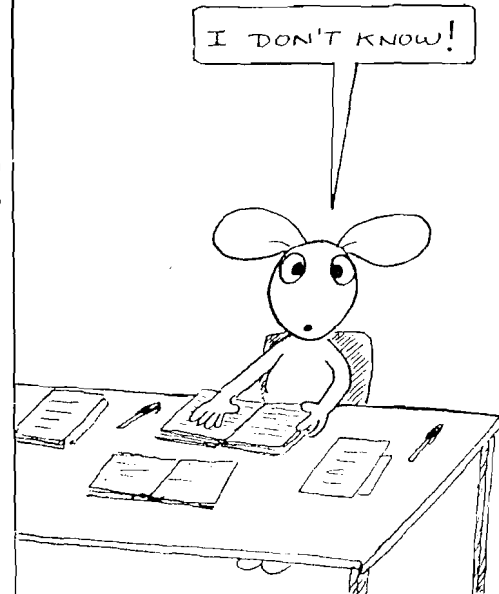
AT THE CAREERS CENTRE



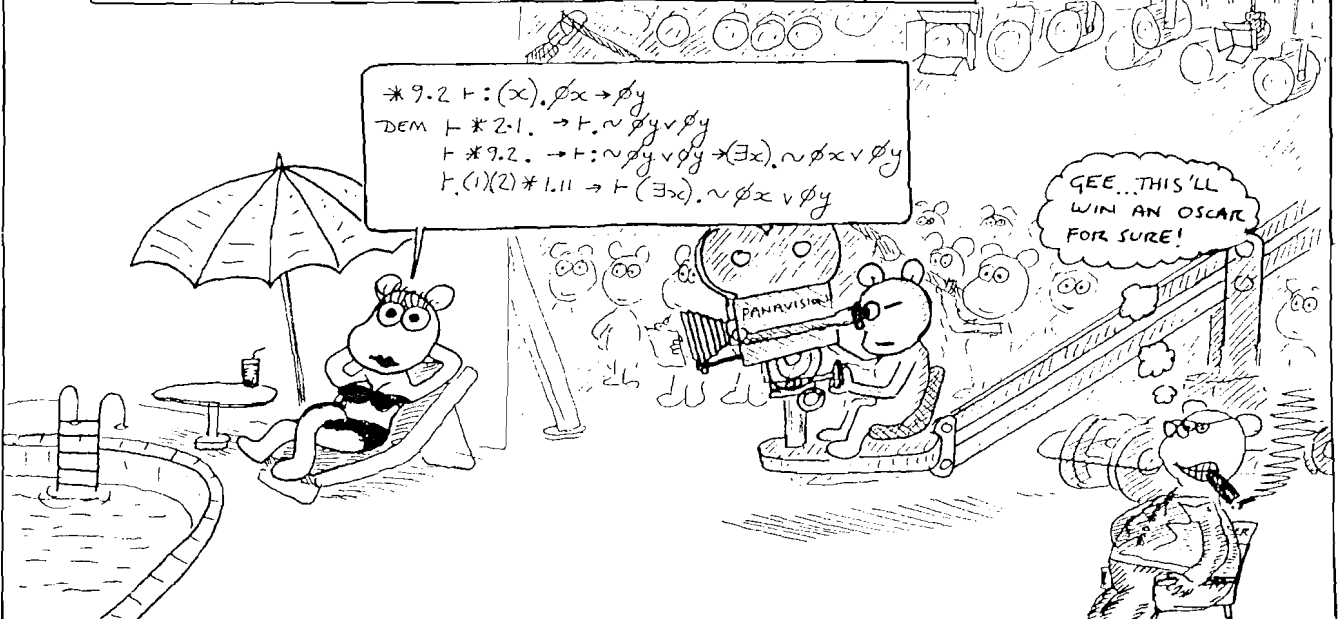
DO I KNOW WHAT I KNOW?
IF I ASK MYSELF "DO I KNOW", DO I KNOW ITS ME WOT'S ASKING? IF I DO, DO I KNOW I KNOW? IN WHAT SENSE DO I MEAN "KNOW"? IF I ASK THE SAME QUESTION NEXT TUESDAY WILL IT BE THE SAME QUESTION? WILL IT BE THE SAME ANSWER? WILL IT STILL BE ME? DA.....



AT LAST THE TRUTH DAWNS...



MEANWHILE, IN HOLLYWOOD, MISS LULUPOP BEGINS HER BIG SCENE.



This must be the end!