

The Tyrannic Character of Concepts : Some problems in philosophical constructions

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Abstract

The main issue to be dealt within this paper can be formulated in a question form, i. e., what does it mean to adopt a theory ?

And to seek an apposite answer to it we find it necessary to tackle it in terms of commitments that result from theory adaption.

The paper will try to bring to our attention the theory commitment relationship and the danger issuing therefrom if theory appropriation takes place in the absence of self-reflection.

The danger just mentioned is referred to in our paper as « tyranny » which will be explained in due course. In medical terms, theory adoption can have side effects that can be treated only at the level of self-critical activity. The paper will substantiate this claim through conceptual analysis aided by historical illustrations.

The analysis contained in the following pages deals with a peculiar phenomenon usually ignored by philosophers or those who theorize in general. But to be sure the onus is not on them, especially when we realize that the topic we are going to deal with is of such a nature that it could not lie within the scope of any given theory as long as it deals with something other than itself.

In order to spare our efforts and avoid generalities let us begin with some assumptions for the sake of providing the space necessary for our reflections. As an initial reflection, we give the following characteristics of a theory in terms so general in order to have the widest application possible. Given these preliminaries we may say that a theory is a body of logically interrelated propositions. But the interrelatedness or interconnectedness is merely a logical requirement ; thus in addition, a theory has to have a subject matter.

Besides what has been mentioned, the theory must have a certain categorical structure peculiar to it as this is manifest by the appropriated set of concepts. The latter are governed by rules provided by the internal logic of a given theory. The linguistic similarity of two concepts should not lead to their assimilation for each one of them is governed by different procedures whereby it is designated for something quite different from its counterpart. Thus the sameness of linguistic terms occurring in different theories is quite accidental, and examples from the history of philosophy or science are not hard to come by.

Now the rules provided by what is loosely called the internal logic determine the use, the application and meaning of the concepts in question. They also determine the concept formation and this is because not every concept is fit for the logical structure of given theory. It looks as though we choose the relevant concepts, but actually the word «choose» is only metaphorical, and becomes totally misleading if understood in psychological terms. In other words, once we accept a certain theoretical framework we find ourselves obliged to pick up this or that concept in particular. The obligation in question is, again, not a matter of psychology but a matter of logic.

At this point the reader may run out of patience and ask : «but what does this have to do with «tyranny » ? As will be clear, these preliminaries are in order. All we have to do is investigate the meaning and consequences of espousing some theory. To begin with, there is no particular reason why one adopts this or that theory per se. The moment of preferring one theory to another might be irrational in the sense that there is no valid reason of choosing except what the theory itself provides. For if the reason behind the acceptance of a theory is provided by it, then the whole process of deciding takes place within the theory itself, and in this case the justification of one's option can at best be fallacious as it begs the question. Hence the whole issue could be finally reduced to become a matter of psychology in which case it is not philosophically interesting. If, however, the ground of our choice lies outside the theory, then we seem to position ourselves in a different theoretical framework. But here we are not better off as long as we can still impugn the validity of such a frame, and once this is done the same endless process seems to issue, thereby leading to the pointlessness and fruitlessness of our efforts.

Now granted that all this has taken place, i. e., a theory of some kind has been adopted, we can legitimately ask what it means. The first thing to notice is once this happens there issues a series of commitments that can be characterized as ontological, epistemological, ethical, etc. The series is not clear cut and remains open as long as there are different kinds of theories which require different commitments. But from a formal point of view all theories have this in common, namely they all commit us in one way or another. However, what is to be noted here is that the commitments issued from a given theory are interconnected, and our attempt to separate them is mainly pedagogical.

All commitments are worthy of study, but as this is not the proper place to deal with all, few of them will suffice to show how tyranny comes in. If we take, for instance, conceptual commitment, we find that it determines the holder of a theory to use certain concepts provided by it if he is to make sense of what he is doing. He feels compelled to abide by the rules governing them, and it is not difficult to illustrate this. Someone who thinks within the Aristotelian framework cannot avoid using terms such as «substance», «accident», «genus», «species», «potentiality», «actuality.» Take any philosophical or scientific theory for that matter and you will find the same pattern at work.

There is, of course, a hermeneutic circle here, i. e., in order to make sense one has to make use of the concepts made available by the theory, but at the same time these concepts have meaning only within the theory itself.

The fact that these concepts are indispensable means that they exercise power on their users. One cannot dispense with them without thereby rejecting their framework which simply means the abandonment of the theory itself. Now once the obligatory character is established, we are in a position to infer that they also condition the manner of looking at things, or whatever we think it is worthy of consideration. In this way they really determine our Weltanschauung. If this is the case, then the so-called objectivity or neutrality is totally groundless, especially if naively based on vulgar realism which assumes a radical diremption between concept and object.

Once we reach this point of analysis, concept-object relation, we can make the move to the ontological commitment. As we know, ontology concerns itself with the investigation of the kind of things there are, or what can be metaphorically described as the furniture of the world. Thus it is proper to ask how does a theory commit one ontologically? If we take the assertion of the previous paragraph as established, then we can see that it is the concepts with their theoretical arrangements that tell us what kind of objects we must appropriate in order to provide the ontological bases for our theory.

The acceptance of a certain ontological framework is at the same time a declaration that this framework is set up as a standard whereby a given set of objects has the right to existence or does not have it. In so doing, it lays out the conditions for existential eligibility. One implication of this is that even scientific theories are disguised forms of ontology, for to tell what kind of objects to be investigated is at the same time to announce what sorts of objects there are. Hence doing science cannot help avoiding some form of ontology. Here, again, the ontological framework adopted determines one to accept what must be accepted and reject what has to be rejected.

From an ontological point of view, a given theory seems to tell us what exists only, but what about the entities that do not exist, i. e., the entities that are excluded from the kind of ontology declared by a certain theory? Actually this question is simply ignored by anyone who is exclusively committed to a particular ontology. If the question is put to him, he might at best remain silent since he would decide upon the issue from within; probably because for him this is not a question in the first place. The reason is not far to seek, i. e., what counts as a question in this respect is decided within the accepted ontological framework. The term question should be qualified to refer to the philosophically genuine question, and hence the linguistic trappings are of secondary importance.

It turns out that the issue of non-existing entities is a matter of whether a given question is genuine or not, and this depends on the frame of reference of a given theory. As an illustration of this, we may take some metaphysical questions and see how they are treated by a Carnap or an Ayer. If, for instance, the question «is substance simple or complex?» is put to them, it will be immediately rejected off hand on the ground that it is not a «genuine» question.

Here, as already mentioned, the genuineness of a problem is decided from within. Someone like Carnap would refuse to consider the simplicity or complexity of substances on both conceptual and ontological bases. The term substance does not form part of his conceptual arrangement, nor is his world furnished with entities among which are substances.

If the above analysis makes sense with the admission that there had been and still are different conceptual schemes and ontologies, the unavoidable conclusion which seems to issue therefrom is that of ontological relativity. That is to say, such and such objects exist only within a certain ontological framework with the consequence that their existence is relative to it. This is reasonable enough, but is it acceptable ? We usually tend to have a negative attitude toward what is relative ; and when something is judged to be so and then subjected to the norms of objectivity, at least in the naive sense of the term, it may not pass muster. By «naive objectivity». I mean the kind of objectivity associated with what is commonly called naive realism.

This relativity, moreover, seems to stand as a stumbling stone in the way of communicative activity in the philosophical realm. If these are really the consequences of the aforementioned reflections, then the negative attitude toward relativities is understandable.

But although this is not the right place to deal with it, we find it appropriate to say something about it for two reasons.

The first is that because it has bearings on our subject ; and the second, there is a need for a clarification of a prejudiced naivete in this regard. By this I mean the view that ascribes ontological or epistemological claims to the private person making them, in which case they turn out to be mind dependent. But what we should understand by relativity is something more sophisticated than this. Accordingly, we ought not say that an object depends for its existence or knowledge on private individuals' states of mind, but on some conceptual scheme which recognizes its ontological status and epistemological value. This is because the claims of conceptual arrangements or theoretical frameworks are quite different from the fluctuating claims made by private individuals ; for the former can take a universal form and be judged by standards independent of private states of mind. This sense of relativism can be reasonably argued for, and for this purpose one may appeal to philosophical pluralism for support. We should now turn to the epistemological side of our reflections.

What we have referred to as epistemological commitment should not be disputed since it is consequential upon some presupposed ontology. This is not new for it has been historically in practice, i. e., it has always been the case that what is known is what is there. It seems that ontology prescribes for epistemology since the latter cannot perform its function until some kind of object is made available, and only then does it make its way to become a member of the epistemological field.

It also seems that there is a sense of priority on the ontological side, but this priority should be qualified as ontological only ; in actuality these two investigations are so intricate and interconnected that we cannot undertake one without making use, at least implicitly, of the other. Take, e. g., an ontologist who wants to find out what kind of things there are or seeks to investigate the general features anything has to acquire if it is to qualify as an object having an existential status. How can he do this without, at the same time, committing himself epistemologically ? Is it possible to assert that only this kind of objects exist without, in the meantime, making an epistemological shift by recognizing them ? The two investigations are at some point concurrent, and I do not see how this can be practically avoided. This does not, however, mean that the two areas cannot be conceptually differentiated.

Once we concede that one is epistemologically committed, it becomes apparent that only these objects are knowable. The features or the conditions that have to be fulfilled for anything to be are already laid down by the ontological enquiry. In epistemology these conditions will help to constitute what might be called the epistemological field within which a certain entity acquires the status of objecthood. This field sets a limit to what can be known as long as ontology sets a limit to what can exist.

What can we learn from this ? We learn what we have already said with regard to the aforementioned commitments, although we are here trying to be more specific. As an illustration of this, we need just read any philosopher who has a theory of knowledge ; we should not be surprised to find that his theory contains a set of conditions, implicit or explicit, operating as the determinants of the knowability of objects, thereby delineating the epistemological field.

When we use the term field, we seem to indicate that such a thing exists, but this is manifest by the very internal logic of the theory in question. Thus when a certain conceptual shema is set up, an area of investigation is thereby delineated in order to signify the legitimacy of what to do and how to do it, and the limits thereof.

The field limitation is necessitated by the internal structure of the theory, not imposed from without. The external factor, the presence of other philosophies for instance, might have some influence in this regard since no philosophy can rise in total isolation from others.

If the preceding analysis makes sense at all, then our thesis becomes apparent and hopefully plausible. To state it in clear statements, we should say that doing philosophy or theorizing in general involves the use of concepts. Once the theoretical framework is fixed the theoretician is caught in it, and as far as the intellectual activity is concerned, he cannot help dispense with the concepts provided by it, nor with the consequences (i. e., the commitments alluded to earlier) issued therefrom.

As has been mentioned earlier, the acceptance of a theory depends on non-psychological factors. Yet, regardless of the validity and soundness of the reasons for espousing it, there might emerge an attachment, in the psychological sense of the term, to the conceptual arrangement adhered to since man is not a purely logical being. By establishing this kind of relationship we thereby put our trust and faith in the adopted theory. The allusion to the psychological side is in order for it strengthens the tyrannic character of theories.

The concepts necessary for theory building are not empty forms, but, as we have seen, vehicles for ontologizing, epistemologizing, moralizing, etc... They exercise power on our intellectual activity and practical action. Their power is so strong that we become submissive to them. It is this power which is the source of tyranny, especially when unquestionably ceded to the adopted theory, and in this regard one can simply imagine the scope of such a power in theories related to socio-political spheres.

In view of these characteristics the concepts acquire the status of constant presence, and if we remain unconditionally attached to them, we can only produce a coercive philosophy with the consequence of not seeing how things could be otherwise. One cannot deny that concepts are indispensable, and without them nothing can be done. It is absolutely out of question to imagine what the situation would be like had we not had them ; yet holding to them blindly runs the risk of becoming dogmatic in our attitude toward others' point of view, and in this case rational discourse would be impeded. Hence the suggestion implied by these remarks is that we should always be alerted to the side-effects of conceptual schemes.

The emotional side usually escapes our attention, probably because it is thought to be either innocuous or irrelevant. It is certainly irrelevant to the validity of the theory acceptance which is a matter of logic regardless of the subject-matter of the theory in question. The side effect mentioned above is more conspicuous in the case of socio-political theories for these do not take place in vacuum ; and in view of their interest orientation they cannot, therefore, be free of all ideological trappings. Now that one has to be aware of the emotional side associated with concepts can be readily granted by theoreticians, but the issue we have been attempting to reveal is not confined to this.

What we intend to bring to the fore is that the blind adherence to a particular theory can hinder one from seeing the shortcomings of his own theory, let alone others' point of view which will be presented in a distorted form at best. Here, then, lies a double devaluation which is the natural outcome of such an unreflective attitude.

In view of what has been said it becomes legitimate to ask how this takes place: To begin with, we cannot trace the origin of how this situation came about for it has something to do with psychology, but we may gain insight if we inquire into what makes it remain without warrant. The first thing that comes to mind is the unreflective character of theories , or, to use Hegelian terminology, the lack of self-consciousness on the part of the theoretician adopting this or that theory. This attitude is probably based on our unquestionable trust in our theory, a trust that can be, at some point, totally irrational. This might be due to the unwarranted validity and explanatory power ceded to a theory which might not in fact have.

The self-consciousness mentioned in this context is supposed to be critical. It is only through self-criticism that a theory is kept in check. By subjecting our own conceptual frameworks to scrutiny we become aware of any shortcoming they might have, and obviously this requires a constant revision.

The manner of undertaking this self-critical activity depends on the kind of theorizing we are engaged in for every field of human knowledge requires the type of criticism adequate to it.

Since our concern is with philosophy, we should not extend the enquiry to non-philosophical fields. If there is a similarity of some theoretical problems, this should not distract our attention and dispers our efforts. It is natural that some features are common to all theory constructions and so are the ways of treating them, but this is not the place to deal with it at any length.

Philosophers, unlike scientists, do not have laboratories where they kept their conceptual arrangements in check. They, instead, have language as a field of pursuing their inquiries. Their conceptual arrangements are formulated in language, their issues are conceived and tackled therein ; yet though the process of revising their theories requires them to take a step beyond the adopted position, such process still takes place within language but on a different level. The revising process in philosophy necessitates a subjection of its own categories to examination. In thus being immanently critical, philosophy frees itself from unnecessary prejudices. When we talk of theory construction in philosophy, we obviously give the impression that there is such a thing in this domain. We are, however, aware of the objections raised by some philosophers, namely that philosophy cannot, properly speaking, have theory on the ground that it does not produce propositions or arguments functioning as proofs. One need just read F. Waismann's "How I See Philosophy " for an elaboration of this negative judgement⁽¹⁾. For whom we use the term "theory" in a definite way, we are expected to be consistent in using it regardless of the domain of our inquiry ; did we not assume the term "theory" to be a body of logically interrelated propositions ? And knowing that logic textbooks teach that a proposition has to have a truth value seems to put us in a difficult position. Even a positivist like Ayer found himself in a perplexed situation when, after drawing the line between what is meaningful and what is meaningless, he came to deal with philosophical propositions. Since the latter are neither formal nor informative, he said they are linguistic⁽²⁾.

At any rate, this is not the right place to deal at any length, with the question whether philosophy can have the right to "theory", thereby constituting an autonomous domain of epistemic claims. Instead, we should now turn to recent history and take some examples of how certain practices and conceptions of philosophy led some philosophers to commit themselves to some of the senses of commitment we have propounded. For this purpose I take two well-known figures in the analytic tradition, R. Carnap and B. Russell.

(1) F. Waismann, " How I See Philosophy ", in A. J. Ayer, ed. **Logical Positivism** (N. Y. : The Free Press, 1959), pp. 345 - 380.

(2) This might be an unfair description for Ayer seems to imply that philosophical propositions are formal, and hence philosophy is made part of logic. " the propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character they express definitions, or the formal consequences of definitions. Accordingly, we say that philosophy is a department of logic " (**Language, Truth & Logic**, 2 nd : ed. N. Y. : Dover Publications, 1952), p. 57. By making philosophy part of logic, one may take it to imply that philosophical propositions are formal and hence tautologies, for Ayer holds that they are " analytic " (Ibid., p. 31).

Carnap's practice moves within the logical positivist movement whose members, though differing on some issues of methodological or conceptual nature, they all adhere to certain commonly shared theses. Among these is the assumption that philosophy does not have the right to knowledge, since all epistemic claims are ceded to science. Hence all knowledge is propositional.

Given this context, it is natural for Carnap to declare that philosophy does not enjoy "a domain of knowledge in its own right", but should be confined to the clarification, description and reduction of scientific concepts and statements to more fundamental ones ⁽³⁾.

This way of doing philosophy is known in this tradition as "logical analysis". The total adherence to this methodological practice made Carnap emphasize on the analysis of scientific language so much that he proposed to replace philosophy "by the logic of science" that is to say, by the logical analysis of the concepts and sentences of the sciences, for the logic of science is nothing other than the logical syntax of the language of science" ⁽⁴⁾. Carnap's attempt at such a transformation, not only shifts the traditional field of philosophy to a different one, but also eradicates its very metaphysical roots. Consequently, many claims of philosophy are thereby delimited.

The conception of philosophy described above did not originate with logical positivists but was taken over from, among others, Russell. The latter confines the activity of philosophy to the "different sciences and possible conflicts between them," ⁽⁵⁾ and its main task "is that of logical analysis followed by logical synthesis" ⁽⁶⁾. This does not, however, assimilate his views to theirs. He does not, for instance, reject metaphysics off hand, a position for which they castigated him. He referred to his position as "logical atomism" which is an offshoot of realism. Briefly, this can be shown in his attempt to construct an ideal language by means of symbolic logic, and in this language every term acquires its meaning in view of the object it corresponds to :

In a logically perfect language the words of a proposition would correspond one by one with the components of the corresponding fact... There will be one word and no more for every simple object, and every thing that is not simple will be expressed by a combination of words, by a combination derived... from the words for simple things that enter in, one word for each simple component ⁽⁷⁾

(3) R. CARNAP, "The Old and the New Logic," in A. J. Ayer ed. **Logical Positivism** (N. Y. : The Free Press, 1959), p. 133.

(4) Quoted in R. W. Ashby, "Logical Positivism," in O'Connor, ed. **A Critical History of Western Philosophy** (N. Y. : The free press, & London : collier- Macmillan, LTD, 1965), p. 507.

(5) B. Russell, "Logical Atomism," in **Logic and Knowledge**, ed. by Robert C. Marsh (N. Y. : Copricorn Books, 1971) p. 341.

(6) Ibid., p. 323.

(7) B. Russell, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism", in **Logic and Knowledge**, pp. 197-8.

In this and like passages in this period of Russell's development we see how a particular ontological commitment requires a particular theory of truth. As all realisms require a correspondence theory of truth Russell's is no exception, and in this he also differs from logical positivists. However, in both cases philosophy is affiliated with science and made in its service, just as it was made by the medievals in the service of theology.

As our exposition shows, both positions deny to philosophy its traditional ontological investigation and many of its distinctive problems and domains ⁽⁸⁾ Gone is the possibility of philosophic knowledge ⁽⁹⁾ on the ground that knowledge arises only where statements or propositions can be produced. It is needless to say that philosophers of this conviction equally apply "proposition" to logic and mathematics, but this does not affect the status of philosophy on this score. And even if one occasionally comes across the phrase "philosophical propositions", he cannot really be sure what to make out of it.

Any judgment about philosophy implies a point of view regarding its nature and function. Now as we have seen, certain conceptions of philosophy necessitated a division within the realm of knowledge; this has issued in, among other things, drawing a line between what can legitimately be stated and what cannot be so.

In this context science scores, whereas philosophy gets obscured. Nevertheless, the philosophers we have been dealing with do not disregard it as worthless. But what I want to consider in the following is an ambiguity no less intricate and complex than what has been shown thus far, i. e., the question of meaning about which I shall be brief. Now granted that a particular philosophy has been adopted and a certain language has thereby emerged. The question is what kind of language is it? That it is not scientific is clear from the above considerations; but if it is not worthless, how is it supposed to make sense for us?

If we consult positivistic literature, we encounter the once famous principle of verification as the sole criterion of meaning. According to this principle, at least in Ayer's formulation of it ⁽¹⁰⁾, statement is meaningful only when we know how to verify it. And as all scientific statements cannot actually be verified, the principle adjusts itself to make room for those statements that can, in principle, be verified. Added to this is Ayer's conviction of the impossibility of conclusive verifiability concerning universal statements.

(8) In lecture entitled "On scientific Method in Philosophy", published in **Mysticism and Logic**, Russell advises that if philosophy is to advance, its « ethical and religious motives ... ought now to be consciously thrust aside ... It is from science, rather than ethics and religion, that philosophy should draw its inspiration », (pp. 93-94). But did he consistently subscribe to this view?

(9) Historians get perplexed when they attempt to find out what exactly the status of philosophy is in Russell, thus at the end of the long essay "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" he tries to differentiate between philosophy and science in terms of knowledge. That is to say, in science we « more or less know », whereas in philosophy we « do not know », (p. 281). And then he immediately continues, « philosophy is that part of science which at present people choose to have opinions about, but which they have no knowledge about », (ibid). Immediately thereafter, he tries to show how philosophical problems cease to be once they become scientifically approachable. In view of this situation my treatment of philosophy in Russell is regrettably partial. It should be noted though that my aim is not to investigate the status of philosophy in Russell, but to make a point and illustrate it by one of his many, though apparently irreconcilable, opinions.

(10) See, e.g., his **Language, Truth and Logic**, ch. I.

Hence the weak version of this principle. On his part, Reichenbach, too, adheres to this principle when he holds that, "a sentence the truth of which cannot be determined from possible observations is meaningless"⁽¹¹⁾. Whether the criterion of meaningfulness is called "verification" or "confirmation," sense-data, direct or indirect, are necessary for epistemic claims to pass muster.

This sketchy presentation would serve our purpose. Now if the meaningful is equated with the verifiable, or, as in Russell, with the referentiality presupposed by the correspondence theory of truth, where does philosophical language stand?

If we are to adopt the verification principle, philosophic discourse will certainly not fulfill its requirements nor those of correspondence theory. For according to the latter, reference is supposed to have an extra-linguistic existence, a requirement that philosophy cannot meet. But if this exhausts the case, then philosophy will not be the only enquiry to be consoled. The attitudes toward philosophy we have spelled out are merely particular particular points of view, and subsequent development in philosophy shows their untenability. Further, the availability of philosophic pluralism implies the possibility of rethinking any conception of philosophy. If we take, for instance, the question of meaning which has always been of great importance to philosophy, we find that it is not exhausted by the views we have been expounding. So, the view that equates the meaningful with the verifiable or the referential has been questioned, and one need only consult the late Wittgenstein or the hermeneutic tradition in this regard. But as we are not interested in the pros and cons of such a view, we put it aside. Our interest mainly lies in whether it has bearings on our subject. In this respect and from the point of view of commitments, we can see it involves the kind of tyranny we have pointed out. That is to say, once the framework is set to comprise concepts such as "proposition," "verification," "meaning" etc, with their meanings fixed, we see how it leads one to designate the limits of meaningfulness and its conditions. In holding exclusively to this view other philosophical discourses become unworthy of pursuit, and one need just read Ayer who, rejecting metaphysics as a genuine philosophical discipline, favorably quotes the last words of Hume's *Enquiry* where the reader is advised to commit metaphysical treatises to the flame⁽¹²⁾.

This position is obviously coercive and intolerant. This brings us to another point which further helps a given philosophy to both critically investigate its claims and the limitation of its field and this is done, in part at least, with the help of other philosophies. We know that the existence of philosophical pluralism brings with it a dialog or a communication of ideas. Thus when a philosopher tackles an issue thought to be of a great importance, he usually has in mind the position of another philosopher. If we take, e. g., Kant's statement that though knowledge starts "with experience, it does not follow that it all arises" (B1) therefrom, we find that he has in mind the principle of empiricism first laid down by Locke.

(11) Hans Reichenbach, *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA. : University of California Press, 1951), p. 256.

(12) A.J. Ayer, *Language, Truth & Logic*, 2nd. ed. (N.Y. : Dover Publications, 1952), p. 54.

The latter starts by assuming" the mind to be ... white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas, "and puts a series of questions regarding the source of its content to which he answers "from experience : in that all our knowledge is founded, and from that it ultimately derives itself," and after this immediately he specifies "experience" to involve sensation and reflection ⁽¹³⁾ When putting forward this principle, Locke, in turn, has in mind the theory of innate ideas which he vigorously attacked. This is shown by the very assumption of tabula rasa and the organization of his book. So in both cases the two philosophers argue for a position and against a position, and examples of this sort are not hard to come by.

What this shows, and history testifies to this, is that the rise of a new philosophy or the taking of a different stand on a particular issue is stimulated by the existence of other philosophies. From these and other remarks, we may confidently infer that the co-existence of philosophies is not only healthy to philosophical practice, but a demand necessitated by the profession itself. The positive side of this, as can be gathered from the preceding pages, lies in two things. First, it helps a particular philosophy to rise to the reflective and self-critical level, and makes it constantly revise its concepts with the result of minimizing their possible abuse. Secondly, it curbs any attempt at exclusive absolutization which might be due to nothing else than a self-conceit flattered by some philosophers. All this can serve as a therapy against tyranny.

(13) John Locke, **An Essay Concerning Human Understanding**, Abridged with an introduction by A.D. Woozley, (Cleveland & New York : The World Publishing Company, 1964), bk. II, ch. I, sec. 2.