Background Logic, Critical Thinking, and Irrational Language Games

RICHARD PAUL   *Sonoma State University*

The character of an act is given by the circumstances in which it occurs.
- Oliver Wendell Holmes

When we allow that the individual projects a definition of the situation when he appears before others, we must also see that the others, however passive their role may seem to be, will themselves effectively project a definition of the situation by virtue of their response to the individual and by virtue of any lines of action they initiate to him. Ordinarily the definitions of the situation projected by the several different participants are sufficiently attuned to one another so that open contradiction will not occur. I do not mean that there will be the kind of consensus that arises when each individual present candidly expresses what he really feels and honestly agrees with the expressed feelings of the others present. This kind of harmony is an optimistic ideal and in any case not necessary for the smooth working of society.
- Erving Goffman,
*The Presentation of Self
in Everyday Life*

Everywhere and always the quota of generally accepted rules and opinions weighs, however lightly, on the individual spirit, and it is only in theory that the child of 12-14 can submit all rules to a critical examination.

Even the most rational of adults does not subject to his 'moral experience' more than an infinitesimal proportion of the rules that hedge him round. Anxious though he was to escape from his 'provisional morality,' Descartes retained it to the end of his days.
- Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child*

He that would seriously set upon the search for truth, ought, in the first place, to prepare his mind with a love of it. For he that loves it not will not take much pains to get it, nor be much concerned when he misses it. There is nobody, in the commonwealth of learning, who does not profess himself a lover of truth,—and there is not a rational creature, that would not take it amiss, to be thought otherwise of. And yet, for all this, one may truly say, there are very few lovers of truth, for truth sake, even amongst those who persuade themselves that they are so.
- John Locke, "Essay on Development of Doctrine," Chapter VII, Section 2.

Introduction

With Aristotle, Socrates' dialectical method was relegated to an inferior role and formal syllogistic reason designated as the exclusive organon of

knowledge. The foundation was thus laid for a long history to come of formal, non-substantive, algorithmic approaches to logic: logic abstracted from context, from the conceptual problems of everyday life and dispute, and from the practical problems that the would-be rational person faces in an irrational, multi-categorial, deeply disguised and obfuscated world. Philosophy itself, in contrast, maintained dialectic as its fundamental organon, giving testimony to the intuition that when one is engaged in multi-categorial argumentation, in disputes not only about the proper answer to a question but also about the nature of the question itself, when one is engaged in concept development as well as concept use, then dialectical, not formal or procedural or algorithmic skills, are primary and crucial. At the same time, the slow but steady emergence of more narrowly defined, technical disciplines replete with increasingly refined algorithmic approaches testified to the power of procedure, operationalism, and algorithm in settling narrowly defined one-dimensional questions. General, dialectical, cross-categorial, macrological philosophical skills seemed to many in need of giving way to micrological, narrow, formal procedures so that the kind of "progress" demonstrated by the physical sciences might be duplicated, at long last and finally, by philosophy itself. Philosophy, it was thought, was to become monocategorial and specialized.

Interestingly enough, this demand that philosophy "professionalize" itself, and thus abandon free-wheeling dialectic for disciplined procedure was and is being countered by an increasing recognition among educators and other intellectually concerned people that education based on atomized layers of compartmentalized monocategorial training produces not rational persons but irrational persons with powerful technical means to enforce irrational desires, means to maintain self-deceived irrational states while manipulating and being manipulated by advanced technical tools and mass media. There is a growing recognition that the rational person is not to be understood as one adept at following one-dimensionally established procedures. The crucial problems that we face, both individually and socially, in the push-and-shove complexities of everyday social-technological-psychological-economic-political-personal life are multicategorial, beyond intradisciplinary definitions, recalcitrant to one-dimensional analyses, highly conceptual, subtly linguistic, and profoundly dialectical. In disciplinary atomized schooling, there is little room for dialectic or for focus on the analysis of multi-dimensional, discipline-transcending questions. Indeed the questions which do not submit to disciplinary procedures are defined away, ignored, or left to politics, religion, intuition, or the mass media.

The very disciplines which ought to concern themselves with dialectical, macrological, category-analytic skills —history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics—because their subject matter itself, human behavior, is multicategorial and dialectical, struggle instead to proceduralize themselves into one-dimensionality and reduce the emphasis on dialectics. It is something of an embarrassment to them that there are competing points of view within their disciplines, something to be eliminated or explained away as soon as possible, to be replaced with definitive, well-defined, scientific procedures.

Overview: Everyday Irrationality as Obstacle to Critical Consciousness

My position is that critical thinking, as evidenced by rational persons in their everyday life, is informal, dialectical, and, in its highest development, emancipatory. It is not and cannot be proceduralized. It should be viewed as

a development of Socratic-Enlightenment paradigms, augmented by key post-Enlightenment "discoveries", and based on the recognition that human behavior, and the human mind itself, are deeply, essentially, and inevitably inferential and substantively, not formally, conceptual.

My view is that people as they are now largely constituted, in what is not the "natural" or normal state, are deeply irrational, acting habitually on the basis of first principles, concepts and assumptions, to which they have not given, and could not give, free, conscious, and deliberate assent. In the "normal" state of today's daily life, people are devoid of convictions, properly so called, and have little sense of the many contradictions that exist between their words, thoughts, and behavior. Most importantly, they lack skills of primary categorization, little sense of what it would be to question the basic labels and categories on the basis of which they multiply inferences of divergent logical types. For the most part, they unconsciously internalize and assent to the basic category-decisions of their peer group and society. They have no conscious cognizance of what it would be to decide for themselves on the basis of rational reasons which fundamental *labels* ought to be attached in a primary, inference-determining way to which situations, persons, and events. Utterances, by themselves and others, are taken atomically at their face value, supplemented by egocentric sensitivity to what bears on their vested interest, as they inarticulately conceptualize it. They are heavily responsive to and unconsciously awed by social rituals and the trappings of authority, status, and prestige. Their lives are lived in an endless series of surface structures and any situation is material to be covered into self-serving verbalizations. They have little sensitivity to categorial distinctions. They do not know how to explicate and clarify an issue. They do not know how to enter sympathetically into points of view that they have consciously or unconsciously rejected. They are strongly resistant to analyses of their behavior that do not reinforce their carefully cultivated self-serving images of themselves. They are deeply insecure. They are unconcerned with injustices that are not visited upon themselves or upon those they ego-identify with. They have no difficulty in dehumanizing in a spontaneous turn of phrase those who thwart, or are perceived to thwart, their vested interests. Many of their fundamental inferences and concepts are infantile in origin. They have no patience for close reading or careful thought and analysis. They are non or anti-intellectual.

It is these pronounced tendencies, qualities, and dispositions which give substance to the problem of "uncritical thought" and define the agenda of obstacles and problems against which proposed critical thinking pedagogy must be measured. The problem of teaching critical thinking to essentially rational persons living in an essentially rational society is a categorially different problem from that of teaching it to unconsciously irrational persons living in an unconsciously irrational society, one that defines itself and its social, political, economic, and personal rituals as paradigmatically civilized, free, and rational. When the most fundamental logical structures, the most basic concepts, assumptions, beliefs, inferences, and category-decisions, are typically unexpressed, unconscious, and irrational, then the problem of background logic assumes new proportions and the language games implicit in the *lebensphilosophie* of everyday forms of life are in need of a fundamental reconstrual. It is with this problem and this reconstrual that the remainder of this paper is concerned.

Background Logic: Some Examples, Principles & Distinctions

All human behavior without exception is understood, made intelligible to us, in terms of some assumed, expressed, or implied background logic. This derives in turn, as Wittgenstein put it, from concrete forms of life in which these logics are embedded. Yet for the most part people do not achieve active cognizance of the background logics they use. Many they absorb quite implicitly through the socialization process. Some, conflicting with their expressed beliefs and values, they disavow if attributed to them. Often these divergent logics are misused or confused, resulting in a multitude of category mistakes. The pattern of their use and abuse often reveals fundamental contradictions or inconsistencies in the life of a person or group. Yet to this day no adequate taxonomy of background logics has yet been developed and the concept still stands in need of foundational analysis and clarification. But before we look at some of the ways the concept can be sharpened and made more useful as a critical tool, some examples will serve to make the notion more intuitively obvious. Note the significant consequences that can follow changes in background logic: the formalists' restriction of background logic for the analysis of reasoning to such formal rules as *modus ponens, modus tollens,* disjunctive syllogism, conjunction, commutation, etc.; Aristotle's similar use of the laws of syllogism; Wittgenstein's use of the logic of natural language as a background logic in the assessment of philosophical arguments; and Hegel's use of his own theory of dialectic as background logic by which to reinterpret the nature of philosophical debate. The list of examples can be multiplied indefinitely, not only in the field of philosophy but also in the history of disciplines and in everyday argumentation as well.

There is in this latter sphere, for example, a distinct switch of background logic that can be observed, when one examines the arguments put forward by the U.S. State Department in contrast to the parallel arguments advanced by the political leaders of the U.S.S.R. So great is the shift in background logic that it is unclear whether the same issue is being debated.

Now some distinctions. There are four dimensions of background logic to which one can allude, each expressive of a different point of reference and a different order of analytic fact: the *preductive* (in contrast to the inductive and deductive), the *infralogical,* the *extralogical,* and the *dialectical.*

I coined the term 'preductive' to highlight the fact that before we reason with respect to an issue or goal, either inducing facts or deducing implications from them, there must be reasoning directed consciously or unconsciously to the shaping of the goal or issue itself. Few logic or critical thinking texts highlight the profound significance of critical moves of a preductive nature. The problem of deciding on one specific issue rather than another and wording it one specific way rather than another goes a long way toward shaping and delimiting the reasoning which then follows. If reasoning consists in an attempt to settle questions, then all reasoning presupposes that the questions at issue are apt and properly framed. The history of philosophy, to cite a clear case, can most fruitfully be viewed as a series of disagreements as to how best to frame philosophical questions, and hence disagreements about what specifically is at issue in them. Closely associated with disputes as to the nature of a question are disputes as to what concepts or categories are to be given primacy within a given domain. Hence, shifts in how to interpret an issue are often accompanied by shifts in how to categorize its subject matter, and such categorial shifts generally entail shifts in tacit

assumptions and relevant background facts (what I designate as the 'infralogical') as well as in, as a result, the manifest reasoning and the further unexpressed implications and collateral consequences (what I designate — hoping however for a better word — as the 'extralogical').

Finally, I include in background logic the dialectical interjection into reasoning of an opposing point of view. In this case part of what makes the manifest reasoning intelligible, in addition to its own preductive and infralogical substructure and its extralogical implications and consequences, is the capacity of the reasoning to be developed in such a way as to meet specific objections put to it from another point of view. Indeed once there is an extended dispute carried out dialectically, the two or more opposing points of view contribute as background logics to the further understanding of the other. Hence Kant's reasoning adds a dimension to our understanding of the logic of Descartes and Hume, while their reasoning contributes to our understanding of his. By the same token different stages in the development of a discipline constitute background logics that contribute to the intelligibility and definition of each. Often then we conclude that we had not fully understood a point of view until it was superceded by another. To be reasoning, then, is always to be somewhere in the middle of things [*in medias res*]; our explication of inferences always in some sense incomplete. However confident in a given line of reasoning, however attentive to the basic shaping of issues, no matter how focused on our basic principles, concepts, and assumptions, no matter how conscientious in explicating further implications and collateral consequences, we cannot be sure we haven't missed a move of importance or that we have framed all of the strong objections to our reasoning from every plausible point of view. The value of dialectical

analysis in this context is obvious. It is generally only when we expect and get some opposition to our reasoning that we give some scrutiny to our shaping of the issue, to our primary choices of category, to the infralogical assumptions and extralogical implications, and to the objections that might be developed to our line of thought. There is no reason, of course, when a portion, even a significant portion, of what is background logic in one context cannot become *foreground* or *manifest logic* in another. Indeed, an essential characteristic of the critical mind is illustrated in the passion to penetrate, explicate, and dialectically assess competing background logics.

To do so one must begin to develop a taxonomy of background logical distinctions. For example, one must distinguish monocategorial technical background logics, specified in fine detail, narrowly defined and procedurally developed, from the background logic that one unconsciously absorbs, for example, in the socialization process, a background logic almost entirely unformulated, broadly based, multicategorial, and non-proceduralized. And we must distinguish both from the background logic of natural languages with their vast array of distinctions and multicategorial, open-textured, conceptual possibilities. We will see something more of the significance of these distinctions in the next section of the paper.

Irrational Language Games, Wittgenstein, and a Background Logical Trinity as Precondition of Human Experience

The logic of the English language, and of all other natural languages — a logic Wittgenstein, Austin, Wisdom and many others, rightly admired and insightfully used as background logic for the development of philosophical critique — must not be confused with

the background logic of the egocentric mind or that of social groups or of society writ large. Wittgenstein made a regretable mistake, a category mistake, when he assumed that the logic of natural languages was the only logic that constitutes concrete forms of life. Indeed, all human existence is of necessity multi-dimensional, not only in involving persons, beings whose nature and behavior can never be reduced to one category solely, but also in involving some necessary intersection of personal, social, and "natural" background logics. Every interpretation of language usage, in other words, is a complex act of decoding in which we are responding to cues that reflect three variously-related background logics, that of the egocentric individual, that of the social group, and that of the natural language of the user. Hence it is possible to conclude that a given speech act is personally idiosyncratic, such that its function or meaning can only be understood correctly if one understands something about the specific history or background of particular individuals. Or it may be more accurate to understand what is said as a social or in-group performance, as using a word, or engaging in an act, that presupposes familiarity with the ideology or rituals of a social group. Or finally, one might best understand what is being said as expressing the logic of what is straight-forwardly implied by the words as used by educated speakers of the language, irrespective of the society in which they were raised or of their personal idiosyncracies.

Psychoanalysts aim at developing facility in decoding highly idiosyncratic speech acts and of disclosing by that process primitive assumptions and concepts which the person has come to hold unconsciously about himself, about people close to him, and about the nature of the world in which he lives. All of the sophisticated defense mechanisms, so called, can be viewed consequently as various forms of irra-

tional, but highly functional language games by which a person fends off unpleasant reality and maintains his unconscious world view. All of us, it should be emphasized, have necessarily internalized, as part of the process of growing up, some complex set of assumptions, concepts, and beliefs, of which we are more or less unaware and some of which conflict with our conscious view of ourselves. Since these principles are embedded in our behavior and influence the character of our speech acts they are part of what Wittgenstein called language games, however idiosyncratic, difficult to decode, or irrational they may be.

The sociocentric, or in-group, background logic, and associated language games, are easier to decode if one is a member of the in-group, or if one has studied the *Weltanschauung* presupposed in their social interactions. Furthermore, it is of the nature of sociocentric logic, like egocentric logic, that it is not ordinarily formulated as such, and were you to pay close attention to the language games played in the social transactions by which the implicit inner dynamics of group power is maintained and expressed, and then to construct a dictionary of basic meanings as reflected in the usage of the members of the group, you would obtain a text more like Ambrose Bierce's *Devil's Dictionary*, than like the *Oxford English Dictionary*. You would find at least two layers of meaning at work stimultaneously. You would find meanings implied by surface verbalizations and meanings implied by behavior, with frequent contradictions between the two. An outsider or naïve person would take the surface meaning to be the sole meaning present. The sophisticated in-group member, however, would respond not simply to the surface meaning but also to latent cues, to operational meaning, to interpretations implied to one who experienced other events of this type within this social group in the past. If

there is a split in a society between two opposing behavioral logics at work within it, and so between the two social groups or classes whose life embodies those logics, then sometimes the discrepancy between verbally and behaviorally implied meanings becomes a subject for discussion, analysis, and critique. But as long as the "hypocrisy", "deception" or duplicity is shared more or less universally within a group, then it is not typically noticed as such. Things go quite as they are expected to; no disturbance to highlight contradictions.

It may be useful to distinguish here three different modes of living that represent different values and different skills of analysis with respect to the decoding of language games within these three background systems. There are those who tend to idealize social interactions, routinely accepting fostered impressions and surface language usage. These people, let us dub them the idealizers, tend to accept the ideology of their society as descriptive of reality. Their horizons are conceptually and pragmatically limiting. They are not adept at manipulating situations to their advantage since they are minimally aware of the transactions going on at behavioral levels. They tend to be easily manipulated by those who are sensitized to the behavioral level of transaction. Let us dub this second group rationalizers.

The idealizers are clearly not critical thinkers, since they cannot get beyond surface logic. The rationalizers of this world on the other hand penetrate the surface level and identify behavioral or operational pay-offs, but in doing so, they tend not to note the discrepancies and inconsistencies in the unspoken social ideology they use to their advantage. Having discovered how to play a game to advance their interest, they tacitly sense no value in making the game public. Besides, like all humans, rationalizers need to maintain a positive

view of themselves and would find it difficult to do so if their manipulative use of other people were made explicit.

This leaves one final life style choice with respect to the language games of everyday life and that is one in which the individual interests himself in making explicit all hidden dimensions of discourse and action implied in social transactions to the extent that this is possible, of striving to decode as fully as possible the real, deeper, meanings being conveyed and grasping as many of the games, and the contradictions in the games, being played. I would dub this third choice of a life style that of the reasoner, the genuinely fair-minded, critical thinking person, the person striving to transform blind assent into rational conviction, and to appraise the assents or convictions of others.

The reasoner or critical thinker, on this view, learns to view his behavior in terms of the tacit infrastructure of thinking that underlies it. Of necessity this requires a willingness to undergo circumstances of stress, to face personal and social contradictions, to develop rational passions, and, as a result, to engage in a process that is self transformative. On this view, no one can think critically and avoid the "hot" issues that underlie personal and social life, or the necessity of facing, indeed the necessity of *constructing*, dialectical opposition to his own and his society's favored or received principles and preconceptions. Most importantly, then, the passion for truth must be a passion for concrete truth, not simply for abstract or notational truth, a passion for dialectical synthesis that takes into account the specific relations between, and the problems of overcoming, unformulated-but-lived and formulated-but-unlived logical systems.

Dialectical Synthesis

At the same time that our experience presupposes and reflects continual and spontaneous acts of logical synthesis that transcend any particular academic category, our conscious knowledge remains logically unsynthesized. Acts of everyday life seem to belie the problems of academic life. All research on perception testifies to the pervasiveness of experientially synthetic acts. For example, in the words of Hans Toch and Henry Clay Smith, ''Any perception is an awareness that emerges as a result of a most complicated weighing process an individual goes through as his mind takes into account a whole host of factors or cues. It must be emphasized at the very outset,'' they continue, ''how tremendously complex even the simplest perception is — for example, the perception of a star point. For it can be demonstrated that, in perceiving a star point as such, a whole host of indications are weighed and integrated to give us our final experience'' and that ''the integration of all these factors is accomplished in a fraction of a second and is, more frequently than not, entirely unconscious'' [1]. This spontaneous weighing and totalizing process applies in everyday experience to our perception of individuals, groups, ideologies, religions, and any manner of complex or ''simple'' social event. Unfortunately, because most of our *de facto* skills of synthesis reflect background logical systems that are egocentric, sociocentric, or both, our skills of rational synthesis are not enhanced thereby. The paradox is that while our irrational mind is well practiced in using logical systems to integrate, synthesize, and structure behavior and events, our rational mind is still struggling in a heavily compartmentalized way, as a product of an academic world whose fundamental interest is turf-preservation and procedural purity, an interest in keeping disciplinary categories unintegrated and free of dialectical and crosscategorial moves. The academic world, it would seem, is drunk with the idiosyncracy platitude, the principle that every (academic) thing is itself and not another. But we cannot face situations in everyday life in the terms we were taught chemistry, math, history, or psychology. Hence we cannot turn to the atomized disciplines as an answer to the problem of uncritical thought in everyday life. The only ''neutral'' background logic we have at our critical disposal is that of natural languages themselves. Unfortunately, however, though they represent in some sense neutral logical terrain, they are a resource for conceptual moves only, not a source for a practical program in critical thought.

We need to forge for ourselves a multicategorial critical logic of ends which we can use with the practical casuistic skills already reflected in our highly developed egocentric and sociocentric minds. It is here that special dialectical skills are required, both destructive and constructive: on the one hand ability to question the ongoing stream of fostered definitions and primary categorizations that uncritically shape our daily thought and experience, and on the other to synthesize across categories so that our ''totalization'', our summing up of people, facts, and events into wholes, represents deliberate commitment to first principles, assumptions and concepts to which we can give, and do give, conscious assent.

Some Unresolved Questions

Since all reasoning, all thought, presupposes questions at issue, and since the fundamental questions for which the rational person needs critical skills are concrete, multi-categorial, category-analytic and dialectical, we need a

fuller exploration and specification of what this entails, especially in contrast to discipline-specific questions. We need to decide how to frame and settle such questions with respect to conceptual, evaluative, and background logical considerations. We need to relate this to the distinction between concrete and notational truth, as well as to the question of egocentric and sociocentric "truth". For, let us not forget, the social world is a real world, one whose background logic transforms the lives and minds of people. In some sense, then, what is true *of* the world is a reflection of what is true *in* the world. This brings us to the most important question underlying all of this, a question to which our concrete lives provide an answer, even if our words do not: is it rational to be rational in an irrational world? Less paradoxically, does it make sense to give up all the advantages that accrue to one who "chooses" to conform to socially rewarded behavior patterns irrespective of their "irrationality", achieving thereby status, prestige, money, power, easy self-satisfaction and ego-gratification, in order to engage in a personal and social dialectical struggle, disturbing to oneself and others, and so to transform unconscious assent into rational conviction and to live life with personal, intellectual, and moral integrity? The wisdom of the world, the answer suggested by those most heavily engaged in it, would seem to be "No, it is not worth it. To be rational is to be the successful rationalizer, in tune with and acceptant of the ascendent social ideology, skilled in personal self deception, able to question fostered appearances only when that is to your advantage, able to use them as suits you in all other cases and, if anything else, skilled in helping your friends and hurting your enemies." Socrates and Plato might have won the academic debate against this position but history demonstrates they did not win the

battle for the hearts and minds of people. Academics, I venture to suggest, are as uninterested in this question as their non-academic counterparts. After all, it cannot be proceduralized and settled with discipline-specific skills.

Summary & Conclusion

The history of disciplines with their procedural and notational emphasis fails to provide an organon for everyday critical thought. We live as inferential beings enveloped in unformulated, deeply behavioral background logics. The logical systems of the schools have little to do with the logic we live. We are largely controlled and confused, and consequently have never consciously assented to, the inner logic we ourselves create in our concrete forms of life. We don't know how to get perspective on them, how to analyze or how to synthesize them. Our inner world, the world of our self-constituted experience, is heavily synthesized, but unconsciously, egocentrically, and sociocentrically so. We have not yet developed adequate insight into the significance of background logic and the analytic reference points from which it can be viewed: the preductive, the infralogical, the extralogical, and the dialectical.

A categorial distinction must be drawn between the logic of natural languages and that of egocentric or sociocentric life forms. Because of his failure to note the latter two, Wittgenstein failed to distinguish irrational from rational language games. He failed to see that all speech acts can be divided into three categories, the idiosyncratic, the sociocentric, and the "natural". When one makes this distinction explicitly one finds that they define, insofar as they become patterns in peoples' lives, the basis for three categorially distinct forms of life: the

life of the idealizer, the life of the rationalizer, and the life of the reasoner. If there are idealizers in the world, persons given to idiosyncratic speech acts, presumably with thoughts to match, it would follow that they would live in a narrow self-enclosed world, highly vulnerable to manipulation and frustration. If there are rationalizers in the world, persons given to sociocentric speech acts, presumably again with thoughts to match, it would follow that they would live in a larger but not in a universalizable world, highly successful perhaps within their group or society but with little sense of the circumscribed nature of their "socialized" world. If there are reasoners in the world, persons with a passion to transcend egocentric or sociocentric life worlds and the irrational language games which define them, it would follow that they would strive to engage in rational speech acts, acts which do not covertly presuppose egocentric or sociocentric concepts and values. If these three life worlds are in some sense logical possibilities for every person, and for every speech act of every person, then the interpretation of language usage calls for an act of decoding, and so distinguishing, egocentric, sociocentric, and rational speech acts. Because these distinctions cannot be made except in reference to background logical considerations that may not be accessible in the immediacy of a situation, and because those background logics may be covert and disavowed, the problem of analysis and categorization is difficult.

In any case we postulate three structurally different speech acts parallel to three different modes of living, each with different conceptual horizons, different "pay-offs," and a differently constituted "reality." Each requires an existential categorial decision to live and constitute a life world in one of three ways. Only the reasoner is a critical thinker in the proper sense, since only he can penetrate and decode the speech acts of the other two life styles and give conscious assent to his own. Only he chooses to constitute a maximally self-conscious and free life world.

To become a reasoner or critical thinker, however, requires skills of concrete synthesis which are as yet not fully developed. We will get little help from the academic world as presently structured with its strict categorial compartmentalizations. We need new skills in the art of totalizing experience rationally, as well as in dialectical questioning of primary categorizations.

We have not settled all of the questions that face us in developing the possibility of living a life as a rational person. We need more knowledge of the logic of questions, of concrete and notational truth, of the power and inner attraction of ego- and sociocentrism, and of how to combat the "wisdom" of the world, which, up to now, meets emerging critical thought with disdain, ignores or suppresses it, and thus answers with a resounding "No!" the question, "Is it rational to be rational?"

Note

[1] *Social Perception*, eds. Hans Toch and Henry Clay Smith (New York: D. Van Nostrandt Co., Inc., 1968).

Dr. Richard W. Paul, Director, Center for Critical Thinking and Moral Critique, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA 94928.   ☐