

THE PHILOSOPHER AS TEACHER

WHY ARE LOVE AND SEX PHILOSOPHICALLY INTERESTING?¹

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Love and sex interest most philosophers as part of their personal lives, some philosophers in their therapy, and a few philosophers as subjects currently worthy of serious philosophical attention. To use one's philosophical energy thinking and teaching about love and sex has obvious benefits. One's life seems more integrated than usual: it is pleasant when one's work concerns problems about which one spends time and emotional energy in daily life. Because students as well as professors use their time and energy in this way,² teaching issues concerning love and sex is worthwhile and enjoyable. We all have experience to draw upon to test our philosophical theories and analyses; we can tell more easily (than we can with problems of reference or certainty) when important philosophers are simply saying silly things, not addressing themselves to the hardest questions, or have gone wrong; we can see political, cultural, and religious biases; and we can appreciate that we hold philosophical opinions and understand why clarity about these subjects is useful to us.

In addition, fascinating methodological problems arise concerning the ways one deals with love and sex in philosophy, in psychology (as well as in psychotherapy), and in feminist theory (as well as in feminist consciousness-raising). A related benefit of teaching love and sex is evident here: one can include feminist writings as an integral part of a course. Feminist philosophers not only question some of the traditional methodological assumptions (such as the possibility of doing value-neutral philosophical analysis, the differences among the philosophical, the political, and the personal in these matters, and so on), but also consider the political assumptions and values underlying our personal relationships and the institutions surrounding them.

¹This paper grew out of a workshop presented with Sharon Bishop in the Philosophy and Feminism section of the National Workshop Conference on Teaching Philosophy, Schenectady, New York, August, 1976. Sharon Bishop's influence on this paper is great; we have discussed most of the issues in it and I have used several examples from her paper "Love and Dependency" (In *Philosophy and Women*, Bishop and Weinzweig, eds., Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth, 1979, pp. 147-154.) I also want to thank William Winslade, Naomi Scheman, and the participants in the workshop, especially Sandra Harding.

²I have been told, only partly in jest, that my generalizations about students and professors are based on a skewed sample of divorced Southern Californians. I doubt this, but even if there is something to it, can the rest of the country be far behind?

Given all these benefits, why do philosophers shy away from writing and teaching about love and sex? The following are some of the replies I have received: Why are *these* benefits? I don't want my life integrated; how can I escape from my personal problems if my philosophical work is not removed from my everyday life? And even if I want to deal with my own problems concerning love and sex, it would be a mistake for me to believe that philosophical thinking about them can replace confronting my emotions and dealing with the problems on that level. Why divert my attention by thinking about the conceptual relationship between love and commitment when what I really want is to get a divorce?

Furthermore, I've been told, philosophy classes should avoid the danger of engaging in pseudo-therapy or consciousness-raising: separate problems and approaches should be kept separate. Personal/emotional problems about sex or love should be kept separate from political problems about how love has been institutionalized and used to keep women "in their place", which in turn should be kept separate from conceptual points about love.

Finally, why would I want to undertake a course in which the methodology is unclear and in which personal feelings create problems in the classroom? Breaking new ground methodologically is never easy, and is especially troublesome in messy, touchy areas such as love and sex. How can we tell the difference between a philosophical and a psychological claim about the relationship between sexual fidelity and jealousy? What are philosophical criticisms of the institution of marriage, what are political ones? And, surely, to discuss these subjects in a classroom will stir up students' feelings: they will be upset, angry, excited, depressed, want to tell personal stories, be tempted to invade my privacy, and who knows what else. Are the philosophical issues about love and sex so interesting that I should want to deal with all these problems?

I think so. After I give the reasons for this answer, which constitute most of the paper, I will make some suggestions for dealing with some of the practical problems which arise when teaching this kind of subject matter.

Philosophy, Psychology, and Feminism

In order to determine what is *philosophically* interesting about love and sex, it would help to distinguish what would traditionally interest us as philosophers from what would interest us personally or as feminists or as psychologists. One way to try to distinguish these categories, if it is possible at all, is to utilize some of Wittgenstein's remarks: "The work of a philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose." Something of which we need to remind ourselves is "something that we know when no one asks us, but no longer know when we are supposed to give an account of it . . . (and it is obviously

something of which for some reason it is difficult to remind oneself)".³ To talk about assembling reminders seems appropriate not only for some philosophers' work on love and sex, but also for the work we do as feminists or psychologists. We can assemble many kinds of reminders about love and sex for many different purposes. We need to look at what the purposes are for feminists, psychologists, and philosophers, and why assembling these reminders is difficult. Talk about reminders is further appropriate because much of the work about love and sex is done piecemeal, in fragments; we often can remind ourselves of only a few things at a time. Especially where methodological problems are difficult and emotions are easily stirred, it helps to make progress where one can.

I will discuss feminist theorists and consciousness-raising groups, psychologists and psychotherapy groups and philosophers in that order. To do this requires me to generalize and oversimplify in ways which make me very uncomfortable. People within each category vary tremendously; in addition, some people fit in at least two categories, e.g. feminist and philosopher. For ease of comparison, I am emphasizing groups' activities rather than the work of individuals. The questions I will ask about each category are: What kinds of things are the theorists saying? What kind of activity is going on in the groups (which kind of reminders are they assembling?) What purpose do the groups have? What impact do the groups have in terms of personal, political, or intellectual change?

1. Feminist theories and consciousness-raising groups

Although feminist theory can be more or less empirical, conceptual, or speculative, any feminist theory about love and sex would deal in some way with the political and institutional underpinnings of love and sex. "Sexual politics" and "the personal is the political" are not just catchy phrases: personal relationships have political bases and implications. In addition, it is important to feminists to call attention to biases and sexist assumptions in traditional academic methodologies. An example of a largely speculative feminist issue is what might happen to sexual attraction between people (of any combination of sexes) if society were radically different: if people did not have traditional sex roles, if inequalities were erased, and if the sex or gender of one's lover were irrelevant to one's attraction. An empirical problem might be whether there is any change in sexual behavior or emotional patterns in families in

³*Philosophical Investigations* (PI), trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1953), Part I: 127, 89. The reader should not expect to find a Wittgensteinian view of philosophy in this paper. I consider a much wider view of philosophy than Wittgenstein's, but find his remarks about assembling reminders a good way of thinking about the work that goes on concerning love and sex. I further stray from Wittgenstein in the sort of reminders I assemble. I do not, as Wittgenstein usually does, restrict my reminders to those about the uses of language.

which there have been abrupt changes in roles performed by men and women (wage-earning, house-keeping, child-care).

Although some of the same kinds of topics could come up in a consciousness-raising group, discussing feminist theory or teaching a class in feminist theory is not the same as participating in a consciousness-raising group. The purposes differ though they overlap. In each case feminists want to improve the position of all women; theorists work on the theoretical foundations for action, realizing that neither theory nor action exists alone. A consciousness-raising group attempts to put feminist theory into practice. In it, women aim to develop trust in and respect for themselves and the others in the group. It is a small structured group whose discussions are focused not on personal "coping" solutions to individual member's problems, but on the common problems of women and the shared political, social, economic, and emotional circumstances from which our experiences arise. Because one woman's problems are not solved until the condition of all women is improved, consciousness-raising groups discuss experiences for the purpose of fostering social change, and function as a microcosm of such change.⁴

Suppose both a consciousness-raising group and a group discussing feminist theory were assembling reminders on the subject of the possibility of non-destructive heterosexual love relationships in a situation of economic and political inequality. Although both would be doing it for the purpose of bettering the condition of women the procedures differ. In a consciousness-raising group individual women would recount their experiences in love relationships, thinking about what impact inequality or economic dependence had on them. The group would look for generalizations from these experiences or for the political as well as the emotional bases. To assemble these reminders might be difficult: women have been isolated from each others' experiences; other people close to the women in the group (e.g., their lovers) may find newly expressed anger or other feelings hard to accept and may not see the validity of some of the reminders. This kind of pressure makes it hard to assemble reminders and makes the support of the group all the more important.

⁴This is as good a point as any to answer a few questions that might have come to mind. (a) Do feminists want to improve the position of women at the expense of men, or will everyone be better off? Feminists differ about the extent to which men will benefit from women's liberation; men will lose some of their current power; they will gain more options for their lives. (b) Can there be male feminists? Yes. (c) What does "consciousness-raising" mean and must consciousness-raising groups be only women? There are groups for men; there are some that are mixed sexually. But most are only for women and it is an important part of the theory that this be true. To raise one's consciousness is to become more aware of the many, varied forms of sexism and how they affect us. For detailed information see *Guidelines to Feminist Consciousness Raising*. Prepared by the National Organization for Women: Gay Abarbanell and Harriet Perl (1835 S. Bentley, Los Angeles, 1976). A philosophical discussion of how collective autonomy works in consciousness-raising groups can be found in Larry Blum, Marcia Homiak, Judy Housman, and Naomi Scheman, "Altruism and Women's Oppression", in *Women and Philosophy*, eds. Carol C. Gould and Marx Wartofsky (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), pp. 222-247.

When feminist theory groups assemble reminders they need not proceed from specific experiences to generalizations, but do think it important that the theoretical claims be linked repeatedly to experience. If, after careful analysis, a woman is sure that her current long-standing love relationship with a man is healthy and non-destructive, she cannot very well deny that such a thing is possible, though it may be very rare and almost never "permanent". The reminders assembled in this context can concern our own experience or be about theoretical points. The kinds of theoretical reminders would vary greatly; feminist theorists have first received some kind of traditional training, for example, in biology, sociology, or philosophy, which often influences the nature of their reminders. Although the purpose here is to produce theory for social change, not specifically to develop trust in oneself and other women or to raise consciousness, such discussion tends to produce all these results. They come to be expected and valued by feminists.

2. Psychological theories and psychotherapy groups

I use "psychological theorist" very broadly to include those who take human psychology to be their field, for example, psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, therapists, and psychologists. Yet under psychologists I want to focus on humanistic psychologists and clinically oriented psychologists. I use "psychologist" here to refer to those psychological theorists whose theories about love and sex tend to be supported by case studies and anecdotes rather than systematic empirical research and statistical data. By choosing to discuss this group of psychologists I am making it more difficult to distinguish psychologists from philosophers. But the fact is that many psychologists writing on love and sex, particularly on the relation between them, tend to take this approach. And, of course, one can find differences in philosophers' and psychologists' uses of anecdotal data. Only psychologists apologize for having mere anecdotes to support their theories. Philosophers are often glad to have an anecdote to provide an interesting test case or object for analysis.

The sort of psychotherapy I am discussing here would fall mid-way between classical psychoanalysis and radical therapy.⁵ It can be practiced in groups or individually, it emphasizes getting in touch with one's current feelings (with some encouragement to understand the present by reference to the past), and it wants to look at recurrent behavior patterns in order to see to what extent a person contributes to the perseverance of his/her problems.

If we look at the purposes for which reminders are assembled in therapy groups and by psychologists, it is easier to distinguish these two

⁵Radical therapists see the purpose of therapy not as adjustment but as social, political, and personal change. They would agree with most of the criticisms of traditional therapy and therapists that I attribute to feminists or feminist therapists. See, for example, a journal, *The Radical Therapist*. I do not include radical therapists in my use of "psychologist" here.

groups from feminists than it is to distinguish philosophers from psychologists. This is so because the political commitments of a feminist are clearly different from those of a psychologist. A feminist's reminders are assembled for a political purpose. The purpose of some psychologists would be to construct and support theories about love and sex which not only are good theories but can, when applied, help people to fulfill their potentialities for satisfactory sexual experiences and love relationships. The fact that psychologists (including therapists) need not have a commitment to social change has brought them criticism from feminists. Feminists have said that psychologists who believe that they have no political commitment *qua* psychologists do, in fact, assume society's standard for health, including the notion that the individual should adapt to current social arrangements (or perhaps to the most moderate of feminist reforms, such as shared housework or the ability of each partner to make sexual overtures). Feminists would be skeptical of the reply that psychologists do work for social change by trying to increase love in the world.

A similar contrast is present between therapy groups and consciousness-raising groups: only the latter has a commitment to political analysis of problems, not just "personal solutions". A therapy group (like a consciousness-raising group) seeks to build trust among its members in order for its members to express their feelings and to interact openly with each other. But in a therapy group the purpose is not to foster a commitment to social change or to see the ways in which institutions contribute to our problems, but to see the ways we as individuals contribute to our problems and can free ourselves to solve our problems. This is not to say that feminist-inspired political points do not arise in therapy groups (or for that matter that therapy-inspired points do not arise in consciousness-raising groups); however, in my experience, it is feminists in therapy groups who make such political points, it is not part of the process of therapy itself that these points be made.

The reminders that emerge in therapy groups are sometimes difficult to assemble. For although we have admirable purposes such as self-understanding or personal growth, we have built up defenses against recognizing and appreciating the reminders—they are sometimes painful or hard to face. For example, suppose a man tells his therapy group that he cannot get close to one woman because she is too dependent, he cannot get close to the next one because she whines, the third one because she's too aggressive. He and his group might assemble some reminders about what worries him about women, what fears he has of closeness, of women, of dependency, of loss of control. There is no easy way to spell out the causal connections between what "clicks" with him and whether it leads to different feelings or changed behavior. (Similarly, in a consciousness-raising group, there is no clearly defined causal chain between first sharing experiences and giving political analyses, and the members' subsequent changes in feelings, political attitudes, and

commitments.) In both kinds of groups our feelings are stirred up, and, in fact, people sometimes change. When asked about the change they sometimes see important influences from the interactions and discussion in their groups.

3. Philosophers

Because the traditional view of analytic philosophy is that the purpose of philosophy is solely intellectual, not to produce emotional or political change, it might be hard to see the value of a comparison between philosophy and either consciousness-raising or therapy. For example, there is no institutionalized group doing philosophy that corresponds to therapy groups or to consciousness-raising groups. The group activity of doing philosophy—whether in classes, discussion groups, or among friends—would correspond to discussions of theory by feminists or psychologists. And it is true that philosophers usually do not have political change or emotional growth as the goal of theorizing. The similarity among these discussion groups is that the purpose of each group is to produce theory or analysis, but as a by-product of the discussion people are sometimes stirred up either emotionally or politically. The more emotionally charged the topic the easier it is to be stirred up, to have points “click”, which in turn sometimes lead to other changes. I think we should be pleased, not distressed, by the idea that philosophy discussion can have this effect and accept philosophy as another useful approach for thinking about our emotional and political lives.

The kind of philosophy I discuss here is analytical, broadly construed. It includes not only analysis of “ordinary” and “ideal” concepts but also such tasks as criticizing the foundation of work in other fields and constructing certain kinds of philosophical theories. Since analytic philosophy is thought to be among the most dry, detached, aloof forms of philosophy, if it can have an impact on our lives, surely almost any philosophy can.

I want to tamper a bit with a characteristic that is commonly attributed to analytic philosophy—that it is “value-neutral” or “objective”. (I believe that we are still left with analytic philosophy after my tampering, but in case we are not, we can think of it merely as acceptable philosophy.) It does not make sense to think that philosophers are indifferent onlookers (not to mention ideal observers) when they discuss love and sex. Philosophers speak from a time and place, a race, a sex, and an economic and social class. We have many explicit and implicit theoretical assumptions, not the least of which is “common sense”. But given this, there are still degrees of fairness and impartiality we can exhibit. For example, a philosopher might analyze the concept of sexual perversion or the connection between sexual perversion and morality not for the purpose of recommending action or making a political statement, but wanting the analytical chips to fall where they may. But the chips may, in fact, fall in a path leading toward concrete action. Perhaps the

law governing sexual activities in one's state is based on a confused concept of sexual perversion. It does not detract from the philosophical merit of someone's paper if it finds its way into the hands of a state assembly representative. Nor is it inappropriate to have begun the analysis in the first place because of a hunch about the conceptual confusion in the law.

In addition, "objectivity" does not require that we isolate philosophy from social reality. Instead we should try to distinguish the features of each. For example, what part of the relation between love and dependency is conceptual and what part is the empirical fact that between men and women there is an important economic basis for psychological dependency? I do not mean to minimize the difficulty in drawing these distinctions. How we talk and think about love and sex is set within complex institutions which have social, economic and psychological components. But it seems to me that philosophers who have not hidden their heads in the political sand are well-equipped to sort out these components.

It is especially important to sort out the empirical from the conceptual in developing new theories. Suppose one is analyzing sexual attraction in the context of developing a theory of sexuality. It would be important to separate features of sexual attraction which are "necessary" from those which happen to exist currently. For some of the current features surely stem from the combination of the use of a heterosexual model for sexual attraction and the fact of inequality between men and women. One hopes that such factors such as these do not produce key features of a concept of sexual attraction in a new theory.

Other philosophers have asked me, at least partially seriously, whether good philosophy leads to better sex or more love. I want to discuss briefly two questions that underlie an inquiry about the value of doing philosophy about love and sex: (a) Of what use and interest is it philosophically? (b) What impact can it have on us personally and politically?

(a) Philosophy about love and sex leads to the same things that any other philosophy leads to; the goal might be truth, plausible theories, clearer concepts, or uncovering nonsense—as one finds appropriate. Take conceptual clarity as an example. No one denies that the concepts in the area of love and sex are interesting and of importance in human existence. Such concepts are worth analyzing. (The worry one has is that philosophers will produce boring analyses of interesting concepts.) Furthermore, the analyses are useful to counteract the rampant popular (and theoretical) confusions about love. Think of "Love means never having to say you're sorry" or Lee Marvin's courtroom distinctions about the types of love that began "Love is like a gas tank". Conceptual clarity is especially important for concepts such as love, dependency, sex, need, autonomy, and trust, which come in clusters and are overlaid with emotion. Not only do the concepts form a complex cluster, but different people's input on their meaning is important. For we look at trust and need in importantly different ways.

Also of philosophical interest are the moral problems that arise when analyzing concepts in this area. For example, application of moral concepts such as self-interest and self-respect to the context of personal relationships is extremely interesting. How do self-interest and self-respect fit in with loving other people, being committed to them, and acting in their interests?

But what about less “pure” questions which seem to require more empirical content to their answers or which seem to be filled with loaded psychological terms? Are these *philosophically* interesting? For example, a philosopher might be interested in an issue I mentioned previously: Are all heterosexual love relationships in our society destructive dependency relationships (or worse)?⁶ A philosopher can proceed to think about what it means to be dependent on a lover, what the difference between healthy and destructive dependency might be, what notion of health we tend to use in this context, and what all this has to do with love, which, in turn, needs elucidation, too. There is much empirical content here, some psychologically loaded terminology, and many underlying political questions (for example, in this society is it *prima facie* worse for women to be dependent than for men to be dependent). However, it is also interesting philosophy. One is certainly mapping conceptual relations; the concepts just happen to be ones that have bearing on our emotional lives.

It is easy to overlook one factor that leads people to think mistakenly that investigations such as the above are not really philosophical: when non-philosophers write more about a subject than philosophers do we forget that the subject can still be philosophical. Not only have humanistic psychologists and the “human potential movement” flooded the popular market with material about love, personal growth, and sex, but social scientists and feminists have been doing much more than have philosophers in criticizing the institutions surrounding personal relations. It sometimes does not look like philosophy—the jargon is funny—but social scientists and feminists are sometimes functioning as philosophers when they offer this kind of criticism. This kind of philosophy is in addition to the more obviously philosophical approach of those who set about analyzing the nature of love (or even the essence of love), making distinctions with which philosophers feel comfortable, talking about what is necessary and universal. For example, consider Eric Fromm, “In contrast to both types [brotherly and motherly] of love is erotic love; it is the craving for complete fusion, for union with one other person. It is by its very nature exclusive and not universal”.⁷ Even

⁶For an affirmative answer to this question, see Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York, Bantam: 1970) and Ti-Grace Atkinson, *Amazon Odyssey* (New York, Links: 1974). Atkinson thinks lesbian and male homosexual relationships are not healthy either.

⁷*The Art of Loving* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), p. 44.

Masters and Johnson do philosophy. Their discussion of commitment in *The Pleasure Bond* is budding philosophical analysis.⁸ My point is that because non-philosophers do philosophy of love and sex, it does not follow that philosophers should not do it too (and, one hopes, do it better). It is philosophically interesting material.

I have already touched on the answer to question (b): What impact does philosophy about love and sex have on us personally or politically? I cannot agree with the position that philosophy “leaves everything as it is”,⁹ but neither can I believe that philosophy solves our emotional problems. The impact that philosophy can have on us depends largely on us. First, we have to overcome the common assumption that philosophy is divorced from what is personally or politically useful. Then if we are emotionally open to thinking about the implications a view could have for our lives, it may, in fact, have an impact. We react to philosophical points at different levels; suppose I am reading an analysis of the conflict between commitment and autonomy; I may find useful comments that explain some of the conflicts I have felt myself; I may also find puzzles that intrigue me philosophically.

I do not want to claim that reading some philosophical remark or discussing philosophy is likely to cause significant, long-standing behavior patterns to change; I am saying instead that when philosophical discussion is directed toward areas of life in which emotions play an important role, it stirs up people, triggers certain changes in feelings, raises doubts about their previous beliefs, and leads them to change some of their beliefs. What people do as a result of change in beliefs or feelings depends on the person. Suppose a man reads an analysis of the meaning of respect for a person in the context of a sexual relationship. He sees what his lover has been complaining about (which he had previously denied he was doing at all), and feels bad about the way he has treated her. Regardless of what happens next, it was a philosophical reminder that made him see the problem.

Another, more general, way in which philosophy is of use to us personally and politically is in the way we are trained to think. This is such an obvious point that we overlook it. Of course, it applies far beyond the issue surrounding love and sex. We can apply our methodologies in a clear-headed way to any problem.

When discussing therapy groups and consciousness-raising groups, we noted that the purposes for which reminders are assembled are, respectively, emotional growth and social change. They both share with

⁸(Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), Ch. 12 “Commitment”.

⁹Wittgenstein’s point that philosophy “leaves everything as it is” (PI 124) is harder to interpret than it sounds when it is used as a slogan. He made the remark in the context of leaving mathematics and language as they are, not leaving one’s life as it is. One way to interpret Wittgenstein, suggested to me by Naomi Scheman, is that we are not to try to show that our concepts are mistaken, but show how they function in our lives. Once we see this, it may lead us to make changes in our lives (or not).

philosophy the assumption that improvement of some kind is possible. In philosophy, although our purposes are intellectual, we have a long tradition of thinking that the examined life is better than the unexamined life. Constructing good theories and clarifying our concepts are part of the process of examining our lives. Other parts of the process deal more directly with political and emotional factors. Philosophy contributes indirectly to other changes for the better in our lives because it does, in fact, stir up feelings. We should look not only at the indirect, contingent benefits but also at the direct one: philosophy is one useful tool for thinking about our lives.

Practical Suggestions

At the beginning of this paper I stated what I consider to be the benefits of teaching a course on love and sex, realizing that some people would not see them as benefits at all, but as problems to be avoided by not teaching the course or to be dealt with grudgingly in teaching it. I now want to offer some common sense suggestions for some of the typical problems that arise because of the subject matter.

I feel strongly that it is a mistake to try to gear one's course to avoid arousing students' feelings. Something would be sorely missing from such a course and it might well be impossible anyway. It is much harder to dismiss issues about love and sex as having bearing for one's life than it is to dismiss the question whether moral judgments are relative or absolute. If one fears that loving a person deeply always means loss of identity or the necessity to subject oneself to the will of another, then it will be hard not to be affected by even the most abstract discussion of love and autonomy.

We should not deny to ourselves or to students that we might feel uncomfortable or threatened by some of the discussion, but that discomfort is not always bad and can be profitable in getting us to think about the issues differently.

We should think through the responsibilities we feel we have as instructors. People's extra-philosophical training varies; I do not see why someone without training in "facilitating" groups should be reluctant to teach this course—as long as one has confidence in one's basic human judgment and sensitivity. Much of the responsibility I feel in a course of this kind differs only in degree from that which I always feel: to treat students' views and feelings with respect, to listen carefully to what people say, to balance the need to pursue the issues as they arise with the need to follow through "on the point". The difference in degree stems from the difficulty in understanding what people are trying to say: for not only does the usual obscurity exist, but sometimes people do not realize, or deceive themselves about what their feelings and views are in sensitive areas. A Libertarian may oppose marriage because it is an unwarranted intrusion of the state into people's lives; he may also fear commitment; he may have both these feelings and views simultaneously

and not know it. One must not only think about what is underlying the words spoken, but be sensitive enough not to allow someone to be pressed beyond comfortable limits. This task is not impossible or even very difficult, for it is not solely the responsibility of the instructor. Groups seem to regulate themselves very well; people tend not to pursue what they see someone cannot handle. Although people argue vigorously and with anger, I have found that when someone seems to need support or encouragement, people give it readily. This is especially true when a common commitment or ideology, *e.g.*, feminism, binds people together. But even between women and men with radically different and equally intense political commitments about sexism and sexual issues, there is a bond among them, as members of the group, that leads them to be supportive. Of course, the instructor can encourage this behavior—explicitly by suggesting it, and implicitly by doing it.

Another responsibility that is easy to exercise is to remind students that their lovers, families, or roommates have not been reading or discussing what the class has and may not be wholly sympathetic to abrupt behavior changes.

Privacy is a two-faceted problem: how to keep enough privacy about one's own life and not to invade the privacy of students. In one's own case, it is a matter of personal taste whether one wants to answer questions such as "How do you, as a woman, feel about anal sex?" or "Do you have an open marriage?" I do not consider areas of privacy to include important political commitments such as feminism. I would find it very difficult to teach the course in a sincere manner without making these commitments explicit.

In order to avoid invading the privacy of students and at the same time encourage them to deal with the feelings and attitude changes that discussions stir up, I ask students to keep journals or notebooks. They write entries for each class, describing their reactions to the reading and to the discussion. The style and content of the journals is the choice of the students: some are more purely intellectual than others; some are self-analytical; some students spend time expressing anger towards people in the class with whom they are afraid to disagree openly. They may block out parts of their journals which I am not to read. In addition to obtaining valuable information about student reaction to the material and discussion, and spotting people with unusual problems, the journals have obvious virtues; for example, they help people keep up with the reading, think about the discussions between sessions, and provide opportunities to tell about relevant conversations they have had at home. When possible I avoid grading the journals, but make comments on them.

One can utilize other centers on campus to fill different kinds of needs of people in the class. Women's centers usually operate consciousness-raising groups which women and sometimes men can join. Counseling centers sometimes have special focus groups. (Our counseling center has

had “Sexual Concerns Discussion Groups”; several students attended this group while participating in my class and found the combination beneficial. One woman noted an important difference between them: in class they are not criticized for intellectualizing.) In addition, students tend to their own emotional needs; for example, they continue their discussion long after class. If possible, it is good to arrange the time of the class to facilitate this natural emotional-overflow group.

If someone has serious emotional problems, one can obviously refer him or her to a professional of the sort with whom the student would feel compatible—traditional therapists, radical therapy collectives, feminist therapists, or others.

Summary

I have both talked about assembling reminders in this paper and have been doing it. I have called attention to some of the benefits of thinking and teaching about the philosophy of love and sex and to a few ways of handling a class. I have discussed feminist theory and consciousness-raising, psychology and psychotherapy, and philosophy—thinking about the purpose for which we assemble reminders in each. Although the purpose of philosophy is intellectual, philosophical reminders can produce results similar to those aimed for in feminism and psychology—political change and personal growth, respectively. Love and sex are philosophically interesting both for their own sake and because they are central in the lives and happiness of human beings.

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