

brain gives birth to thoughts and feelings that are not material, though they have analogues in material processes, and you can't say where one ends and the other begins, because each is an aspect of the other. *Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses.*

3 The consciousness that emerges from matter demonstrates that consciousness is a normal property of the physical world and much more widely diffused than human beings think. *How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way, Is an immense World of delight, clos'd by your senses five?*

4 The governing principle of life is energy. In its absence happiness, beauty, intellect and goodness are listless, useless phantoms pining for the blood of life. *Energy is the only life, and is from the Body; and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy. Energy is Eternal Delight.*

5 In doing the work we believe to be good, we should use whatever works. And if invoking ghosts, demons, spirits, gods, demigods, nymphs, hobgoblins or the Muse helps me to write, then I should banish the fear of appearing superstitious and invoke them without embarrassment or hesitation. *All deities reside in the human breast.*

6 The true object of the study and the work of a storyteller is human nature and its relationship to the universe. *God Appears & God is Light To those poor Souls who dwell in Night, But does a Human Form Display To those who dwell in Realms of Day.*

7 The work we do is infinitely worth doing. *Eternity is in love with the productions of time.*

Those, as I say, are the things I hold to. Now where does liberty appear in this scheme of things?

First of all, I suppose, it appears in the fact of my being able to make such a list and publish it without being arrested and put to death. In this place, at other times, it was the custom to execute those who expressed heterodox opinions; and at this time, in other places, the same grim principle prevails.

Secondly, it lies in my feeling quite free to add another proposition, or modify an

existing one, and maybe even to abandon one altogether if I find it doesn't help. I am the boss, as far as my philosophy goes; I am free to hold to what nonsense I like, without having to account for it to anyone.

Those are great freedoms, and I now realise that I should take account of them.

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I'm grateful that they're there, and I feel I ought to express my gratitude. Not only that: I ought not to take them for granted. I ought to think about guarding them.

To begin with gratitude, I looked in the prayer book I used to carry to church every Sunday of my young life. There were prayers of thanksgiving there, I vaguely remembered, and so there were, expressing gratitude for blessings of various kinds: For Rain; For fair Weather; For Plenty; For Peace and Deliverance from our Enemies; For Deliverance from the Plague, or other common Sickness; and – here we are – For restoring Publick Peace at Home. What did that one have to say? “We bless thy holy Name, that it hath pleased thee to appease the seditious tumults which have been lately raised up amongst us; most humbly beseeching thee to grant to all of us grace, that we may henceforth obediently walk in thy holy commandments...”

Not a word about freedom of expression, but a vote of thanks for dealing with seditious tumult. So it's clear that the church takes a dim view of rebellion against authority, and believes firmly that God does too.

We shouldn't be surprised; the only sort of freedom God gave his creatures in the first place was freedom without knowledge. They had to steal the knowledge, and they got punished for it. I'm criticising Zeus here, by the way, as well as Yahweh.

So, to begin with, we should put up statues to Prometheus as well as to Eve.

But praise and gratitude aren't enough. We have to guard the liberty we have. The realisation that freedom of thought and expression are good, and suppressing them is bad, took a long time to find a home in the human understanding. In some minds it's still not welcome. Plenty of people find stupidity less trouble than curiosity. In the long term, of course, curiosity is far more useful, but we're still stupid enough to think that the long term can look after itself.


So what do we have to do about it? Keep watch, and make a loud noise when we see liberty of any kind being threatened.

In recent years the government of Great Britain, made drunk by the possibilities of information technology, has allowed a culture of spying, interfering, controlling, snooping, dominating, and managing to creep around the lives of private citizens like some kind of malevolent ivy.

Things I used to do without having to ask permission, such as visit schools to talk about my books, I am now only allowed to do if I pay a fee for a certificate to confirm that I am not a convicted child-molester. At the moment, much of this busyboddiness is merely a petty annoyance, but there's more and more of it, and it was a multitude of little threads that tied Gulliver down. Whenever we see another one appear, we should cut it through with sharp argument.

But there are greater slaveries than this in other parts of the world, and greater liberties to be fought for. Freedom from hunger, disease, brutality, injustice, illiteracy, and so on, are no less true liberties, and no less necessary, because they are metaphorical.

So if I were to add another proposition to my rickety non-philosophy, it would be something like this:

8 Thought and consciousness and work and study are living things, and need free air to breathe, or they die of suffocation. *The Sun has left his blackness & has found a fresher morning, And the fair Moon rejoices in the clear & cloudless night; For Empire is no more, and now the Lion & Wolf shall cease.* 

Philip Pullman is the author of the trilogy *His Dark Materials* and the forthcoming *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*.