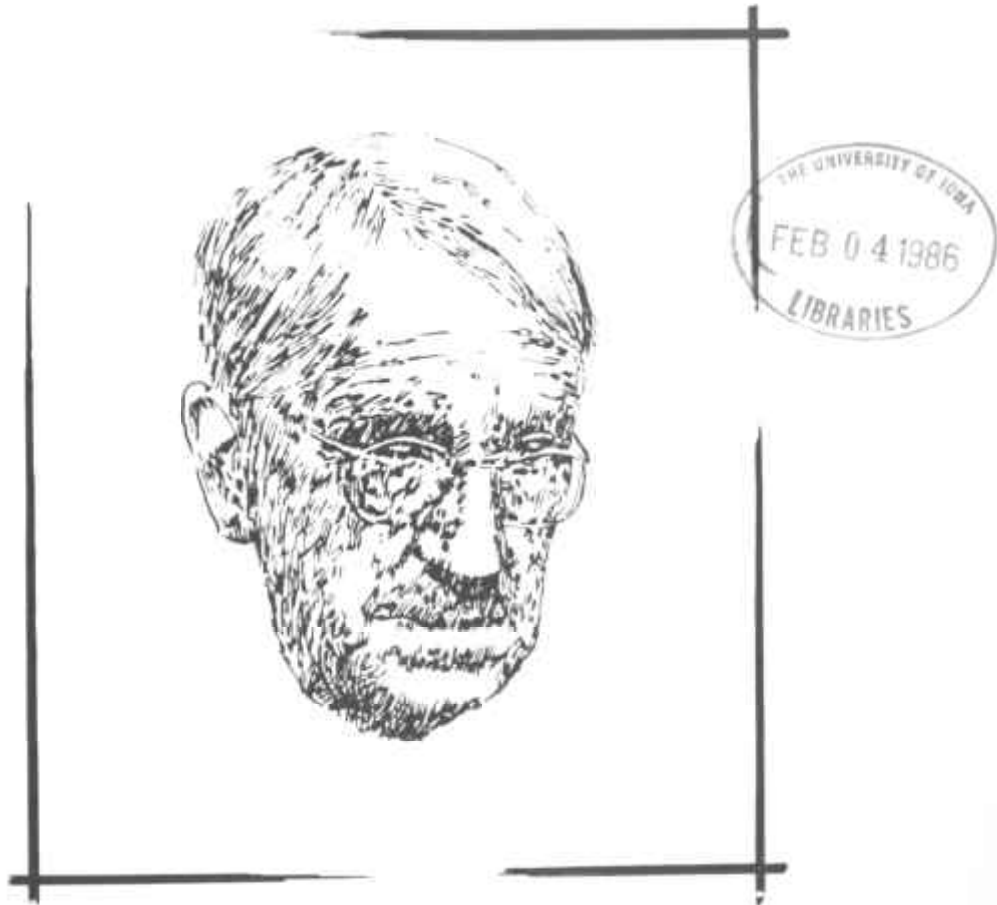


VARIETIES OF PLURALISM



Editor: Chris Eisele, Illinois State University
Fall, 1985, Volume V

Published by the John Dewey Society for the Study of Education and Culture at Illinois State University, Normal, IL.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Chris Eisele
Illinois State University

First, vote "Yea" or "Nay" on the following from Wittgenstein:

What is the use of studying philosophy if all that it does for you is to enable you to talk with some plausibility about some abstruse questions of logic, etc., and if it does not improve your thinking about the important questions of everyday life...?

If you are protesting that the issues in the quotation are not that easy to vote on, then this Current Issues is perfect for you. It will provide context and arguments to further your understanding of the complexity of the issues involved—with a special emphasis on Dewey's thinking. On the other hand, if you found voting easy, this Current Issues is even more perfect for you. It will show why it is not always easy to know what your vote is supporting when it is cast on philosophical questions, especially questions in social and moral philosophy.

The source of our contributions gives Current Issues a slightly different look this year. The topic is still "current," and, as you can see from the preceding paragraph, much may be at "issue." A series of circumstances has made it possible to reproduce the John Dewey Lecture, with a response, in this format. The lecture, given annually at the John Dewey Society Meeting, was delivered last February in Denver by Richard Bernstein of Haverford College. Michael Simmons, S.U.N.Y. Buffalo and a member of the Dewey Board of Directors, prepared a response for Current Issues.

Highlights

In a wonderful early piece (1893), "Why Study Philosophy," (Early Works, 4:62) Dewey says, "If our wise ancestors, instructed in the lore of Rousseau concerning the uselessness and harmfulness of the philosopher, had isolated him as soon as he showed himself, all might still be well. But the philosopher was allowed to be at large, and succeeded in infecting his time." Professors Bernstein and Simmons are "at large" in

the pages that follow, infecting their time and investigating how their time has been infected by philosophy and philosophers. To spread the infection, I offer these inducing samples:

- Bernstein asserts that Dewey "rejected the very idea of philosophy as some sort of super science with its own distinctive problems and methods...."
- Bernstein asks and answers the question, "Why did Dewey fade from the American philosophic scene? Why is it that Dewey, who inspired so many during his lifetime, has become such a 'marginal' figure?"
- Bernstein explains Rorty's statement that "the best hope for an American philosopher is Andy Warhol's promise that we shall all be superstars, for approximately fifteen minutes apiece."
- Bernstein finds it exciting "We can even begin seeing an interweaving and criss-crossing of philosophic movements which until recently have seemed to share little in common."
- Simmons feels that "Bernstein in less inspirational tone, in more critical voice, hovers over his John Dewey Lecture. The kind of questions Bernstein has put to others, to obtain concrete social and political knowledge, must ultimately be put to Bernstein."
- Simmons finds "a problematic that all who pursue philosophy must contend with. The intellectual problem that is philosophy paradoxically emerges most fully formed but also best concealed in well wrought philosophy. It is here that the power of philosophy's content and method, of philosophic argument, conceals from itself and its followers the problematic that is philosophy."
- Simmons warns that "final causes have a tendency to take on the cover of ideology. The well being of phronesis, of our very selves, now requires critical identification of efficient, material, and formal causes that brought us to our present precarious condition and sustain us in it."
- Simmons believes that "concealed in the magic of Dewey's dialectic are 1) the undemonstrated assumption that Deweyan phronesis, Theory of Valuation as outline of a program of social theory and action, is adequate to society as it is, and 2) Dewey's a-theoretical dissection of our body politic. We are left with no vocabulary to provide critical entrance and leverage adequate to society today."

A Special Note

The Dewey Society is once again planning a session at its annual meeting on the previous year's Dewey Lecture. In this case, the Bernstein Lecture reprinted here will be discussed by a panel which will include Michael Simmons, our respondent. The Dewey Board hopes that such arrangements can facilitate dialogue among the members. We encourage you to bring Current Issues to the meeting.

Acknowledgements

Thanks, of course, to Richard Bernstein and Michael Simmons for their thoughts and their responsiveness to my time lines. And thanks to Glen Hass, Dewey Society President, and Bob Gowin, Chair of the Dewey Lecture Commission, for making it possible for all of us to share in Professor Bernstein's thinking. Continuing thanks to Dean William Dunifon for support of this publication from Illinois State University's College of Education. A special thanks to Kathy Funk who has suffered with two years of Current Issues manuscripts, editing changes and "as soon as possible" requests, and still makes the final product look as good as it does.

1985 Membership Application		
Name:	_____	
Address:	_____ _____	
Institutional Affiliation/Position	_____	
New members receive a complimentary copy of <u>one</u> of the following: (check one).		
<input type="checkbox"/> John Dewey's <i>Moral Principles in Education</i> , 1909, 72 pages.		
<input type="checkbox"/> John Dewey's <i>The School and Society</i> , 1899, 118 pages.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Thomas Green's <i>The Formation of Conscience — Moral Education in an Age of Technology</i> , (1984 John Dewey Lecture).		
DUES		
Students/Retired	\$15.00	<i>Checks for dues, and for subscriptions, should be sent to:</i> Dr. Robert C. Morris (Secretary-Treasurer) Dept. of Curriculum & Instruction College of Education Northern Illinois Univ. DeKalb, Illinois 60115
Fellows	25.00	
Institutional Members	30.00	
Patrons of the Society	50.00	
Members may subscribe to <i>Educational Theory</i> at the special rate of \$10.00 per year.		
Enclosed is a check for		
\$ _____ to cover <input type="checkbox"/> dues,		
or <input type="checkbox"/> dues plus a subscription to <i>Educational Theory</i> .		