

The New York Times

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would help us clarify the situation," he wrote. A disputation is a teaching

Continued on Page B8, Column 3

legislation."

An aide said that Mr. Howard would

Continued on Page A11, Column 1

practical problems and lacks American support, could result in protracted

Continued on Page A7, Column 1

White House could use to buttress the dollar are, at best, modest.

Two Tools Available

Based on the Administration's remarks today and a joint communiqué last Tuesday by the United States and its six leading trading partners, the immediate tools for stabilizing world currency markets are sporadic buying of currencies and public relations, the latter reflected in today's White House statement.

The statement came after weeks of refusals by the Administration to comment on the dollar. It echoed last week's Group of Seven statement, which said the dollar's continued instability could be "counterproductive by damaging growth prospects in the world economy."

When pressed Mr. Fitzwater would not elaborate on the Administration's specific fears or say whether the United States was intervening to halt the dollar's decline. Nor would he outline other steps the United States was taking, except to say that the White House statement was "a response to a

Continued on Page D17, Column 1

Philosophical Rift: A Tale of Two Approaches

By RICHARD BERNSTEIN

Charles Sherover, who teaches philosophy at Hunter College, speaks in a sort of paradox about certain other philosophers. All too often, he says, those who were accepted into the ranks of the philosophers in America were not what he calls "philosophically inclined."

"You're much more likely to find philosophically inclined people outside of philosophy," Professor Sherover said, "because if you are philosophically inclined, you've probably been excluded."

Dr. Sherover's paradox, vehemently rejected by his targets, well reflects an argument taking place among American philosophers, sowing discord within the ranks of the 6,000 or so members of the American Philosophical Association, a group that rarely makes headlines but is, presumably, engaged in the task of examining the very foundations of Western thought.

Some philosophers like Professor Sherover, already organized into a group whose members call themselves pluralists, met in Cambridge, Mass., last month and formed a new organization, The Society of Philosophers in America, to combat what they believe is the control over the field exercised by what they see as a highly technical subspecialty, the Anglo-American analytical school.

Bogged Down in Logic

Underlying the pluralists' activities is the belief that philosophy, bogged down in a stress on logic, language, and empirical data, has lost its vocation of addressing the big questions asked by perplexed mankind: what is being? Is reality what our senses perceive? Does the universe have purpose?

Instead, the pluralists maintain, philosophy has come to mimic the sciences, striving to attain new clarity over what the big questions mean, with the result that philosophy has departed from the informed speculation that gave it its appeal over the centuries.

The analysts themselves not only disagree with this conclusion, but some dismiss the way the pluralists pose the problem. They deny, for example, that there is even such a thing these days as

Charles Sherover
Hunter College

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The New York Times/Angel Franco



The New York Times

Ruth Barcan Marcus
Yale University

"It's not just fake history, it isn't even history," she said of the pluralists' version of philosophy's changes. "The tradition up to Kant was analytical. It was one of addressing questions in a careful way and giving reasons for one's point of view."

an analytic school, and they claim that their own work, even if sometimes highly technical, marks a continuation of more than 2,000 years of rigorous philosophical reflection.

The dispute among philosophers is not the sort of thing that heats up public emotions, although it echoes disputes in other fields. Economics is one example where higher and higher degrees of specialization have alienated members of the public and some specialists as well.

Philosophy, moreover, even if no longer followed as avidly by non-philosophers as it was in centuries past, does provide the foundation of many other disciplines, establishing grounds for judging ethical principles and claims to know the truth.

In this sense, underlying the position of Dr. Sherover and his allies is their concern, rejected by their opponents, that philosophy has drifted from the center of intellectual life to a technical periphery, with the result that Western civilization has been impoverished.

"The problem arises when it comes down to saying that a certain way of doing philosophy is the only way, and if you don't do it that way you don't do it

Continued on Page A15, Column 1

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INSIDE

Surgery Preserves Potency

A new technique for surgery in prostate cancer that does not sever certain nerves is moving into widespread use as doctors find it can often avoid impotence. Page C3.

Good News for Gary Hart

His Presidential campaign was declared eligible to receive Federal matching funds, with the first installment expected next week. Page A17.

Hanoi's Economic Policy

Vietnam has announced an economic policy that in effect abandons centralized planning in favor of managerial decision-making at the factory level in state enterprises. Page A4.

News Summary, Page A2

Banks	C20	Obituaries	D19
Bridge	C18	Op-Ed	A19
Business Day ..	D1-18	Our Towns	B1
Chess	C12	Science Times ..	C1-12
Crossword	C20	Sports	B10-14
Editorials	A18	Theaters ..	C12-13, C16
Fashion	B6	TV/Radio	C18-19
Letters	A18	Washington Talk ..	B4
Movies	C13, C17	Weather	B7

Classified Index B15 | Auto Exchange | B14 |