

Israel Scheffler interviewed by Harvey Siegel

In this interview with Harvey Siegel, Israel Scheffler reflects on his career in philosophy of education. Beginning with his unusual entry into the field, he discusses the connections between his own early projects and that of R. S. Peters and Paul Hirst to make philosophy a central part of teacher education programmes, and articulates his view of the importance of general philosophy for work in philosophy of education. He reaffirms his longstanding commitment to the central importance of rationality in education, and reconsiders the fact/value distinction and the place of analysis in philosophy of education. He discusses the enduring legacy of Dewey, and assesses changing trends in the philosophy of education and the current state of the subject.

Harvey Siegel: In your recent book, *Gallery of Scholars*, you describe the unusual way in which you came to philosophy of education. Could you briefly recount that?

Israel Scheffler: My entry into philosophy of education was unexpected and unplanned. It was a result of the fact that the Rockefeller Foundation had awarded a grant to the Graduate School of Education at Harvard to bring two instructors in liberal arts fields to the school, one in history and one in philosophy. My teacher at the University of Pennsylvania, Professor Nelson Goodman, happened to be in Cambridge when the grant was announced and phoned me. I was at that time living in Philadelphia, where I had done my doctoral work, and had no prospect of a job at all. Goodman urged me to arrange a visit in Cambridge with the Education School Dean, Francis Keppel, whom he had already briefed about me. It turned out that Keppel indeed had an instructorship to fill, with a focus on philosophy as relating to education. In my conversation with Mr. Keppel, I told him that I had never had a course in education—to which he said, ‘If you had had, we would not be able to consider hiring you, since a specification of the job is that you have to come from outside the field of education.’ I was from the outside. My counterpart in history was Bernard Bailin, who had the analogous qualification. And so, as it happened, I did get the job and Keppel, who was a very unusual Dean, also refused to tell me what to teach or how to teach; I could do whatever I wanted. But he thought I ought not to teach at all the first semester, just speak to various members of the faculty to see what they thought philosophy’s role at the School of Education should be. Thereafter, it would be up to me. So, I did talk to several faculty members who gave me

many ideas about philosophy. But their ideas were quite varied and did not add up to anything. I decided that I'd better do what I thought I could do. I had wanted to find out more about analytic ethics, and I decided that the best way to find out about it was to teach it. So I offered to teach that course. Thereafter I expanded my offerings to include analytic approaches to science and language as well as American philosophy, especially the pragmatists, who had a special appeal for me. My real introduction to education as such came from having to deal with students in the School of Education. No matter what I said to them, their apperceptive mass was education. To communicate whatever philosophy I was teaching to that audience was my real education in education.

Siegel: In retrospect, do you think Keppel's idea was a good one? Would you recommend that philosophers of education be trained, as you were, in general philosophy?

Scheffler: I'm strongly in favour of training in general philosophy. The riches of the subject are not apparent if we just skim off the presumed applications from the top, or else construe philosophy of education as a set of rival schools packaged in stereotyped ways for students to choose their favourites while they are offered no basis for their selections. Popular textbooks when I started my teaching career tended to organise the subject into such categories as Realist, Perennialist, Thomist, and Pragmatist, etc., each accompanied by a small caricature of supposed applications to education. Some were simply laughable: pragmatists favoured moveable chairs while Thomists insisted on fixed chairs. I tried to teach by working on philosophical problems with students engaged in educational practice. This method had the happy effect of creating students who became fans of the subject.

Siegel: How do you see the relationship between philosophy of education as a scholarly subject and general philosophy?

Scheffler: I think the relation is comparable to the other 'philosophy of' subjects: the philosophy of history, the philosophy of science, the philosophy of language, etc. In each case, philosophical thought is applied to an object domain independently understood and taken seriously. However, I think the philosophy of education, unlike these other cases, has a special problem. Education is such a broad and diverse field that it tends to send its philosophers off in quite different directions. Unlike philosophy of science or philosophy of language, for example, the pressing problem of the field is to avoid incoherence by developing lines of research that are consecutive, building on what has been done before. Now philosophy, generally, has this problem by comparison with science, and a certain amount of it is to be expected in any philosophical enterprise. But in education, I believe the problem is much more salient.

Siegel: Are there any particular lines that you would like to see developed in that way?

Scheffler: No, I think the general point is: any line, so long as it is consecutive.

Siegel: You have long argued for the importance of rationality in education. Perhaps that could be such a line. Has your view of the place of reason in education changed over the years? Would you say that fostering it is the fundamental aim of education, for example? If so, why?

Scheffler: I would rather not say *the* aim of education, as if there were a single aim. I would rather think of a family of aims to keep in mind, but certainly I would defend the idea that rationality ought to be considered a major aim, peculiar in that it is applicable in all realms in which one can sensibly ask for the reason, or reasons, why, including the practical, the moral, the ethical, the aesthetic and the domain of skills. To reflect on the broad scope of rationality tends to bridge the different fields of education rather than pull them apart. The arts, for example, are all fields in which rationality and the cluster of ideas connected with rationality have a place—e.g., discussion, consideration, reflection, deliberation. A student of dance doesn't just emote and move around with flailing arms and legs; the apprentice as well as the expert does a lot of thinking, questioning and talking, even if the talking is not all verbal but is by way of gesture, sketching and facial expression.

Siegel: How do you see recent criticisms of rationality, either in education or in philosophy or in general?

Scheffler: I am much more aware of popular reactions to it than I am of philosophical arguments. A currently popular mood exalts the feelings at the expense of rationality. I believe one source of this mood is a hunger for something called 'spirituality' but not further explained. I sympathise with the hunger which I interpret as a symptom of dissatisfaction with the consumerism, crassness and vulgarity rampant in contemporary society and magnified by the popular media. This dissatisfaction powers a wish for something more decent and finer. I share the wish but sympathise neither with the blame directed at rationality nor the praise of an unanalysed spirituality.

Siegel: It sounds like you don't take any of that to be any sort of serious criticism of rationality.

Scheffler: No, I don't.

Siegel: Maybe I could point your attention to a more direct criticism of rationality. There are some theorists who would argue against the very idea of rationality, as conceived in the Western philosophical tradition, that it has unhappy political consequences or presuppositions; in particular, that it in effect imposes a Western, 'masculinist' conception of rationality onto people who have different cultural values and cultural and gender identities and so on. Do you have any sort of general reaction to that?

Scheffler: Yes. That kind of argument seems to me ridiculous, to put it straight.

Siegel: ‘Ridiculous’—well, that’s straight, all right! Why, though?

Scheffler: In the first place, the justification of rationality is not that it promises ‘happy’ political consequences, but that it empowers understanding, effectiveness in action and the pursuit of truth. Political, cultural and gender critiques are wildly beside the point. Secondly, the idea that rationality is a Western trait imposed on the reluctant East, for example, is ludicrous. The stereotype of spiritual Asia is belied by Asian excellence in science, mathematics and technology and the heavy involvement by Asian countries in the expansion of political power and trade. I remember asking my dentist before my trip to Asia what I should do if I needed dental work while I was away. He laughed, assuring me that the best dental technology in the world was to be found in Japan.

Siegel: Do you know the recent book by the social psychologist Richard Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently—and Why*, which argues for a kind of different mentality between the West and the East?

Scheffler: I don’t know the book. But certainly there are differences in mentality rooted in history and culture. For example, one of the things that profoundly interested me during my visit to Japan was the religious aspect, the dominant spirit of which was not monotheism but polytheism. Coming into the main hall of the Sanjusangendo temple in Kyoto, housing 1001 statues of Kannon Bosatsu, each five and a half feet tall and with individualised facial features, was a strikingly new experience for me. The notion that the world is not one, religiously speaking, but many—that is indeed a difference of mentality ingrained in aspects of Asian culture. But that it implies any difference with respect to rationality, either technical rationality, instrumental rationality or logical and linguistic rationality, seems to me just plain wrong.

Siegel: Would you say that there could be some sort of gender bias in the valorisation of rationality or reason? Some feminists have said of your views that they are masculinist, biased against women. How would you answer that charge?

Scheffler: This claim is equally ridiculous, itself expressing a bias against women. The notion that rationality is less suitable for women or that they are less able to reflect rationally on anything is just insulting to them. I still remember one meeting of the American Philosophical Association devoted to issues of feminism several years ago. Some of the panellists were promoting certain feminist ideas, when from the floor came a comment from Ruth Barcan Marcus, the Yale logician. She recalled that, when she was a graduate student, she had joined with several other women graduate

students, pasting a portrait of Freud on the wall and taking turns throwing darts at it in protest of Freud's view about a special women's psychology. She further recalled that when she told her advisor that she wanted to major in mathematics, he said, 'You cannot major in mathematics. You're a woman.' She concluded by saying, in roughly these words: 'I have been fighting against this bias all my life. Now I come to this meeting and am told by women that women are rationally different and cannot handle technical materials?' That was a forceful speech I thought perfectly to the point.

I have known women in my academic and life experience who in every way have been as creative, as rational, as intellectually serious as any man I know. Certainly women have been restricted in their professional aspirations because of social constraints impugning their rationality. It is these constraints that embody bias against women, not the high value placed on rationality.

Siegel: I wonder whether that is the basic objection to be faced. While I hesitate to speak for them, I can imagine that some feminist philosophers would say (among many other things): 'Look, we're not arguing that Ruth Barcan Marcus isn't a great logician. That is not our point. Our point is rather that the way that rationality is conceived in the West carves up the world in ways that reflect certain values and denigrate other values—and the way that that is done overvalues traits and abilities commonly associated with males and function in what is called the "public sphere", the sphere of public life where rational disputation and cold calculation are supremely valued, and undervalues the private sphere: child-rearing, care-taking, mentoring, activities where something other than calculation is most appropriate.' And so the complaint against the general characterisation of reason in the West doesn't say that people like Ruth Marcus aren't great logicians—of course not. It says rather that the other areas of life to which women have traditionally been consigned get short shrift, and that there's a problem with *that*.

Scheffler: You refer to 'the basic objection' by some feminists who argue that 'the way rationality is conceived carves up the world' so as to overvalue traits commonly associated with males. Now, to what exactly is this argument an objection? Certainly not to rationality as such but rather to the way it is presumed to have been conceived. Rationality itself, i.e., the idea of critical thought, does not carve up the world at all nor, *a fortiori*, does it imply any value preference for males or 'the public sphere'. This feminist argument is utterly irrelevant to rationality as such, nor does it in the least challenge the high value placed upon rationality. The quarrel of feminists is with prevalent social barriers, which they advocate changing.

Siegel: So, if I could bring this part of our discussion to a close: if I understood you aright, what you just said is something like, 'If there is a problem about women being consigned to the private sphere where reason is not as relevant, then the solution is, first, to notice that reason *is* relevant; and

second, that this is not a philosophical problem but rather a social problem to be solved by social change.’ Is that a fair summary of your remarks?

Scheffler: Yes.

Siegel: Thank you. Maybe we should move on to a different topic. You know that in the history of the philosophy of education since you have been part of it, there has been a great rise and then somewhat fall of the analytic tradition (in the philosophy of education). I wonder if you could say something about that—about the place of analysis or analytic philosophy in philosophy of education, and its trajectory over the course of your career.

Scheffler: Philosophy has its ups and downs and changes. I recall a debate in which Thurman Arnold responded to Sidney Hook, a promoter of pragmatism, by suggesting a flippant comparison of philosophy to ballet: First, one group of dancers does its little dance on centre stage and returns to its place; then a different group of dancers does its little dance on centre stage and returns to its place. His concluding suggestion was that after the pragmatists had finished their little dance, they would retire into the wings and give way to the next group. Pragmatism is indeed a pertinent case in point. After Dewey’s pre-eminence in the twenties, thirties and forties, there was a lull in which nobody was interested in Dewey, and that was apparently the end of that. Other interests had emerged, focusing on new techniques of analysis, which I supported. I knew that philosophy typically advances in spurts rather than continuously so I didn’t take the Dewey lull very seriously, and indeed he was among the first philosophers I taught when I began my Harvard career. After I went on to concentrate on other studies, having completed my book on pragmatism, a Dewey revival had its halting beginnings until, by now, it has swelled into an ever broadening stream. In recent years, the interest in analytic philosophy of education has clearly begun to wane, and current analytical efforts have sometimes seemed to me to be running in place, losing the momentum of continued growth. But continuity of growth is, in any case, not an option. Imre Lakatos urged the recognition that research programmes tend to lose their steam after a while, and that certainly happens both in science and in philosophy. But they are not always gone, often going into hibernation, eventually to return in different but related garb. You cannot in any event get rid of analysis, which is a primary feature of the history of philosophy, from Aristotle to the present. I don’t know if that answers the question.

Siegel: Yes it does. Let me follow up on your remarks about Dewey. Having taught Dewey now for 50 years or so, what do you see as the main significance of Dewey’s philosophy of education? And, as an aside to the readers of this journal: Why do you think that Dewey was in general less well received in the UK than in the US?

Scheffler: As to your second question, I can only conjecture. There were certainly cultural, educational and historical factors in the shaping of

attitudes toward Dewey on different sides of the Atlantic. But I would rather leave the detailed answer to your question to the historians and return to your first question. Let me, however, make a brief comment on differences of writing style. Dewey, who began as a Hegelian, had a somewhat lumbering style quite at odds with that of his early disputant, Bertrand Russell, whose brilliant conciseness was honed by the British philosophical tradition, and mathematics to boot. Such stylistic difference did, I believe, have an effect, but it was not unbridgeable, as the following anecdote shows. Alfred North Whitehead, who was both English and a celebrated mathematician, appreciated vagueness. In an oral doctoral examination at Harvard, where Whitehead taught from 1929 on, he posed one question to the doctoral candidate (let's call him Mr. Jones): 'What do you think of clarity, Mr. Jones?', to which Jones responded with extended praise of clarity that seemed to go on and on. Whitehead waited patiently until Jones had finished and said, 'That will be all, Mr. Jones'.

Siegel: And the significance of Dewey's philosophy of education?

Scheffler: Dewey viewed education as a function of society at large, comprised of all the social influences affecting the young. This platonic emphasis is one that Dewey took seriously; it tends to remove education from the cloistered realm of schooling and to put it in a larger context, viewing the school itself as a social system nested within a larger social system. A major point of significance is Dewey's emphasis on democracy as a quality of associated living in society, in which free and open communication facilitates the contacts we have with one another. Thus, he was concerned to minimise barriers between members of a democratic society resulting from inevitable differences in vocation, interest, geographic location and still other factors tending to disrupt free flow across the barriers. Dewey related community to communication, offering access to the understanding of others. The enhancement of such access is, he thought, a prime function of education, not only in the three R's, but also in literature and the arts, which allow a democracy to be expanded by easing our understanding of the unique situation of others.

Dewey emphasised the interplay of theory and practice. Action, for him, is not extraneous to theory or a hindrance to learning. It is in fact essential to gaining a sense of the relation between our acts and their consequences. This is the core of Dewey's conception of education as exemplifying activity in meaningful connection with ideas, both in the classroom and in the enviroing society. His ideal society promotes the maximal growth of each person, fostering intelligent exchange of ideas open to the test of experience—criticisable by all affected by these ideas and alterable by procedures consented to by all. Of all the freedoms required by the democratic outlook, says Dewey, freedom of mind is basic, for without it, persons are not genuinely free to develop.

Siegel: Would you say that these views are particularly relevant today, given current multicultural emphases in education?

Scheffler: It is important to acknowledge that our society comprises members with diverse cultural backgrounds. But multiculturalism requires to be sustained by common structures in order for a society to thrive. The legal and political systems are prime examples of the structural frameworks that hold our society together. But the channels of free communication that Dewey emphasised are essential to a community that is, moreover, a democracy. I would add that communication requires not only freedom but also a degree of commonality—shared languages, symbols and literary landmarks that connect us to one another via common memories and associations. Literary landmarks that have served us in the past and provided us with unifying forces have become progressively weaker. Such commonality as had in the past been provided us by shared myths, poetry and religious literatures, for example, has lost much of its hold. Alfred North Whitehead describes his childhood in an English county in the north in which there were stone walls, and sheep and the tolling of the bells. His early education, he recalls, consisted largely of Greek and Roman history and the Bible. Thereafter, he says he never encountered any contingency in human affairs that had not been anticipated by what he had learned either in the Bible or in Greek and Roman history. A tremendous advantage in nurturing a sense of commonality is provision of such a shared, if vicarious, experience of persons and events. Nowadays, that's largely gone, unfortunately, the only comparably shared human templates in our society being products of the TV entertainment media, purveying fool's gold to our youth as common coin. This problem is cultural and educational and needs to be addressed as such.

Siegel: Do you have a recommendation for how to solve this problem? How to give us commonality, or to survive without it?

Scheffler: I wish I did. I don't know. If the popular media could only view themselves as providing not merely entertainment, but also education, that would be a step in the right direction. The public has a central role here in providing the demand that might translate into economic incentives for change.

Siegel: How would you describe the current state of philosophy of education? How do you see its past? Perhaps you might say something about your relationship with Peters and Hirst, and philosophy of education in the English-speaking world in the earlier part of your career. But also I want to ask you about the present: What is the state of play in the present? And then, what do you think about its future? (There's a nice small question for you!)

Scheffler: In the past, I had a clear idea of what I'd like to do and what I thought needed doing. It had to do with treating the subject as connected with philosophy in general, as connected with the history of philosophy, its methods and problems. I thought philosophy an important ingredient in the education of educators responsible for shaping the intellectual and moral climate of our schools. One of the problems in trying to do this was

the fact that, unlike in many other countries, philosophy doesn't have a place in American secondary schools. In other countries, it does: in France, in Germany, in Britain, people know about the subject; they value it, they understand it, and many of the public figures have gone through an educational system in which they learned to appreciate it and see what it contains. In the United States, most of the public figures have not had that experience. They come up in society through the law, or through politics or business, and philosophy is pretty far removed. And so, the schools themselves have to fight the battle without allies. That's a serious problem. What we—Richard Peters and Paul Hirst and I, and others—attempted to do was promote the subject in the education of teachers, our special bailiwick. We had a purpose, a programme and a sense of movement. Peters did a tremendous job in the UK, working with the teachers' colleges in particular. In this country, we could not follow the same course, lacking comparable systems of teachers' colleges and the public appreciation of philosophy evident in the UK. In Britain, books in philosophy are reviewed in the general press, and in journals as well as on radio. We don't have a comparable situation here. Professional journals review philosophy publications, and some general journals do so as well selectively, the *New York Review of Books* perhaps the best known. So the battle was the same, but the resources for the battle were different. To sum up, I think that we managed to accomplish something in that period. I still think it was a reasonable thing to try to do. Now, if I move to the present, the situation is different because of new emphases such as multiculturalism and feminism and the turn away from systematic to political matters, as well as a growing hospitality to mystical and self-described spiritual movements.

Siegel: Are you speaking now about people in general or philosophers in education in particular?

Scheffler: I was talking about the situation in general, but the changes have affected philosophy as well. A good deal of philosophical energy has moved in the direction of political and cultural matters. How such changes ought to affect the educational system has become a preoccupation of many philosophical studies. I can't speak with great confidence about the present situation in philosophy of education, but I do read *Educational Theory* and the *PES Yearbook*, and I was pleased to see the latest issue of the latter, which I thought was quite good.

Siegel: This would be the 2003 *Yearbook*.

Scheffler: Yes. I thought that it showed an improvement in quality, and in the sort of consecutiveness that I mentioned earlier.

Siegel: Turning to the future of philosophy of education: Let's assume for the moment that there is a gradual improvement in quality in recent published work. Where do you think it should go? Where would it be good

to take this new quality? What should philosophers of education be doing for the next couple of decades? (How far into the future are you willing to peer?)

Scheffler: I hope that philosophers of education will locate their work on a broad canvas and deal with the most fundamental conceptual and theoretical questions that can be asked about thinking, knowing, feeling, choosing, acting and valuing. In these efforts they will, I hope, relate their ideas to the historical background of the issues in question as well as to comparable efforts of other countries. Philosophy is a worldwide enterprise, and acknowledging this fact would help to expand the subject from its largely local and contemporary concerns and cultivate a larger view.

Siegel: What you just said reminded me of what you said earlier about the problem of decentralisation in the US. If we really tried to introduce philosophy into the public high school curriculum, the task would be impossible because we'd have to persuade each school district individually to do this. The fact of decentralisation makes significant reform or systemic reform almost impossible; at least very difficult. We'd need an army of philosophical crusaders!

Scheffler: I am perhaps less pessimistic than you are on this point since particular schools or programmes with visibility may occasionally catch on. The problem is to increase the visibility of good programmes.

Siegel: I'm uneasy about asking this next question. Let me just blurt it out, and you do with it what you will: How do you view your own legacy as a philosopher of education? How would you hope to be remembered by the field?

Scheffler: Every age in philosophy has to take account of where it is and not dwell on the past. It has to use what it has from the past, but it has to move along. Every generation succeeds through being useful in the present and then linking with future concerns. That's the way it goes. The best you can do is to contribute something that helps the future to take care of itself. I don't think much about my legacy. But I hope that some of the things I did have been useful and might in addition serve to advance future efforts. I'd be delighted if that were the case.

Siegel: Are there particular pieces of your work that you think are more likely to be useful?

Scheffler: I don't really know.

Siegel: Well, if I may offer my own view of the matter, it seems overwhelmingly likely that much of your work will be very helpful indeed in advancing future efforts, just as it has been enormously influential and useful until now. Speaking personally, some of the essays in *Reason and Teaching* were terrifically important. *Conditions of Knowledge* is still widely

admired among epistemologists forty years after its publication. Your books in philosophy of science, *Science and Subjectivity* and *The Anatomy of Inquiry*, are both still quoted and discussed, as are *Beyond the Letter*, *In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions* and your many other publications. But perhaps for the moment we can agree to await the verdict of history.

I wonder if we might return to our earlier discussion of analysis and the analytic tradition. It's often said that the analytic tradition is unconcerned with norms and sees itself as working on one side of a sharp divide, between something like neutral descriptive analysis, on the one hand, and normative evaluation or recommendation, on the other hand. It has been suggested that you yourself are that kind of analyst, who stays clear of norms in your analytical work. I wonder if you could either confirm or disconfirm this suggestion.

Scheffler: The idea that there is a sharp division between analysis and norms is itself one that I would reject. If you are analyzing the descriptive meaning of ideas that relate to action, or intention, or value and so on, your mere description often has normative effect.

Every descriptive notion has potential effect on people's actions, given their cluster of norms, and further affects these norms. A chemical analysis of a toxic substance, not advocating any norms, just telling you what the toxicity consists in, affects your actions, given your aversion to being poisoned.

Now, take the idea of teaching. I wanted to analyze this idea descriptively in terms of the exchange of reasons. Some people said, 'but you also advocating', suggesting that I was propounding a norm exalting reasoning over all other forms of interaction with youngsters. Well, not really. There are indeed occasions when reasoning, hence teaching itself by my lights, is clearly inappropriate. A small child you have told to stay on the sidewalk and not venture onto the highway happens to be rational and asks, 'Why?', to which you reply; 'Because I don't want you to get hit by passing cars.' The child responds, 'I am not convinced. I've heard your reason and I reject it.' Well, you'd better do something for that child different from teaching. Pull him out of traffic. And then you can take your time indoctrinating him, punish him if you have to, if you want to keep him alive.

I wouldn't want to confuse the descriptive with the apparently normative realms; nevertheless, there are real connections between the two.

Siegel: Would you relate that account of the alleged analysis/norm distinction to Hilary Putnam's last several efforts to challenge the fact/value distinction?

Scheffler: I have not read Putnam on this issue, but I'm familiar with the general idea through Dewey and many of the extended critical discussions of Dewey's views on this topic, by Morton White, Sidney Hook, John Ladd and numerous others. Dewey, however, requires interpretation, and I here offer my own preferred interpretation: In certain passages he states

his view in what I believe to be an extreme and untenable form. In these passages, he affirms that value judgments come down to an empirical assessment of conditions and consequences. Thus it is in principle a scientific matter, once having determined the conditions and consequences of an action, to conclude that it is, e.g., right or wrong (or neither). This view is untenable as stated since from a statement of the conditions and consequences of an action the statement that the action is right (or wrong or neither) does not follow logically. If you know that this particular food will poison you, it does not strictly follow that you shouldn't eat it. In order for it to follow, you would need to presuppose an extra premise saying that you shouldn't eat anything that will poison you, or something to the same effect. The upshot is that there is indeed a logical distinction between facts and values even though the two realms admittedly interact causally.

Dewey's plausible response, as I interpret it, is this: By the time you are trying to determine whether a certain action is right or wrong, you have already incorporated a whole cluster of relevant values. It isn't as if—as the title of Wolfgang Koehler's book, *The Place of Value in a World of Facts*, suggests—value springs by spontaneous generation from neutral fact. The individual world in which each of us lives is not a world of facts alone. It comprises not only our factual beliefs but also our interests, impulses and aversions, all set to move us in particular directions given our understandings of the factual situation. These characteristic sets represent our initial values, helping to define our problems of choice and modifiable by our eventual choices.

When articulated, these sets include the extra premises needed for the logical derivations mentioned earlier. They are not magical rabbits pulled out of Dr. Dewey's hat to save his theory, but real features ingredient in the problem situations we individually face.

Siegel: So, on the one hand, you are agreeing with the basic criticism, which is really Hume's, that 'You can't derive an "ought" from an "is".' But it doesn't follow from that that description and evaluation are wholly separate.

Scheffler: Yes, as you put it, 'You can't . . .', if you think of yourself as possessing only facts as resources. But what, after all is the 'you' in actuality? For Dewey, the particular 'you' is a mass of presupposed factual and value beliefs defining your individual problem situation. This situation already involves both sides of the fact/value divide, your 'oughts' as well as your 'is's'. Given these embodied 'oughts' as your tacit premises, you can, from the empirical 'is's' you newly acquire, proceed to derive the further 'oughts' that resolve your problem.

Siegel: That's a very good way to put it, I think. If you put it the way that I put it—as 'you can't derive an "ought" from an "is"'—the 'you' is already involved. If you said it instead in some kind of neutral way—like "'Is" statements do not entail "ought" statements'—that's correct, but it does not fully represent the problem situation.

Scheffler: That's correct. Dewey expresses his views in different ways. He doesn't organise this anywhere so far as I know. But when you put it all together, the interpretation I gave seems to me to represent his general view. Sidney Hook, a Dewey disciple, one of whose courses I took as an undergraduate, defined philosophy as 'a survey of existence from the standpoint of value'. I was very sceptical of it at the time, but it has a certain point: The standpoint of value is where we are. And the descriptive survey of existence does not stand alone. It is associated from the outset with values determining our problems.

Siegel: I wonder if you could say something about the relationship between your own work in philosophy of education and progressivism. To what extent are you a progressivist, if any?

Scheffler: You mean 'progressivism' in the sense of Dewey's philosophy of education?

Siegel: In the sense of Dewey's progressivism.

Scheffler: I value many of the ideas associated with progressivism—for example, learning by doing, relating school and society, the project method of teaching, the importance of the social climate of the school, individualising learning, democracy as an educational norm, reduction of rote learning, emphasis on creativity and problem solving and still others. Over the years, several of these ideas had been exaggerated or otherwise distorted, incurring Dewey's own criticism, in 1938, of the work of some of his early followers. What he wanted was balance—a virtue most difficult to achieve.

Siegel: A final question: What are you doing these days, philosophically speaking? What philosophical problems are you concerned with?

Scheffler: Well, mostly this last year, I was occupied with the publication of my book, *Gallery of Scholars*, and most of my concern was focused on seeing the way people's teaching styles and personalities interacted with the subjects of their teaching. I have now resumed my work on other topics, including the theory of literature, for example, and certain issues in epistemology.

Siegel: Thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview. It has been a real pleasure for me.

Scheffler: Thank you.

Correspondence: Harvey Siegel, Department of Philosophy, University of Miami, 719 Ashe Administration Building, 1252 Memorial Drive, Coral Gables FL 33146, USA.

Email: siegel@miami.edu; Israel_Scheffler@Harvard.edu