

Shedding Light on Constellations:
On Richard Bernstein's
Eclectic Approach to Philosophy

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Introduction

In 1972, the struggling philosophy department of the New School for Social Research (then called The Graduate Faculty) went against Hannah Arendt—one of its most famous and influential faculty members—by not hiring Richard J. Bernstein. Over a decade later, in 1989, Bernstein was invited to rebuild that same department (which by then was on the brink of being closed down), and he worked tirelessly to turn it into the successful and attractive graduate program it eventually became. Fifty years later, in 2022, the irony of that erroneous decision is obvious, and the actual reasons behind it were best captured by Arendt herself who pointed out the extreme conservatism of all academic thinking upon facing freshness and originality of thought.¹ Nevertheless, the formal reason for rejection voiced in the Dean’s letter addressed to Bernstein is notable. According to the letter, Bernstein’s candidacy was rejected because “some of the best doctoral students in the Philosophy Department” didn’t like his “*supposed non-systematic approach to philosophy*” (emphasis added).² While the word “supposed” was (likely) used to distance the Dean’s own view from the one expressed by the abovementioned students and other faculty members, the expression “non-systematic approach to philosophy”—initially meant as a criticism of Bernstein—aptly captures his philosophical style rooted in his pragmatist commitments, informed by his lifelong engagement with his peers and friends, and articulated in a distinctive Bernsteinian voice.

In an interview he gave to *Yale Daily News* at the time when he was an assistant professor of philosophy at Yale University, Bernstein reflected on the state of philosophy as a discipline in the 1960s and characterized his approach in the following way:

¹ In her letter to Bernstein from October 31, 1972, Arendt wrote: “Dear Dick, You should have received by now the letter of the dean. Needless to say, I am very disappointed. I’ve tried all I could, and I don’t think that the opposition is due to Byzantine intrigues—if there were intrigues, they certainly weren’t Byzantine. The reason as I see it is very simple. I just reread your book which I also use for a discussion of Marx in the seminar and I was again struck by the freshness and originality of your thought. The first reaction of the academic milieu to somebody who quite obviously strikes it out on his own is always negative . . . All academic thinking, whether right, left, or middle, is conservative in the extreme. Nobody wants to hear what he hasn’t heard before.” See Hannah Arendt, *Hannah Arendt Papers: Correspondence, 1938–1976; Bernstein, Richard, 1972–1974*, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/mss11056dig.020110/?sp=14>.

² See the rejection letter from Dean Joseph J. Greenbaum in *Hannah Arendt Papers: Correspondence, 1938–1976*, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/mss11056dig.020110/?sp=13>

Philosophy is now fragmented. Many people who are doing philosophy today are scared, skeptical. They have found that it is easier to carve out a narrow domain, to do all their work in a specialized field. This disease of specialization could be the death of philosophy. Fortunately, many younger philosophers are discontented with this approach. *We must learn to look at every question with comprehensiveness.* It is my deep conviction that no single school has an exclusive hold on the truth. I am not an existentialist or any other kind of “ist.” I hope. *My approach is eclectic.* All perspectives deserve a hearing (emphases added).³

For some philosophers, “non-systematic” and “eclectic” are negative definitions signaling a rational deficiency of some sort. But Bernstein felt comfortable applying them to his thinking. In the course of his career, he explored a broad variety of questions, wrote on seemingly unrelated subjects, and commented on the work of diverse historical and contemporary figures without feeling compelled to provide a systematic synthesis. Appreciating clarity and always striving for it, he elucidated complex issues without reducing his discussions to narrow propositional analyses of philosophical arguments. He lavishly quoted from other authors but kept his own voice loud and clear in the polyphony of the interlocutors he generously brought into his discussions. He let others speak first, but he always took a stand on an issue and provided arguments for his own position.

He stayed committed to this approach throughout his entire intellectual life, including his last works on naturalism: *Pragmatic Naturalism: John Dewey’s Living Legacy* (2020) and *The Vicissitudes of Nature: From Spinoza to Freud* (2022). In both works, he spends a considerable amount of time and attention providing historical context and textual support for his reading of the most notable representatives of the philosophical currents he explores: the naturalists of the modern period (Spinoza, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud), in *The Vicissitudes of Nature*, and the liberal naturalists of the twentieth and twenty-first century (John Dewey, Wilfrid Sellars, Robert Brandom, John McDowell, Peter Godfrey-Smith, Philip Kitcher, Huw Price, Joseph Rouse), in *Pragmatic Naturalism*. And in both works he goes well beyond historical reconstruction when he engages in a critical polemic with the main

³ Mark W. Foster, “Faculty Interview: Richard J. Bernstein: An ‘A’ in Bookbinding,” *Yale Daily News*, February 27, 1963, 2.

characters of his stories: for instance, with Kant on his proposed “solution” to the problem of reconciling freedom and natural necessity (which Bernstein finds unsatisfactory), or with John McDowell regarding his claim of the radical discontinuity between human and nonhuman animals (which, in Bernstein’s view, reinforces an unhelpful dichotomy).

1. Primacy of Inquiry and Fallibilism

In my view, Bernstein’s “non-systematic” or “eclectic” approach to philosophy is the result and expression of his philosophical commitments, the key to which is his pragmatic commitment to the inquiry itself.⁴ From the onset of his academic career to his last book, Bernstein echoed and followed Peirce’s call for an open-ended and self-corrective inquiry into the ultimate ends of human actions taking place within the community. For him, it meant that there weren’t philosophical subjects, ideas, and positions that couldn’t be touched and interrogated further with respect to their meaning in the contemporary socio-historical context and in light of the ever-changing ethical-political goals. He particularly liked and often quoted Sellars’ articulation of Peircean pragmatic fallibilism:

Empirical knowledge, like its sophisticated extension science, is rational, not because it has a *foundation*, but because it is a self-correcting enterprise which can put *any* claim into jeopardy, though not *all* at once.⁵

Bernstein fully endorsed and practiced this fallibilist principle in his own philosophical work. Defending the role of critique as the primary tool and vehicle of philosophical thinking, Bernstein wrote: “Of course, there is always the risk that any critique will distort or fail to do justice to what is being criticized. But if this happens,

⁴ Here is how *Yale Daily News* began their profile of young Bernstein: “Richard J. Bernstein, assistant professor of philosophy, is an excited man. He is excited about what he is doing, but he is even more excited by ideas and by the search for them. Not a man to sympathize with the conventional idea of commitment as a devotion to a single idea, he says, ‘One should be committed to an *ideal of inquiry in which he takes stands but in which he realizes that every area is always open to investigation.*’ (emphasis added).” Foster, “Faculty Interview: Richard J. Bernstein,” 2.

⁵ Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997) §38, 79.

it can only be corrected by further critique.”⁶ Bernstein’s account of Spinoza in *The Vicissitudes of Nature* is an example of the productive pragmatic critique he called for and practiced. In the book, he admits that until a few years ago he shared the prejudices about Spinoza prevalent among the Anglo-American scholars: “Like many contemporary thinkers, I thought of Spinoza as a historical curiosity who proposed a grand metaphysical scheme that is no longer viable in light of criticisms advanced by such thinkers as Hume, Kant, and Hegel. Nevertheless, when I turned to the details of his thinking about nature, I discovered a richness of insight that is relevant to contemporary philosophical debates.”⁷ For Bernstein, admitting the limitation of his long-held critical view of Spinoza was not just a curious and important step of his individual intellectual journey. His personal “rediscovery” of Spinoza affected his entire view of the history of modern naturalism and shaped his narrative by forcing him to outline new distinctions and make new comparisons among the thinkers he brought together in this project.⁸ Moreover, it deepened his understanding of the task facing future proponents of philosophical naturalism. Thus, at the end of his chapter on Spinoza, as if in response to his earlier skepticism, he makes an updated critical claim about Spinoza’s philosophical significance, which reflects his new and more nuanced understanding of his project: “Despite the many critiques by subsequent philosophers, who persuasively showed why we must qualify his extreme version of naturalism and his philosophy of immanence, Spinoza nevertheless stands both as an inspiration and a challenge to those who are committed to developing a non-reductive philosophical naturalism.”⁹

2. Antifoundationalism

Another pragmatic commitment, closely related to the primacy of inquiry and fallibilism, and reflected in Bernstein’s philosophical style, is his antifoundationalism—a belief that it is possible to assess the validity of philosophical claims without appealing to an axiomatic scaffolding provided by rationally grounded universal principles. For Bernstein, as for Dewey and other pragmatists, objective

⁶ Richard J. Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1992) 6.

⁷ Bernstein, *The Vicissitudes of Nature: From Spinoza to Freud* (Hoboken, NJ: Polity, 2022) viii.

⁸ See, for example, pages 202–203 of *The Vicissitudes of Nature* for Bernstein’s illuminating account of the affinities between Spinoza, on the one hand, and Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, on the other.

⁹ Bernstein, *The Vicissitudes of Nature*, 49.

knowledge is achieved neither by the application of “objective laws of reasoning” (rules of formal or dialectical logic) nor by some intrinsic or immutable (transcendental) categories of understanding. For pragmatists, objectivity is rooted in social justificatory practices rather than universally valid criteria of justification independent of the social conditions of inquiry. Thus, when it comes to knowledge, and specifically to philosophical intuitions, we may never be able to achieve absolute certainty and complete agreement among all members of the global philosophical community of inquirers.

But for Bernstein, this provided a reason for optimism. “Nobody has the final word,” he liked to repeat, and this humble acknowledgment of our unique epistemological condition gave him hope that a process of honest and independent inquiry would go on despite the unceasing pressures of dogmatism and nihilism on creative thinking. This doesn’t mean, however, that we shouldn’t aim to harmonize our diverse intuitions in the act of understanding and try to accommodate as many perspectives as possible. But it may be naive to think that we can “ever escape from some form of the clash of intuitions.”¹⁰ Noticing and highlighting many such clashes among the thinkers he examined in *The Vicissitudes of Nature*, Bernstein uses them to remind his readers that the pretensions of philosophy to provide “objective knowledge”—including knowledge of nature—have long been met with skepticism by those thinkers who themselves sought to advance and deepen our understanding of nature. In his book, Bernstein does not smooth out the clashes into a fluent historical narrative; instead, he creatively doubles down on the idea of an intellectual clash by making it into a structural element of his book. He divides the book into two parts and invites Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, the “masters of suspicion” as he calls them (following Ricoeur), to come and effectively destroy the foundationalist illusions holding up the systems of their predecessors, Hume, Kant, and Hegel, who appeared in the first part. “For all their differences, they [the “masters”] shared a suspicion of the appeal to consciousness, which had been so fundamental in philosophy since the times of Descartes.”¹¹ “The masters of suspicion,” Bernstein continues, “are ‘great destroyers,’ but they destroy in order to build afresh and to reveal new ways of understanding nature, especially the *relation* and *transaction* that takes place between human and nonhuman nature.”¹² As Bernstein shows, even with such a methodological rupture in its heart, the project of philosophical naturalism holds up—

¹⁰ Bernstein, *The Pragmatic Turn* (Cambridge, MA: Polity, 2010) 124.

¹¹ Bernstein, *The Vicissitudes of Nature*, 131.

¹² *Ibid.*, 132.

as well as Bernstein's book that traces it—since it is supported not by some ahistorical rational insight we call “truth” (or by an overarching historical claim, in the case of the book), but by the continuous intellectual work of the numerous thinkers—the inquirers like Bernstein himself—who strive to articulate anew a view of nature (and humans-in-nature) reflective of who they are.

3. Plurality and Diversity

Although Bernstein recognized and often spoke of the danger of extreme pluralization in philosophy that may lead to fragmentation, for him, there was an intrinsic value to philosophical plurality.

This pluralistic clash [of intuitions] energizes philosophical speculation and enlivens philosophical debate. Sometimes it is just the slings and arrows that we feel from those who oppose us that drive us to a more subtle articulation of a philosophical orientation.¹³

He practiced what he called “engaged fallibilistic pluralism.”¹⁴ Agreeing with Hannah Arendt, he thought it was important to account for plurality both as a basic biological fact manifested in human beings and as a human condition expressed in the plurality of the ways of life, worldviews, and temperaments reflected in the diversity of philosophical perspectives. For that reason, he strongly resisted grand gestures and temptations to brush over philosophical differences and reduce complex arguments to a common denominator. For him, uncovering and exploring the “differences that really make a difference” was not just a canonical expression of the pragmatic ethos but a valuable heuristic tool that he used to bring together and do justice to heterogeneous thinkers and traditions. Guided by this principle, Bernstein put into dialogue thinkers as different as Spinoza and Freud, Marx and Arendt, Dewey and McDowell, Habermas and Derrida, to name a few, exploring contradictions among them but also discovering hidden affinities.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Bernstein outlines the principles of “engaged fallibilistic pluralism” in his famous 1988 APA Presidential Address. See Richard Bernstein, “Pragmatism, Pluralism, and the Healing of Wounds,” in *The New Constellation*, 323–340, esp. 336–339.

4. Constellations and Juxtaposition

“Constellation” is the metaphor Bernstein uses in the title of his 1991 collection of essays *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity*. An admirer of Plato who also shared his artistic sensibility, Bernstein liked poetic images, calling his lifelong fascination with philosophy a “romance,” and comparing creative philosophical thinking with dance.¹⁵ But here the fertile metaphor is also an expression of the methodological approach he employs to explore the main subject of *The New Constellation*—the relationship between modernity and postmodernity. Explaining his methodological choice, Bernstein writes:

“Constellation” is deliberately intended to displace Hegel’s master metaphor of *Aufhebung*. For . . . although we cannot (and should not) give up the *promise* and demand for reconciliation—a reconciliation achieved by what Hegel calls “determinate negation,” I do not think we can any longer responsibly claim that there is or can be a final reconciliation—an *Aufhebung* in which all difference, otherness, opposition and contradiction are reconciled.¹⁶

In my view, this approach characterizes most (if not all) of Bernstein’s works. To illuminate a constellation of ideas or thinkers means to shed light on the dynamic relational networks connecting individual philosophical insights and figures without inscribing them into a grand synthetical narrative. “Juxtaposition rather than integration” is the principle defining this approach. In Bernstein’s view, if we are

¹⁵ See Richard J. Bernstein, “The Romance of Philosophy,” in *Pragmatic Encounters* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 13–27. As is well known, when Bernstein taught his graduate seminars, he asked students to do class presentations on assigned readings. In 2010, I was lucky to be a student in his seminar on Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*. We spent the entire semester carefully reading and dissecting every proposition in this thin but densely-argued book. Given the complexity of the material, Bernstein demanded extra care and precision when students tried to summarize Wittgenstein’s arguments or make a general claim about the text. It made presenting on the *Tractatus* in class a particularly challenging exercise. Typically generous with praise, Bernstein was restrained and encouraged caution. When we finally mastered the material, and our presentations became more accurate and comments more coherent and even insightful, Bernstein observed: “Before, you were learning the steps. Now I can see that you are starting to dance.” Back then, his comparison of the activity of thinking with the beauty and freedom of dancing struck me as extremely accurate and potent. To this day, whenever I recognize such an experience in myself and others, I think of dance.

¹⁶ Bernstein, *The New Constellation*, 8.

serious about the demands of inquiry, the task of comprehension and critical engagement, we “have to learn to think and act in the in-between interstices of forced reconciliation and radical dispersion.”¹⁷

5. Thinking in the Gap - To-and-Fro Movement between Past and Future

“The in-between,” the gap, is an uncertain, unstable place to be and to think. And yet for Bernstein, it was his source of creative energy, which he masterfully tapped into while engaging his interlocutors—past and contemporary—in a to-and-fro play of understanding taking place in the process of critical dialogue.¹⁸ Unlike some of the analytical thinkers of his generation, Bernstein always understood the value of the historical approach in philosophy and its critical potential. He rejected the ahistorical aspiration to look at the world of ideas *sub specie aeternitatis*—as already given and fully present. “Nobody has the final word” in philosophy, he would say. It’s impossible to have a final word not only because the inquiry is an open-ended process directed into an infinite future but also because, with every new step taken, we access a new historical perspective on the present that affects our view of the future and the next step we take. Similarly, with every new metaphor, distinction, and set of problems we articulate today, we expose the historical contingency of our existing views, which in turn affects the goal we set for our understanding. Bernstein’s own understanding of pragmatism and its history underwent noticeable evolution in the last years of his teaching career. He became convinced that pragmatism should be understood and taught as a living movement rather than a school of thought or intellectual tradition, and he revised his syllabi by adding more Black and feminist thinkers to the reading list.¹⁹ The point of engaging and re-engaging with the history of pragmatism, he

¹⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹⁸ Here is how Bernstein describes the process of understanding, following Gadamer: “The basic condition for all understanding requires one to test and risk one’s convictions and prejudgments in and through an encounter with what is radically ‘other’ and alien. To do this requires imagination and hermeneutical sensitivity in order to understand the ‘other’ in its strongest possible light. Only by seeking to learn from the ‘other,’ only by fully grasping its claims upon one can it be critically encountered. Critically engaged dialogue requires the opening of oneself to the full power of what the ‘other’ is saying. Such an opening does not entail agreement but rather the to-and-fro play of dialogue. Otherwise dialogue degenerates into a self-deceptive monologue where one never risks testing one’s prejudgments.” Bernstein, *The New Constellation*, 4.

¹⁹ It was inspiring and humbling to witness this evolution in Bernstein’s approach to teaching

reminded the students, was not to learn and preserve the canon but to keep this tradition alive by using its critical tools and insights to grapple with the questions we are facing today.

In his essay “Philosophy, History, and Critique,” Bernstein draws on Arendt’s reading of Kafka’s parable to illustrate his view of the relation of philosophy to its past. The parable, which Arendt tells in the preface to *Between Past and Future* (1967), one of Bernstein’s favorite collections of Arendt’s essays, describes a scene in which a person is caught between two antagonists: “The first presses him from behind, from the origin. The second blocks the road ahead. He gives battle to both” while dreaming that “some time in an unguarded moment . . . he will jump out of the fighting line and be promoted, on account of his experience in fighting, to the position of umpire over his antagonists in their fight with each other.”²⁰ The two antagonists represent past and future, and the person’s simultaneous fight with both is a metaphor for human thinking taking place in time while hoping to achieve an eternal vantage point. Pondering further on the parable, Arendt suggests that, from the physicist’s point of view, the act of the two opposite forces results in a third, diagonal force—limited at its origin by the point of the clash but infinite with respect to its ending. “This diagonal force, whose origin is known, whose direction is determined by past and future, but whose eventual end lies in infinity, is the perfect metaphor for the activity of thought.”²¹ While thinking cannot jump out of time, it may still discover a gap between past and future—a “non-time-space in the very heart of time”—where it is sufficiently removed from both to achieve the coveted “umpire” position.

Philosophical thinking takes place in such a gap “and in fighting the battle

pragmatism. At the beginning of his last semester of teaching, Bernstein learned about a newly published book by Deva Woodly, Professor of Politics at the New School. The book, entitled *Reckoning: Black Lives Matter and the Democratic Necessity of Social Movements* (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2022), explores the Movement for Black Lives from the perspective of radical Black feminist pragmatism, which brings together Deweyan pragmatism, Black feminism, and activism. Upon reading it and finding it “superb,” Bernstein immediately asked me to add a chapter from the book to the syllabus of his Pragmatism seminar, and he invited Professor Woodly to speak to the seminar. Introducing the chapter to his students, he said that he felt as if it was written specifically for our class because it demonstrated a creative way in which the ideas of pragmatism can be made relevant for understanding the social and political issues we are dealing with today, such as the oppression of women and other marginalized groups and political movements fighting against oppressions.

²⁰ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: The Viking Press, 1961) 7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

between past and future,” Bernstein suggests, expanding Arendt’s image.²² “We never escape the battlefield in which there is always uneasy resolution and unresolved tension. It is a battle that is fraught with different types of dangers and illusions.”²³ Thus, it is not surprising, Bernstein continues, that philosophers often feel the urge to close the gap and fall into one of the two illusions suggesting either that “philosophy can once and for all cut itself off from its own past, jump out of its own history” or that “it can completely identify itself with its past.”²⁴ But falling into either of these extremes destroys the unique place in which the philosopher is able to think critically, to challenge their *current* prejudgments and prejudices while staying creative and offering *new* claims waiting to be scrutinized and evaluated by future inquirers. This is what Bernstein calls the “double critical gesture of philosophy.” He writes:

[The philosopher] must always engage in a double battle. Philosophy becomes thin and is in danger of losing its identity when it forgets its past... But it also becomes thin when it is seduced into thinking that the appeal to tradition is sufficient to answer its questions. It should be clear that *I reject foundationalism in its multifarious forms*. I not only reject the idea that philosophy itself can be grounded on permanent foundations and that philosophy itself is a foundational discipline, an arbitrator for the rest of culture; I also reject the idea that history—in any of its forms—is or can be a foundational discipline, that it can answer the questions we ask in philosophy. I do not believe that there are perennial problems in philosophy or philosophical intuitions which are so deep that they escape historical contingencies. But there is another way of understanding the perennial character of philosophy. For there is a *perennial impulse of wonder* that can take a variety of forms (emphases added).²⁵

²² Bernstein, *The New Constellation*, 16.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Bernstein, *The New Constellation*, 28. Bernstein spoke about experiencing this “perennial impulse of wonder” in one of his last classes on pragmatism. Reflecting on his intellectual journey, Bernstein remarked: “I really think, in one sense, my basic orientation is Socratic: questioning, thinking and trying to deal with what it means to live a proper life. And that curiosity that I find inspiring in Socrates—that’s what I experienced in philosophy.” Zoom meeting of American Pragmatism (GPHI 6091) course at The New School for Social Research, May 4, 2022.

Conclusion

Bernstein ends his essay by quoting a passage from Dewey's "Philosophy and Civilization," suggesting that Arendt's interpretation of Kafka's parable may actually be read as a commentary on Dewey—yet another example of the kind of improbable and illuminating dialogues Bernstein set up in his works. In the essay that drew Bernstein's attention, Dewey characterizes the work of philosophy as "the old and ever new undertaking of adjusting that body of traditions which constitute the actual mind of man to scientific tendencies and political aspirations which are novel and incompatible with received authorities. Philosophers are parts of history, caught in its movement; creators perhaps in some measure of its future, but also assuredly creatures of its past."²⁶

Bernstein shared this Deweyan pragmatic vision of philosophy and its task, which he carried all the way to his last works. His decision to return to Dewey, with whom he started his philosophical journey, and to thinking about nature was guided by his understanding that the "body of traditions" underlying our existing conception of the relations between humans and the rest of nature is grossly "incompatible" with the challenges of the current ecological crisis, which puts into question our very existence as a species. It was this worried outlook into the future that prompted his return to the philosophical past in search of the insights that could help us better understand the task before us, reevaluate our priorities, and explore what still can be done. Nevertheless, Bernstein's outlook is not pessimistic; it never was. He strongly believed in the power of amelioration. His last book is another reminder that "there are different things that can be done to meet the growing environmental crisis," but we need to be honest and realistic about it.²⁷ Among the many things I was privileged to witness over the years when I was Bernstein's student and research assistant, his intellectual honesty, courage, and infectious optimism are the ones that impacted me and my life in the most profound way.

Bernstein's uncanny (and ironic) academic trajectory, with which I began, as well as his unique philosophical path—his intellectual heroes, metaphors, questions and answers—certainly reflect his own time and the tradition of American pragmatism to which he belonged. And yet one cannot fail to notice that Bernstein was both ahead of his time and larger than any "isms" we are inclined to use to understand him. His respect for the tradition and openness to what is "other" and alien

²⁶ John Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization* (New York: Minton, Balch & Co, 1931) 3–4.

²⁷ Bernstein, *The Vicissitudes of Nature*, 208.

to it; his uncompromising antifoundationalism and gracious balancing in-between and in the gap; his deep respect for plurality and arguments for diversity and dialogue; and finally, his lifelong commitment to philosophical inquiry driven by his “perennial impulse of wonder”—are all eclectic parts of the eternal constellation of Richard Bernstein that shed light for several generations of philosophers, and will continue to inspire those who will come after.

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