



# Fashionable Nihilism: A Critique of Analytic Philosophy

*Bruce Wilshire*

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*One of America's foremost philosophers reflects on the discipline and its relation to everyday life.*

Thoreau wrote that we have professors of philosophy but no philosophers. Can't we have both? Why doesn't philosophy hold a more central place in our lives? Why should it? Eloquently opposing the analytic thrust of philosophy in academia, noted pluralist philosopher Bruce Wilshire answers these questions and more in an effort to make philosophy more meaningful to our everyday lives. Writing in an accessible style he resurrects classic yet neglected forms of inquiring and communicating. In a series of personal essays, Wilshire describes what is wrong with the current state of philosophy in American higher education, namely the cozy but ultimately suffocating confinements of professionalism. He reclaims the role of the philosopher as one who, like Socrates, would goad us out of self-contentedness into a more authentic way of being and knowing.

"If answers regarding the meaning of life and the purpose of philosophy continue to elude Bruce Wilshire, he is not alone. I am grateful to him for sharing his uncertainties, and also for reminding us of important issues that go to the heart of our lives as philosophers. I recommend this book highly." — Philip Cafaro, *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*

"...Wilshire's accomplishment goes well beyond this exposure of a fashionable nihilism. These elegantly crafted essays renew a style and scope of thinking that will be welcome to readers of *Parabola*, who can only lament a trend that threatens to have 'the personal,' 'soul,' or 'spirit' go the way of Zeus or Ahab—dated curiosities to be archived as folksy myths for the untutored ... Wilshire swims against the tide, reclaiming from its sophisticated detractors the ever-abundant wonders, terrors, and sustaining intimacies of mortal life." — *Parabola*

"A daring book! It demonstrates why and how philosophy must address the perennial questions of human existence. Failure to take up this challenge condemns the philosophy profession to irrelevancy and to the nihilism that has plagued it for too long." — Kenneth Stikkers, *Southern Illinois University, Carbondale*

"Wilshire illuminates not only philosophy today but the larger scene of the humanities as well. He addresses the question: Wherfore reflective, philosophically informed thought in America in the future?" — Edward S. Casey, *State University of New York at Stony Brook*

"This book blew my mind! It is a significant contribution to the growing literature assessing the fate of philosophy in the twentieth century, especially in America." — Nicholas Capaldi, *The University of Tulsa*

Bruce Wilshire is Senior Professor of Philosophy at Rutgers University. He received the Herbert Schneider Lifetime Achievement Award for 2001 from the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy. He is the author of many books, including most recently, *The Primal Roots of American Philosophy: Pragmatism, Phenomenology, and Native American Thought*.

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