Philosophy, the Humanities & the Life of Freedom

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Humanistic disciplines have family resemblances rather than a simple shared common aim or method, and, like literal family resemblances, these have an explanation that comes from their historical relationships to one another. Philosophy, in particular, is closely connected to the sciences it has spun off over the centuries, but remains distinct from them, because normative inquiry uses methods different from those of any contemporary science. But much philosophical inquiry, like much humanistic work, is also idiographic *rather than* nomothetic*; it focuses our attention on particular things, rather than seeking generalizations. The rewards of humanistic study are, therefore, as diverse as what we can gain from paying attention to its diverse objects of study. In ethics and political philosophy, in particular, we learn from studying particular episodes in which we discover the significance of certain values by recognizing what is wrong in societies in which they are not respected.*

> I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way.
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> —Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*[1]

No one who is wise will aim to define the humanities in a sentence or two. We use the term to refer to a remarkable variety of scholarly activities and, surveying them, it is not obvious that they have some shared something – an essence, some conditions necessary and sufficient for membership – that explains why we should lump them all together. One common use of the term in practice is to organize the administration of the university, where we have deans of humanities, alongside deans of social sciences, deans of natural sciences, and, often, people with various other decanal titles. But many departments fit uneasily

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into these structures. Are anthropologists and historians, say, humanists or social scientists? Some seem surely to be one or the other; many look a little like both. Where does cognitive science – with its computer scientists, its philosophers and neuroscientists and psychologists and linguists – belong? It seems pointless to insist on settling the question, save as a matter of administrative convenience. The humanities dean will hope for fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies, but will be delighted, too, when philosophers working on consciousness get grants from the National Institute of Mental Health.

You might think that the difficulty here derives from the fact that the various fields of the humanities display the sort of similarities to one another that Wittgenstein, thinking about games, called family resemblances. It is easy to see what he had in mind. I have the same nose as one of my sisters, like my mother and her father, but our eyes are much darker than theirs were. My father and I had gestures in common, as well as genes. But, as you know, the Y-chromosome I got from my father is in none of my sisters or their children and grandchildren. Nevertheless, any two of us – any two of the more than a dozen descendants of my parents – have things in common (family resemblances, then) even if there are no traits distinctive of the family that we all share. Even in the scattered world of my third cousins, who number in the thousands, I will see, from time to time, that nose, which my grandfather got from his grandfather, whose seven daughters spawned one part of that network of my kin.

But focusing on these various resemblances alone misses something important. Namely, that they have a historical explanation. I have that nose *because* I got the genes for it from my mother. Her father got it from his grandfather, by way of his mother. Those gestures I share with my father, I learned *from* him. I take a lesson from this: sometimes the explanation of why things belong together, the explanation of their family resemblances, is genealogical. There is a historical story, which may or may not be genetic, as to why they are there. And because history is messy and multifarious, there may be many such stories, some not much connected with others.

I want to discuss some of the ways in which one part of the contemporary philosophical landscape – the part that has to do with ethics and politics – fits into, and does not fit into, the humanities. Given our focus, I will be paying attention to the family resemblances at work in the literary and artistic humanities and to the humanistic aspects of the social sciences. But let me say at the start that I think the links to the social and biological sciences are important, too. I argued this before, in a book called *Experiments in Ethics*, in which I tried to show how ethics profits from a dialogue with what used to be called the "moral sciences": anthropology, economics, evolutionary psychology, and sociology.[2] A little genealogical sketch may help illuminate why, nevertheless, there is reason to place us in a different family history as well. And the analogy to family

histories here is crucial: all of us belong to many families, traceable by a variety of ancestries.

In his preface to the 1787 edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant said he wanted philosophy to take "the secure path of a science."[3] That move is one crucial starting point for modern professional philosophy in Europe and the cultures that have taken philosophy from her. But what most of us in philosophy departments in the North Atlantic world now do does not belong, in a variety of ways, with either the natural or the social sciences, and it is worth asking why.

One reason, to start us off, is that what we often call nowadays the "Western" philosophical canon – which runs from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, via Ibn Rushd and Aquinas, and on through Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Leibnitz to Kant himself – has spun off a great many sciences, which have then set out on their own. Without Descartes, no Cartesian coordinates; without Leibnitz and calculus, no modern physics; without Pascal, no probability theory; without Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, no economics; without Turing, no computer science; no Rudolf Carnap, no Chomskyan linguistics. So when a subject matter and a set of techniques develop to the point where they can be carried on by a new kind of specialist, they can bud, so to speak, off the philosophical branch.

Nevertheless, philosophy maintains connections with all of those sciences: first, because philosophers think about the philosophy of each particular discipline, of mathematics, physics, biology, economics, and so on. And second, because there are philosophical questions that need to take account of the best science of our day. There are many reasons why this, too, is so.

Here is one. Ontology is about what there is. How can we answer that question adequately while ignoring physics, biology, economics, and psychology? But another important reason is this, and it is crucial to my present purpose. Morality, which is part of the subject matter of ethics, is about what to do and what to feel; about how we should respond to our own, each other's, and the world's demands. And to apply norms sensibly we must understand the empirical contexts in which we apply them. No one, of course, denies that in applying norms, you need to know what, as an empirical matter, the effects of what you do will be on others. An opponent who denied that would be a straw man. There are real opponents, though, who deny that psychology can be relevant to the question of what values we ought to be guided by and what sorts of people we should aim to be. To such opponents, one can reasonably put questions such as these.

What would be the point of norms that human beings could not, given our psychologies, obey? After all, reflection suggests, in a philosopher's formula, that "ought" usually implies "can." (Which means that if you say somebody *ought* to do something, you must ordinarily be supposing that it is something they *can* do.)

And even if unfollowable norms had some sort of ideal force, how should we actual humans respond to them? If moral philosophy is to connect with moral life, if it is not to be, in the justly pejorative sense, "merely theoretical," it must attend, in articulating and defending norms, to how they can come to bear in actual lives.

During the Scottish Enlightenment, David Hume began his 1748 *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* by distinguishing two sorts of moral philosopher. One sort, he said, makes "us *feel* the difference between vice and virtue; they excite and regulate our sentiments." And, he goes on, as long as "they can but bend our hearts to the love of probity and true honour, they think, that they have fully attained the end of all their labours."[4] The others "regard human nature as a subject of speculation; and with a narrow scrutiny examine it, in order to find those principles, which regulate our understanding, excite our sentiments, and make us approve or blame any particular object, action, or behaviour."[5]

But it is hard to see how we can pursue the first project of moral exhortation and reform if what we learn in the second, speculative, project suggests that our recommendations are hopelessly unrealistic. At the very least, then, we would owe the psychologists a hearing in our moral lives, even if there were a kind of speculative philosophy that could ignore them.

You can go too far in the other direction, of course. Neuroscientist Sam Harris, in his book *The Moral Landscape*, aimed to meet head-on a claim he says he has often encountered: that the scientific worldview he favors must be silent on moral questions. Religion and philosophy deal with questions about "meaning, morality, and life's larger purpose," people say, questions that have no scientific answers. Harris's view is exactly the opposite. Only science can help us answer these questions, he says. That is because truths about morality and meaning "must relate to facts about the well-being of conscious creatures,"[6] and science alone – especially neuroscience, his own field of expertise – can uncover those facts. So rather than consulting Aristotle or Kant (let alone the Bible or the Koran) about what it is for human beings to flourish, why not turn to the sciences that study conscious mental life?

Harris means to be denying a thought often ascribed to the same David Hume, according to which there is a clear conceptual distinction between facts and values, the former being susceptible of rational investigation, the latter, supposedly, not. According to Harris, the values, too, can be uncovered by science, the right values, whose pursuit promotes our well-being.

Wait, though. How do we *know* that the morally right act is, as Harris posits, the one that does the most to increase well-being, defined in terms of our conscious states of mind? Has science revealed that? No. And I do not see how it could. That does not seem like a question to be settled through experiment, even guided by theory. And if science cannot do that, then the starting premise of Harris's arguments must have nonscientific origins.

In fact, what Harris ends up endorsing is something very like utilitarianism, a philosophical position that is now some two centuries old and that faces, as all familiar philosophical positions do, a battery of familiar challenges. The idea is that we should aim to maximize human (or perhaps animal) welfare and that that is all that matters. But even if you accept that basic premise, how do you compare the well-being of different creatures? Should we aim to increase average well-being (in which case a world consisting of one blissed-out hippie may be better than one with a billion just slightly less blissful people)? Or should we go for total well-being (which might favor a world with zillions of people whose lives are barely worth living)? If the mental states of conscious beings are what matter, what is wrong with killing someone in his sleep? How should we weigh present well-being against future well-being? Does no one have rights that we need to take account of?

But the deepest challenge to the only-science answer though, I think, is this. Psychology and neuroscience can tell you what it takes for a normal person to feel satisfaction; economics and political science help you think about what the effects of various public policies will be; physics, chemistry, and biology tell us how the world works, so that we can take what we want from it. These things are all true. Still, given these facts about what produces satisfaction, who will help you decide whether John Stuart Mill was right to say, "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied"?[7] Indeed, which experiment will confirm that this question is even worth asking? And where will you learn that one reason for studying the sciences is that understanding how the universe works, understanding where we fit into it, would be worthwhile in itself, even if we never put the knowledge to use in doing anything? Faced with people who do not understand this, and who insist that their lives are entirely satisfactory without that knowledge, it is hard to see why they should respond to the fact that many other people do get satisfaction from it. They will, no doubt, have other satisfactions.

So though there is much for ethics to learn from the sciences, natural and social, ethics cannot be reduced to questions those sciences are equipped to answer. And the methods of reflection that philosophers use in answering questions about, to stick with our example, the nature of well-being – the question of what it is for a human life to go well – may *draw on* the results of experiments but are not themselves experimental; theoretical argument in philosophy is also mostly very unlike theoretical argument in biology or physics. That is a first important reason, then, why ethics does not belong among the sciences, even though it needs to be in continuous conversation with them. Our methods are often very different.

My main focus in this essay is going to be on another kind of reason, though: the fact that ethics, unlike the sciences, needs to maintain its contacts with the arts and humanities. Poetry, fiction, biography, art, and music, as well as literary

criticism, cultural theory, and the other humanistic disciplines, are not just materials for moral reflection. They are also sources of moral understanding, inspirations for moral action, and teachers of the sentiments that moral life requires. Philosophy, for this reason, really needs to be able to engage in different moments with each of the disciplines. We need not the sure path of one science, but a difficult conversation among all the different kinds of systematic knowledge. We need it because people need it, and all the disciplines of the humanities have something to contribute.

One characteristic of much writing in the humanities – one family resemblance across much of that broad field – is a concern to continue millennial conversations. In philosophy departments we still really do read Plato (429? – 347 BCE) and Aristotle (384 – 322 BCE) and Confucius (551? – 479 BCE) and, of course, many others who have also read them between their time and ours. Literary scholars discuss novels going back at least to *Satyricon* (first century CE) and *The Golden Ass* (second century CE), and plays, like Aeschylus's *Oresteia* (fifth century BCE), that Plato and Aristotle would have seen, and poems, like those ascribed to Homer (eighth century BCE?), that they would have known. We think these texts still reward rereading in our radically different contexts. But the rewards are extremely variegated.

Sometimes, as when I read some of the *Nicomachean Ethics* with my students each year in an introduction to ethics, I do so because I think he got something right: friendship really is one of the great human goods. Sometimes, because he got something interestingly wrong: he says that the enslaved are not capable of action "in accordance with excellence."[8] Enslavement, I want to reply, reflects the nature of the enslaver not of the enslaved. Sometimes, though, we read him because someone later – perhaps someone much later like Elizabeth Anscombe – took something from her reading of him to remake modern moral philosophy.[9]

On other occasions, as when I read the *Iliad* with students in a class about honor, it is because the poem explores a powerful ideal that has left its traces in our thought, even though it is utterly unlivable now; as Achilles's rage – the rage that Homer urges the Goddess to sing at the poem's start, a rage that persists despite the costs to his fellow Achaeans – is difficult for us now to make sense of, much less to respect. In the same class, we read about nineteenth-century Asante generals, who sat playing board games surrounded by barrels of gunpowder, ready to blow themselves up if their troops retreated.[10] Victory or death, they said, and they meant it. There is something crazy in this, even if it made them formidable enemies. But we learn something important about the power of honor in one kind of human life here, something that deepens our understanding of how honor works today: when a young man in a gang in Watts risks his life because he has

been dissed, he is not Achilles or an Asante general, but there is a family resemblance worth noticing. This is crazy and, at the same time, intelligible, too.

But the humanistic concern with past artifacts – the drawing on a fifth-century-BCE Grecian urn, or a nineteenth-century romantic ode about one – is not to be explained simply by the fact that we can draw a lesson from it, so that it provides another general truth that might guide our choices, our thoughts, our feelings. Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" does offer such a generalization, since it ends with that famous couplet:

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.[11]

But whatever the interest of *this* thought, it is not that it is true. It is obviously *not* true. Truth clearly is not beauty. And, if it were, you obviously could not live a decent human life if that was all you knew. What we have here is at best figuratively true, and one of the figures involved is hyperbole. Still, reflection on Keats's ode is something that many thousands of members of the Modern Language Association know how to practice, believe valuable, and can demonstrate the worthwhileness of by teaching new generations of readers to attend to that poem and its companions.[12]

The importance to some disciplines of attention to particulars, and not just to generalities, from the full panoply of the human past and present is something that Wilhelm Windelband drew attention to more than a century ago.[13] This insistence is, I think, a feature of much work in the humanities. In a once well-known essay on "History and Natural Science," Windelband wrote about all the disciplines that enrich our knowledge of the world, from history to physics, that they were

> seeking through their experience of reality either the universal, in the form of a natural law, or the particular in a historically specific form. They consider, on the one side, the always-unchanging form, on the other, the unique, specific content, of what happens in reality. The first are law-based forms of knowledge, the others involve knowledge of particular events; the former teach what is eternally the case, the latter what once existed. Systematic knowledge is – if one may construct new terms of art – in the one case nomothetic, in the other idiographic.[14]

It is not that humanistic knowledge is never nomothetic: philologists generalize about language change, philosophers pronounce principles. (And scientists can be idiographers: E. O. Wilson seemed entranced by a particular ant species as well as by general truths about the evolution of the ant.) But humanist inquiry is often idiographic. That is one reason why one characteristic form of humanistic exploration, alongside the article or the treatise, is the essay, a form that Montaigne invented, and that inspired Bacon to do something somewhat different in

English under the same name. An essay is not about proving a general point; it is about stringing together particular insights.[15] It is more like a conversation with oneself, overheard by the reader, than a lecture to the world. All of which makes it even more pressing to ask what the *point* is of attention to these particulars?

Let me point out first that asking that question risks simply denying the claim and following the natural impulse of the nomothete. It is to seek a law, a general answer. We are tempted, that is, to say with Hume, in the *Enquiry* I have already cited, that the study of these things from the past is important because it allows us "to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour."[16]

I want to insist, per contra, in defense of the idiographic, that while humanists are generally interested in past particulars, there is no general answer to the question why. The answers are specific to the objects of attention. I do not say we cannot draw general conclusions from past objects and events. Of course – quite obviously – we can. Hume himself does that in his five-volume *History of England*. But that is not the only thing we can do. The story about why it is worth attending to Keats's ode is an incompletable story, replete with the many kinds of rewards of that attention. In fact, the value of attending to the ode, I want to say, is as various as its readers and the uses to which they put it. The stories about why it is of continuing importance to read Homer or Sappho or Kant or Achebe are specific to their particular works, then. There is, I say again, no general answer.

Still, one central argument for paying attention to the specifics of the past can begin with a point made by Thucydides when he said, in *The Peloponnesian War*, that "an exact knowledge of the past" is "an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it."[17] If we knew all the problems that were going to arise for us, we would know what general knowledge we would need to draw from the past to face them. But we do not. And so we need a great stock of past cases on which we can draw, so we can figure out, as the world presents its challenges to us, which past cases they resemble or reflect. This is often a kind of analogical reasoning which it would be misleading to characterize as a matter of finding a general law that governs both that past case and this new one. An example can guide us by directing our attention, through resemblances that are inexact, to a feature of the new situation that is parallel to something in the old. This is how legal reasoning in the common law tradition often works: We have rules for thinking about straying domestic animals. Faced with straying ostriches, we ask if we can apply similar rules. To do this, we do not have to identify the common properties of the domestic animals and oversized birds and articulate a general principle: ostriches are identical with cattle and sheep for particular legal purposes. Settling the single case will do.

Perhaps an analogy will help here. It is worth having a toolbox around the house, one with a wide range of tools, whose properties you know something about. But there is no general answer to the question, "Why?" Each tool can be used for lots of things. There is no one thing a screwdriver is useful for. (Resist the temptation to say, *driving screws*. If you claim that is all screwdrivers are good for, you are just revealing you do not know much about the lives of screwdrivers.) And the range of things you can do with each tool is different from the range of what you can do with the others. Claw hammers, like screwdrivers, can be used to remove nails from planks, but screwdrivers, unlike claw hammers, are not generally much use in nailing them in. But you cannot now think of all the things that any particular tool might turn out to be usable for. People are finding new uses for them all the time. Like many philosophers, for example, one use I have for tools is to make a philosophical point. With any tool, you do not know what it is good for until you see what problems arise.

When humanists focus our attention on, say, a text or a work of visual art, one reason is that they think that the experience of attending to it will be a worthwhile experience. They do not think that the value of that attention is exhausted by what it teaches us, where "what it teaches" is some general truth. But they also think that we cannot tell in advance what that poem or painting could teach. It is worth having in your repertory, which is one reason people have learned poetry by heart, one reason we revisit paintings. Because who knows when something from them will deepen our response to a new situation?

A poem or a painting is not *for* anything. Not because it has no uses. It has, in fact, many uses, and new ones may occur to new readers each time their situations change. But the value of the poem does not depend on any one of these uses. It lies, rather, in two sorts of facts: that the experience of reading it can be one worth having, and that sometimes we will return to it in new situations and find that it helps us think and feel and act in response to them. And, as a philosopher humanist, I insist that this is true of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Analects*.

You may wonder why I have such confidence in this. Well, first, let me remind you, that the claim is not that these texts reward attention because they yield something that all humanistic attention delivers. I have denied that there is any such thing. The claim I am making, at the moment, is about those two works in particular. Part of the evidence, in each case, is inductive. People have done the experiment of returning to these texts over millennia and come back with a sense of enlightenment. (Also, but this is a different argument, with pleasure. As Arnold insisted in the first section of *Culture and Anarchy*, we need both "sweetness and light.")[18] Watching an interesting mind struggle with an important question turns out to be rewarding. But I am also claiming that we cannot say in advance what reading these texts can be good for. And I concede that it is possible that new readers in new situations may come to feel that they are not good for anything old

or new, that their use has been exhausted. Though, frankly, I am not sure I would want to live in a society in which no one had any use for Aristotle and Confucius.

Someone's life is well-lived – Aristotle's word for this is εὐδαίμων, "blessed with a good genius," as my Greek dictionary puts it – because of what they do, or have, or experience.[19] So, for any life to be worthwhile, there must be things worth doing or having or experiencing. One thing you learn from the humanist's idiographic concern with objects and events from the past is what some of those worthwhile things are. Aristotle, having paid attention, like a good humanist, to some of the particulars, pointed some of them out: friendship, for example, as I mentioned earlier, but also, as he says, developing habits of emotional response that lead to excellence.

When it comes to thinking about political philosophy, and in particular about freedom and equality, it seems to me that one element of the case for the humanistic method of careful idiographic attention to particular past texts and events depends on recognizing something important about moral discovery. Think, for these purposes, about the ideal of liberty that circulated through the American Revolution, and the ideals of equality and fraternity that traveled with it in the great slogan of the French Revolution. Each of those three powerful ideas, so it seems to me, was grasped in part by thinking about what was wrong with the existing shape of things: it was an ancient regime, an established order, that they aimed to overthrow. The idea of liberty, for example, develops through thinking about what is awful about not being in charge of your own society or your own life. What inspires the new ideal of equality is the pain and humiliation associated with belonging to the "lower orders," of being treated as an inferior, required to perform deference, denied access not just to resources – money, education, choices – but to equal standing. Equality becomes the name for the impulse to escape all that.

When the revolutionaries pronounce "all men are created equal" in the Declaration of Independence, and when, thirteen years later, the French National Assembly recognizes and declares, "les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits" (men are born and remain free and equal in rights) in the Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen, there is a sense in which they do not yet know what they are talking about. They do not yet know what a society of free and equal people will look like.[20] What they know is that a society of people whose lives are stunted by domination and inequality will no longer do. They know it is bad to be enslaved. And in learning how to live in a new way, they have to start with what they are seeking to end: the moments of condescension, the insults, large and petty, that demeaned people in the old way of doing things. Those cases come from the history books but also from fiction and from art and, of course, from everyday experience; and from nonfiction literature, as in the slave narratives of the

nineteenth century that articulated the wrongness of enslavement and taught free men and women something about what it meant. Frederick Douglass's struggle with the slave-breaker Covey in chapter 15 of *My Bondage and My Freedom* deepens our understanding of equality by showing us inequality in action.

Mary Wollstonecraft, three years after the French declaration, addressed Talleyrand, who helped to craft it, with her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* and, again, she did so, in part, by making visible the disabilities of the legal situation of women, not just by giving a conceptual account of women's equality (which she does) but also by exemplifying those disabilities, for example in marriage law. The point is that Talleyrand and his kind – a prince, a bishop, a wielder of power – could speak of equality while not realizing what it entailed for particular kinds of people. We can learn more about this topic from reading about the situation of gentlewomen in *Emma* or through careful attention to more recent works, such as *A Room of One's Own* or *The Second Sex*.

One of my favorite books to read with students is Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*. In it, we see what a life is like that is totally (and willingly) subordinated to the projects of somebody else. Mr. Stevens, Lord Darlington's butler, articulates his professional project in a passage that is powerful because it is so disturbing.

> Let us establish this quite clearly: a butler's duty is to provide good service. It is not to meddle in the great affairs of the nation. The fact is, such great affairs will always be beyond the understanding of those such as you and I, and those of us who wish to make our mark must realize that we best do so by concentrating on what *is* within our realm.[21]

This political self-negation, we feel, is just the opposite of what democracy asks of us. In recent years, philosophical egalitarianism has been deepened by reflection on what it is to treat one another – and to be treated – as equals.[22] Our grasp of what equality means and of why it matters is embodied in narratives like these. And part of why they do it so well is that they engage our sentiments as well as our reason.

Cicero, in his defense of the poet Archias – a defense long-studied by humanists seeking defenses of poetry – tells us how the poet was formed in those "arts by which young boys are gradually molded towards *humanitas*." And he speaks, in the same rambling Ciceronian sentence, of Antioch, the poet's native city, as "liberalissimisque studiis adfluenti," that is, abundant in the most liberal studies.[23] So he connects the idea of a preparation for a humane life with the studies most apt for free people. And that, I think, is one way of understanding one root thought of multiple different strands of humanistic thought. The liberal in liberal studies means "befitting a free person." We are, or at least we should aim to be, free people, and one central ideal of liberalism is a conception of that freedom, which insists that individuals are all entitled to lives of their own, lives in which

the central, shaping decisions are for *them* to take and not to be settled for them by a master. And if you are to discharge the terrific responsibility of making your own life, then you surely need all the help you can get. That is what a liberal education is for, and the humanities, in their multifarious ways, provide instruments that allow us to exercise that responsibility. If we are to study the good life, in ethics, or the just society, in political philosophy, we need to draw on these wellsprings of understanding and of pleasure.

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ENDNOTES

[1] "Ich kann diese Ähnlichkeiten nicht besser charakterisieren, als durch das Wort 'Familienähnlichkeiten'; denn so übergreifen und kreuzen sich die verschiedenen Ähnlichkeiten, die zwischen den Gliedern einer Familie bestehen: Wuchs, Gesichtszüge, Augenfarbe, Gang, Temperament, etc. etc." Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen/Philosophical Investigations*, ed. P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte, 4th rev. ed. (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 36.

[2] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Experiments in Ethics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

[3] "Ob die Bearbeitung der Erkenntnisse, die zum Vernunftgeschäfte gehören, *den sicheren Gang einer Wissenschaft* gehe oder nicht, das läßt sich bald aus dem Erfolg beurteilen." ("Whether or not the development of the sorts of knowledge that belong to the transactions of reason travels *the secure path of a science* is soon judged by its success." Italics mine.) Immanuel Kant, Preface to the second edition, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* (1787); and Immanuel Kant, *Werke in zwölf Bänden*, vol. 3, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Suhrkamp, 1977), 20.

[4] David Hume, "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding," in *Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals by David Hume*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 11.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Sam Harris, *The Moral Landscape* (New York: Free Press, 2010), 1, 6.

[7] John Stuart Mill, *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Volume X – Essays on Ethics, Religion, and Society*, ed. John M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press; London: Rout-

ledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/mill-the-collected-works-of-john-stuart-mill-volume-x-essays-on-ethics-religion-and-society#Mill_0223-10_837.

[8] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Christopher Rowe and Sarah Broadie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 250.

[9] G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33 (124) (1958): 1–19.

[10] John Iliffe, *Honor in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 87.

[11] John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," Poetry Foundation, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44477/ode-on-a-grecian-urn.

[12] See, for example, Walter H. Evert and Jack W. Rhodes, eds., *Approaches to Teaching Keats's Poetry* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1991).

[13] I have discussed this point before in Kwame Anthony Appiah, "For the Humanities," in *The Humanities in the Age of Information and Post-Truth*, ed. Ignacio López-Calvo and Christina Lux (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2019), 25–44.

[14] "So dürfen wir sagen: die Erfahrungswissenschaften suchen in der Erkenntnis des Wirklichen entweder das *Allgemeine* in der Form des Naturgesetzes oder *das Einzelne* in der geschichtlich bestimmten Gestalt; sie betrachten zu einem Teil die immer sich gleichbleibende Form, zum anderen Teil den einmaligen, in sich bestimmten Inhalt des wirklichen Geschehens. Die einen sind Gesetzeswissenschaften, die anderen Ereigniswissenschaften; jene lehren, was immer ist, diese, was einmal war. Das wissenschaftliche Denken ist – wenn man neue Kunstausdrücke bilden darf – in dem einen Falle *nomothetisch*, in dem andern idiographisch." Wilhelm Windelband, "Geschichte und Naturwissenschaft," in *Präludien. Aufsätze und Reden zur Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte* (Tübingen, Germany: J. C. B. Mohr, 1894), 136–160.

[15] I have always liked a phrase that Bacon used in describing some of Seneca's Epistles: he spoke of them as "Essaies, – That is dispersed Meditacions," in the draft of the unpublished Epistle Dedicatory for the second edition of the Essays; quoted in *The Essays of Francis Bacon*, ed. Mary Augusta Scott (New York: Scribner's, 1908), lxx.

[16] "Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour. These records or wars, intrigues, factions, and revolutions, are so many collections of experiments, by which the politician or moral philosopher fixes the principles of his science, in the same manner as the physician or natural philosopher becomes acquainted with the nature of plants, minerals, and other external objects, by the experiments which he forms concerning them." Hume, "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding," 34.

[17] Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, book 1, chap. 2, sec. 4. This translation is by Richard Crawley, The Internet Classics Archive, http://classics.mit.edu//Thucydides/pelopwar.html.

[18] Matthew Arnold, "Sweetness and Light," in *Arnold: "Culture and Anarchy" and Other Writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 58–80, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511802072.008.

[19] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. Sir Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3Deu)dai%2Fmwn. By "genius" here they mean what Dr. Johnson gave as the first sense of the term: "the protecting or ruling power of men." Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language: In which the Words Are Deduced from their Originals, and Illustrated in their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers. To which Are Prefixed, a History of the Language, and an English Grammar*, 6th ed. (London: J. F. and C. Rivington, 1785).

[20] Nor yet do we. But we have a better idea. And we have identified some new enemies of freedom, such as bamboozlement by the dissemination, sometimes intentional, of distorted pictures of the world through social media.

[21] Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1989), 199.

[22] Elizabeth Anderson, "What Is the Point of Equality?" *Ethics* 109 (1999): 287–337; and T. M. Scanlon, "The Diversity of Objections to Inequality" (1997) in *The Ideal of Equality*, ed. Matthew Clayton and Andrew Williams (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 41–59.

[23] "Nam ut primum ex pueris excessit Archias, atque ab eis artibus quibus aetas puerilis ad humanitatem informari solet se ad scribendi studium contulit, primum Antiochiae –nam ibi natus est loco nobili–celebri quondam urbe et copiosa, atque eruditissimis hominibus liberalissimisque studiis adfluenti, celeriter antecellere omnibus ingeni gloria contigit." ("For when Archias first left boyhood, and turned from those arts by which young boys are gradually molded towards humanitas, he devoted himself to the study of writing, first of all at Antioch–for he was born there in a noble place–which was formerly a famous and rich city, abundant in the most learned men and the most liberal studies, and there he succeeded speedily in showing himself superior to all in talent and in fame.") M. Tvlli Ciceronis, *Pro A. Licinio Archia Poeta Oratio*, para. 4, http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/arch.shtml.