The Ethics of Philosophy in a Digital Age

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Crisis and Technology
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#RJBPlural
αἰδώς
dίκη
When individuals sense that they are living through a period of crisis, when foundations seem to be cracking and orthodoxies breaking up, then a public space is created in which basic questions about the human condition can be raised anew.

Ethics is concerned with ēthos, with those habits, customs and modes of response that shape and define our praxis. Politics is concerned with our public lives in the polis—with the communal bonds that at once unite and separate us as citizens. The essential link between ēthos and polis is nomos. Although we can distinguish ethics and politics, they are inseparable. For we cannot understand ethics without thinking through our political commitments and responsibilities.

-- Bernstein, The New Constellation, p. 9
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-- Bernstein, *The New Constellation*, p. 9
The Cultivated Practices of a Community of Inquirers
... we must begin with all the prejudices which we actually have when we enter upon the study of philosophy.

-- Peirce, *Some Consequences of Four Incapacities*, 5.265
Prejudices are not necessarily unjustified and erroneous, so that they inevitably distort the truth. In fact, the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the word, constitute the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience.

Prejudices are biases of our openness to the world.

--- Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, p. 9
We individually cannot reasonably hope to attain the ultimate philosophy which we pursue; we can only seek it, therefore, for the community of philosophers. Hence, if disciplined and candid minds carefully examine a theory and refuse to accept it, this ought to create doubts in the mind of the author of the theory itself.

-- Peirce, Some Consequences of Four Incapacities, 5.265
Candor

Discipline
I do not say that it is infallibly true that there is any belief to which a person would come if he were to carry his inquiries far enough. I only say that that alone is what I call Truth. I cannot infallibly know that there is any Truth.

-- Peirce to Lady Welby, Selected Writings, p. 398
[Truth must be] recognized as *public* -- as that of which any person would come to be convinced if he carried his inquiry, his sincere search for immoveable belief far enough.

-- Peirce to Lady Welby, *Selected Writings*, p. 398

Lady Welby via Universidad Navarra, [http://www.unav.es/ gep/LadyWelby.html](http://www.unav.es/gep/LadyWelby.html)
Sincerity

Candor

Discipline
Public Practices of Communicative Transaction
But if Truth be something public, it must mean that to the acceptance of which as a basis of conduct any person you please would ultimately come if he pursued his inquiries far enough--yes, every rational being, however prejudiced.

-- Peirce to Lady Welby, Selected Writings, p. 398
... democracy is a personal way of individual life; that it signifies the possession and continual use of certain attitudes, forming personal character and determining desire and purpose in all the relations of life.

-- Dewey, Creative Democracy
... instead of thinking of our own dispositions and habits as accommodated to certain institutions we have to learn to think of the latter as expressions, projections and extensions of habitually dominant personal attitudes.

-- Dewey, Creative Democracy
Without creative imagination and intelligence, individuals lack the resources to deal with novel situations. Ultimately this type of creativity involves a number of virtues: the courage to experiment, to change opinions in the light of experience. It also requires a genuine respect for one’s fellow citizens—a respect and an openness that is not simply professed by concretely exemplified in one’s practices. These practices do not arise without the careful cultivation of the habits, skills, and dispositions required for creative activity.

-- Bernstein, *Creative Democracy -- The Task*
*Still Before Us*
[We must] nurture the type of community and solidarity where there is an engaged fallibilistic pluralism—one that is based upon mutual respect, where we are willing to risk our own prejudgments, are open to listening and learning from others, and we respond to others with responsiveness and responsibility.

-- Bernstein, *Pragmatism, Pluralism and the Healing of Wounds*
A creative democracy is one that always faces new, unexpected challenges. We see this today in what many call “globalization.”

... The problem we face is how to ensure that new emerging global institutions are genuinely democratic, that they are responsive to the desires and needs of those affected by them.

-- Bernstein, Creative Democracy -- The Task Still Before Us
Cultivating Creative Digital Democracies
Sincerity  Pluralistic

Candor  Fallibilistic

Discipline  Engaged
αιδώς
dίκη
The space of appearance comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and ... the various forms in which the public realm can be organized ...

-- Arendt, *The Human Condition*
Power is never a property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together.

-- Arendt, *Crisis of the Republic*
Empathy
Empathy

Generosity
Empathy

Candor  Fallibilistic  Generosity
Sincerity

Candor

Discipline

Empathy

Fallibilistic

Generosity

Transformative
Power is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities.

-- Arendt, The Human Condition
# The Ethical Virtues of Philosophy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Hermeneutic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
<td>Pluralistic</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candor</td>
<td>Fallibilistic</td>
<td>Generosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Transformative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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