

# The Ethics of Philosophy in a Digital Age

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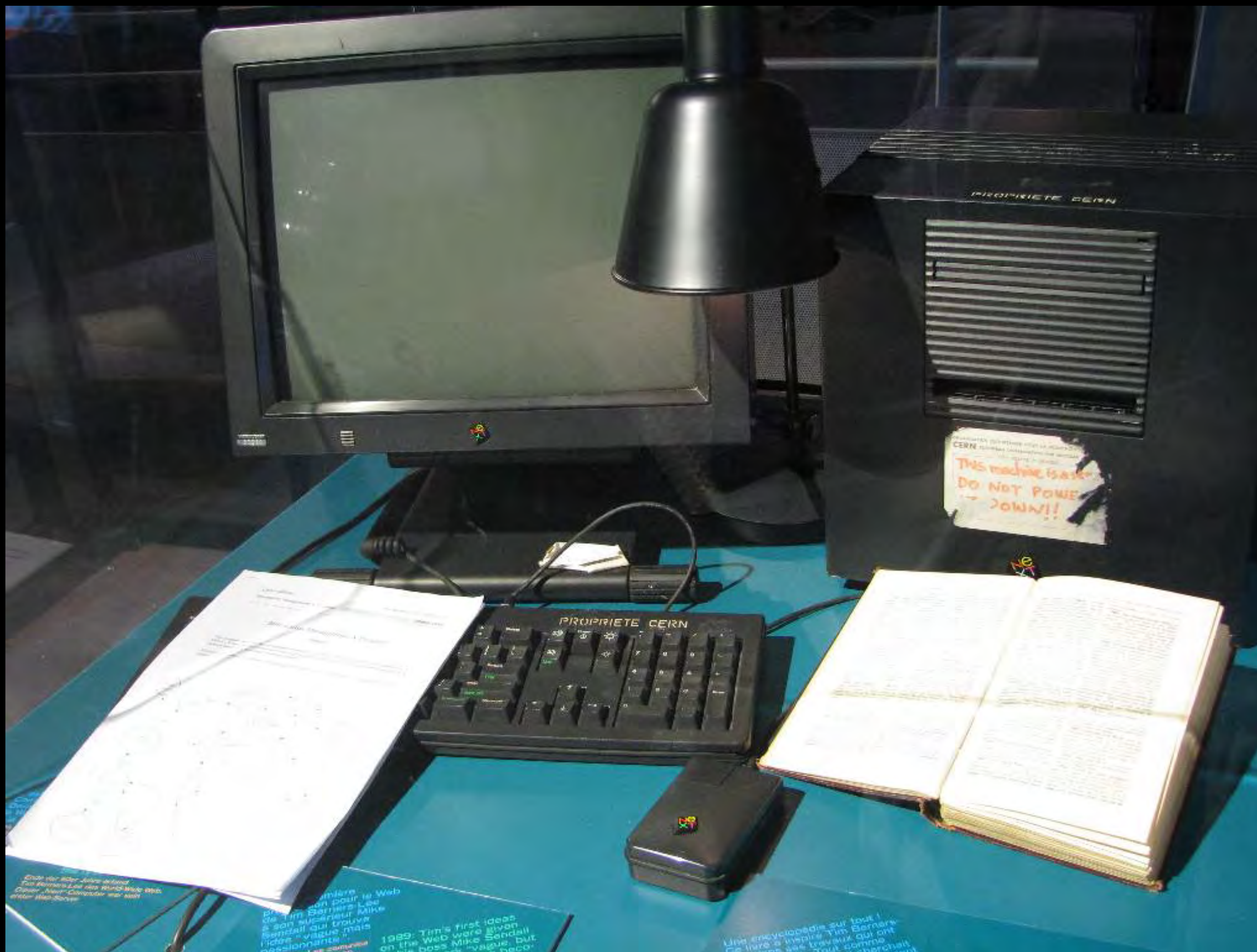
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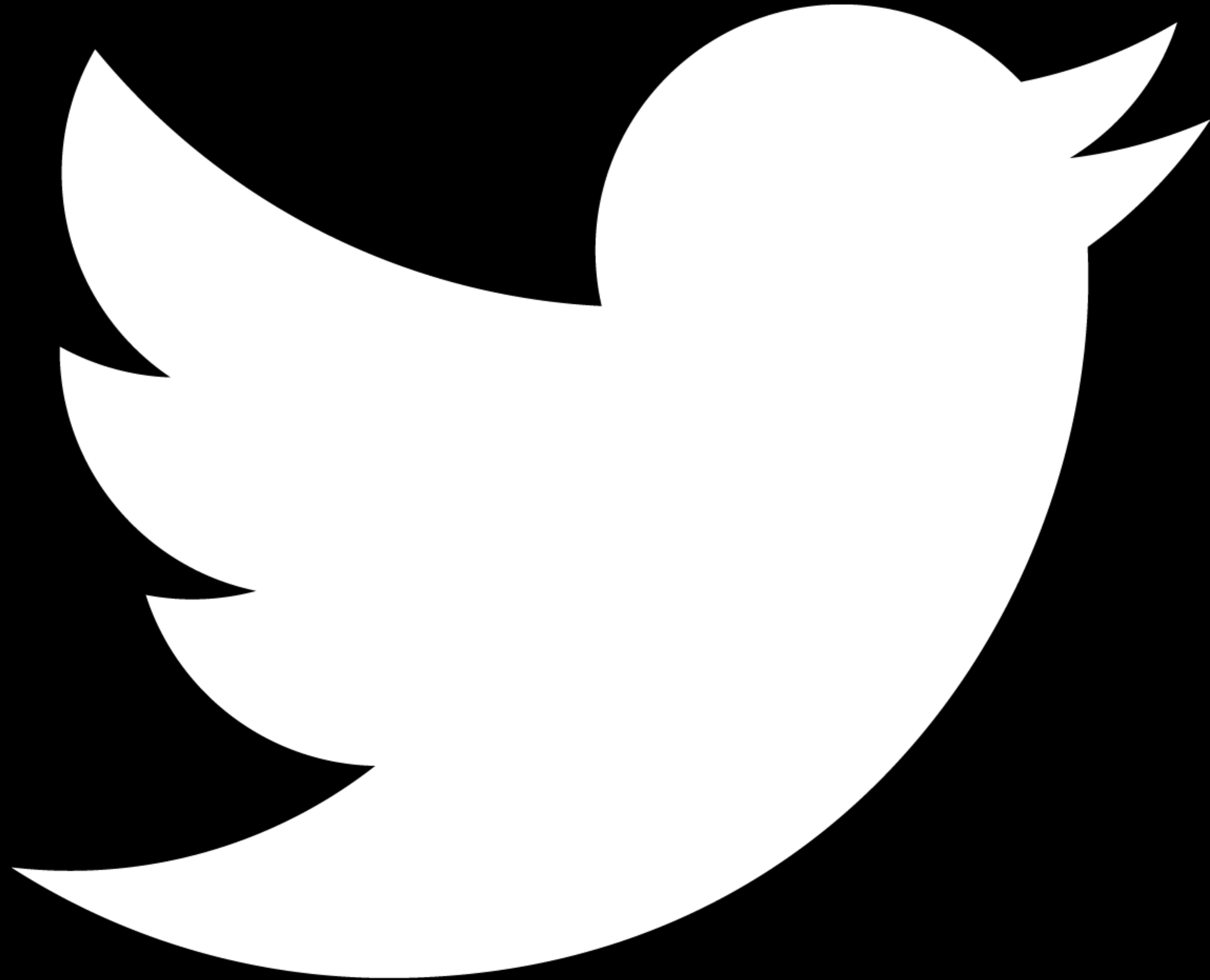


@cplong circa 1994





Richard J. Bernstein





# Crisis and Technology



... "Τούτοις  
...τέρους Αἰγυπτίοις  
...τε γὰρ καὶ σοφίας φ...  
...Ω τεχνικώτατε Θεύθ, ἄλλος μ...  
...ἄλλος δὲ κρίναι τίν' ἔχει μοῖραν  
...τοῖς μέλλουσι χρῆσθαι· καὶ νῦν  
...μαθόντων λήθην μὲν ἐν ψυχαῖς  
...διὰ πίστιν γραφῆς ἔξωθεν  
...αὐτοὺς ὑφ' αὐτῶν ἀναμι-  
...ἀλήθειαν φάρμακον 5  
...ἀλλὰ ὑπομνήσεως πορί-  
...διδασχῆς πολυγνώ-  
...πλήθος ὄντες, **β**  
...ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ σοφῶν."  
...Αἰγυπτίους καὶ ὀποδαπούς

...Διὸς τοῦ Δωδωναίου 5  
...πρώτους γενέσθαι.  
...ἡμεῖς οἱ νέοι,  
...εἰ μόνον **γ**



C H E R I N E V E R Y A R T B R O V C  
D T O M O R T A L A M E A N S T O



Titan Prometheus by Mr. Nixter via Flickr - <https://flic.kr/p/bu2Lur>





# αἰδώς δίκη

Hermes, British Museum by KotomiCreations via Flickr - <https://flic.kr/p/9vnCJa>



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.

-- Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*, p. xiii



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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[http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Sanders\\_Peirce](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Sanders_Peirce)

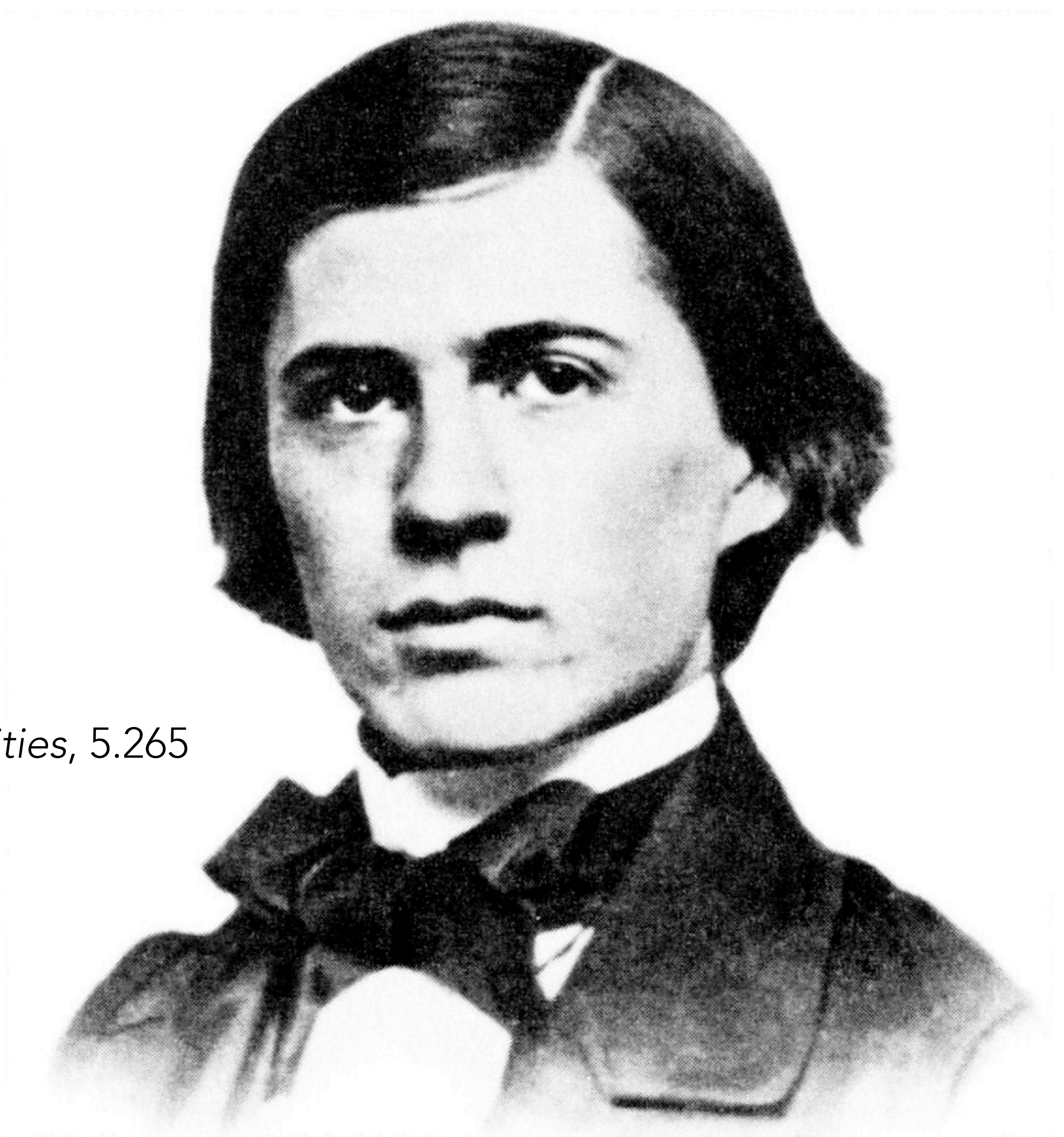


# The Cultivated Practices of a Community of Inquirers



... 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



[http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Sanders\\_Peirce](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Sanders_Peirce)



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

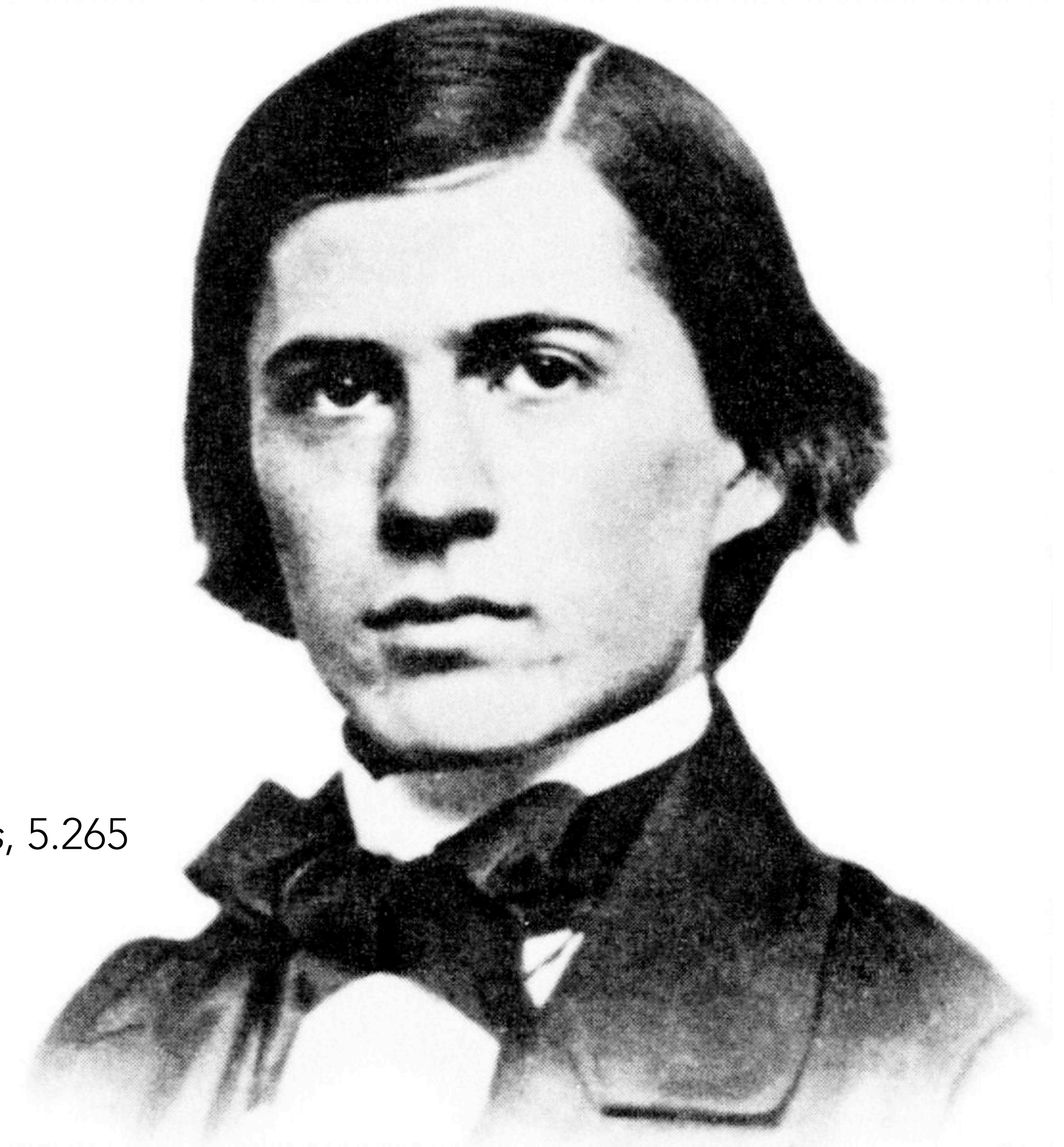


Hans Georg Gadamer via Wikicommons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hans-georg-gadamer.jpg>



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



[http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Sanders\\_Peirce](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Sanders_Peirce)



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



Lady Welby via Universidad Navarra, <http://www.unav.es/gep/LadyWelby.html>



[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>



Sincerity

Candor

Discipline



# Public Practices of Communicative Transaction



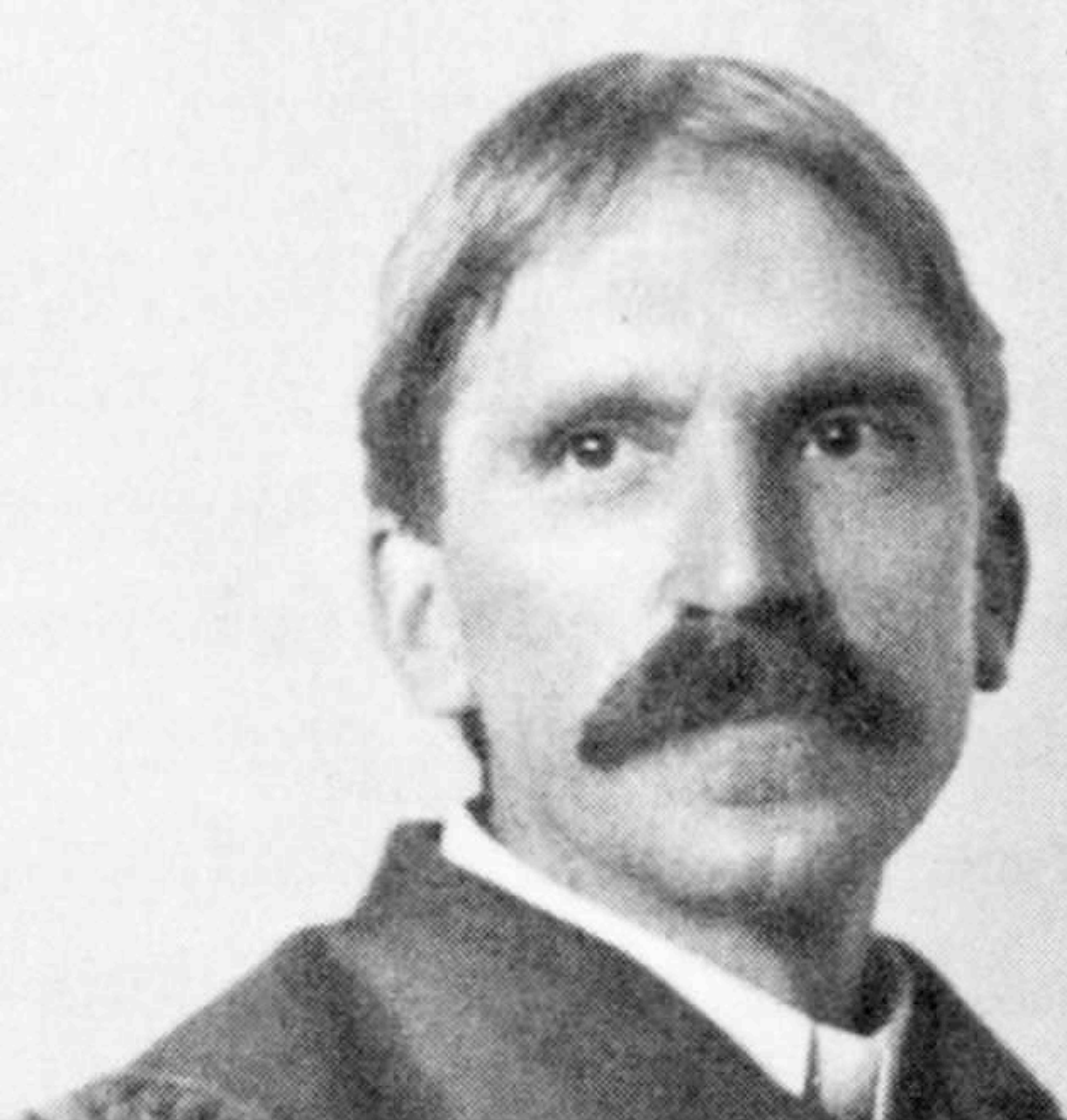
But if Truth be something public, it must mean that to the acceptance of which as a basis of conduct any person you please would ultimately come if he pursued his inquiries far enough--yes, every rational being, however prejudiced.

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



Lady Welby via Universidad Navarra, <http://www.unav.es/gep/LadyWelby.html>



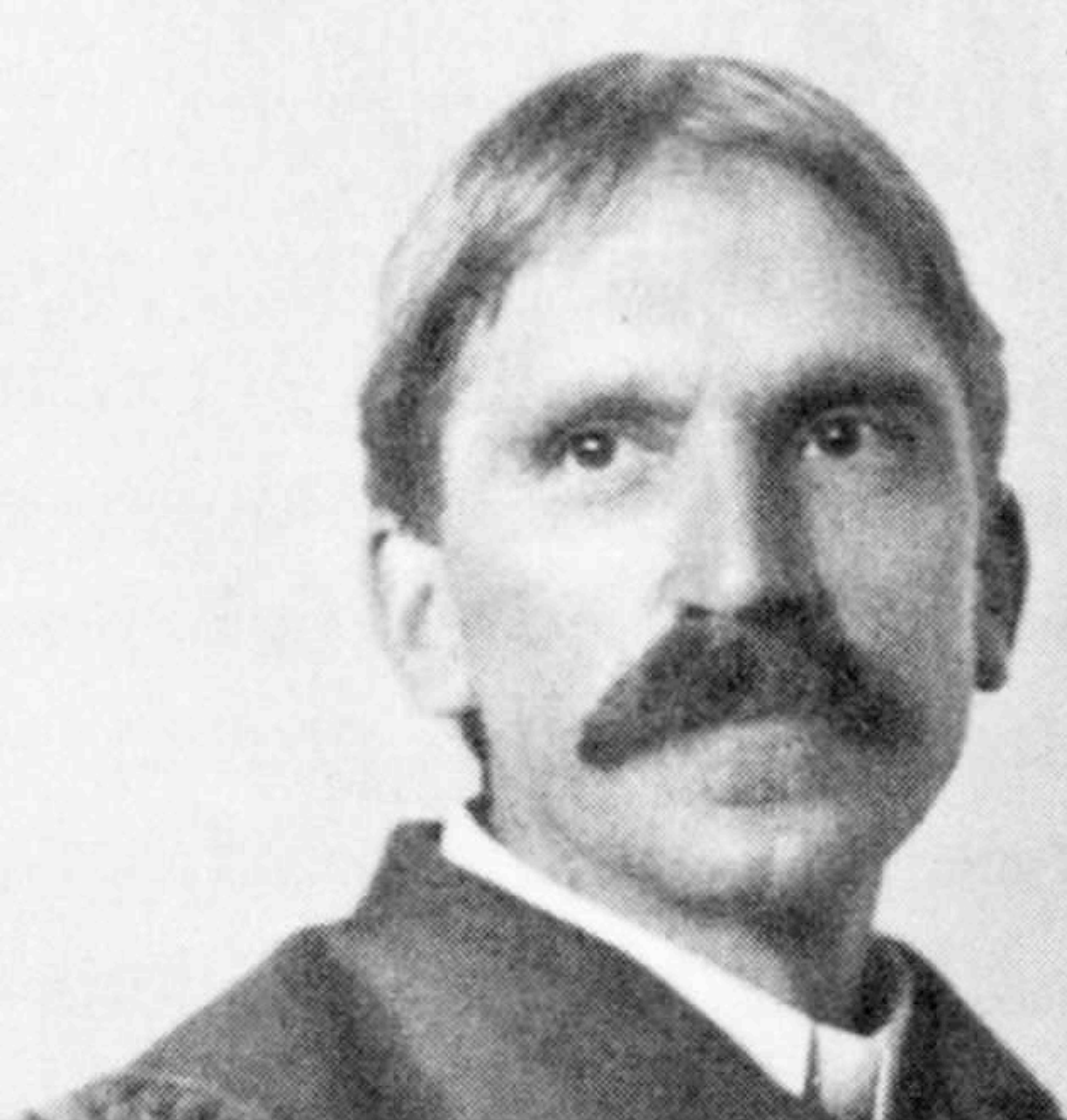


... democracy is a *personal* way of individual life; that it signifies the possession and continual use of certain attitudes, forming personal character and determining desire and purpose in all the relations of life.

-- Dewey, *Creative Democracy*

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... 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*

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:John\\_Dewey#mediaviewer/File:John\\_Dewey\\_in\\_1902.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:John_Dewey#mediaviewer/File:John_Dewey_in_1902.jpg)



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 but 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*





Richard Bernstein

[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*



Pluralistic

Fallibilistic

Engaged





Richard Bernstein

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



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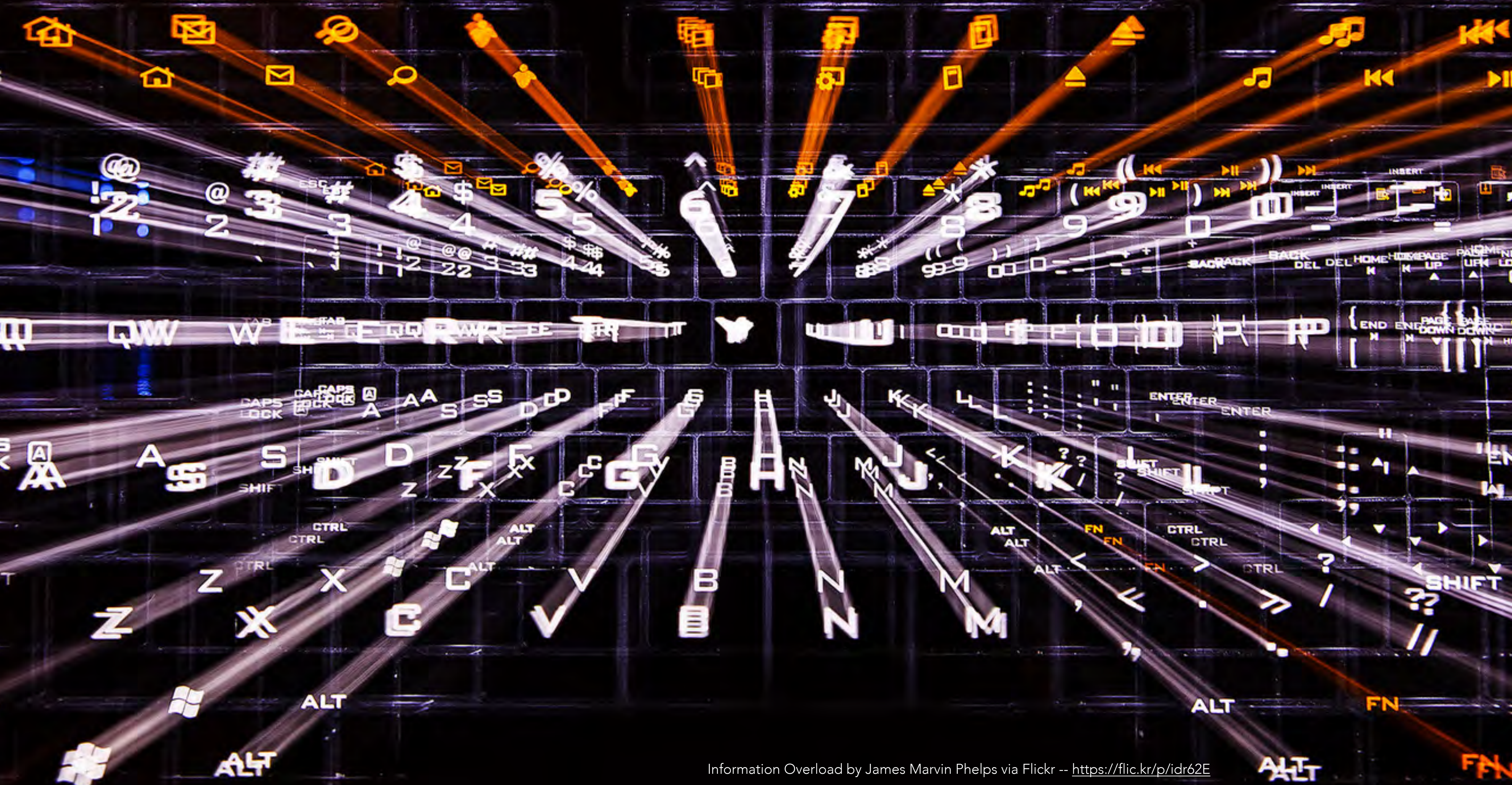
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Sincerity

Pluralistic

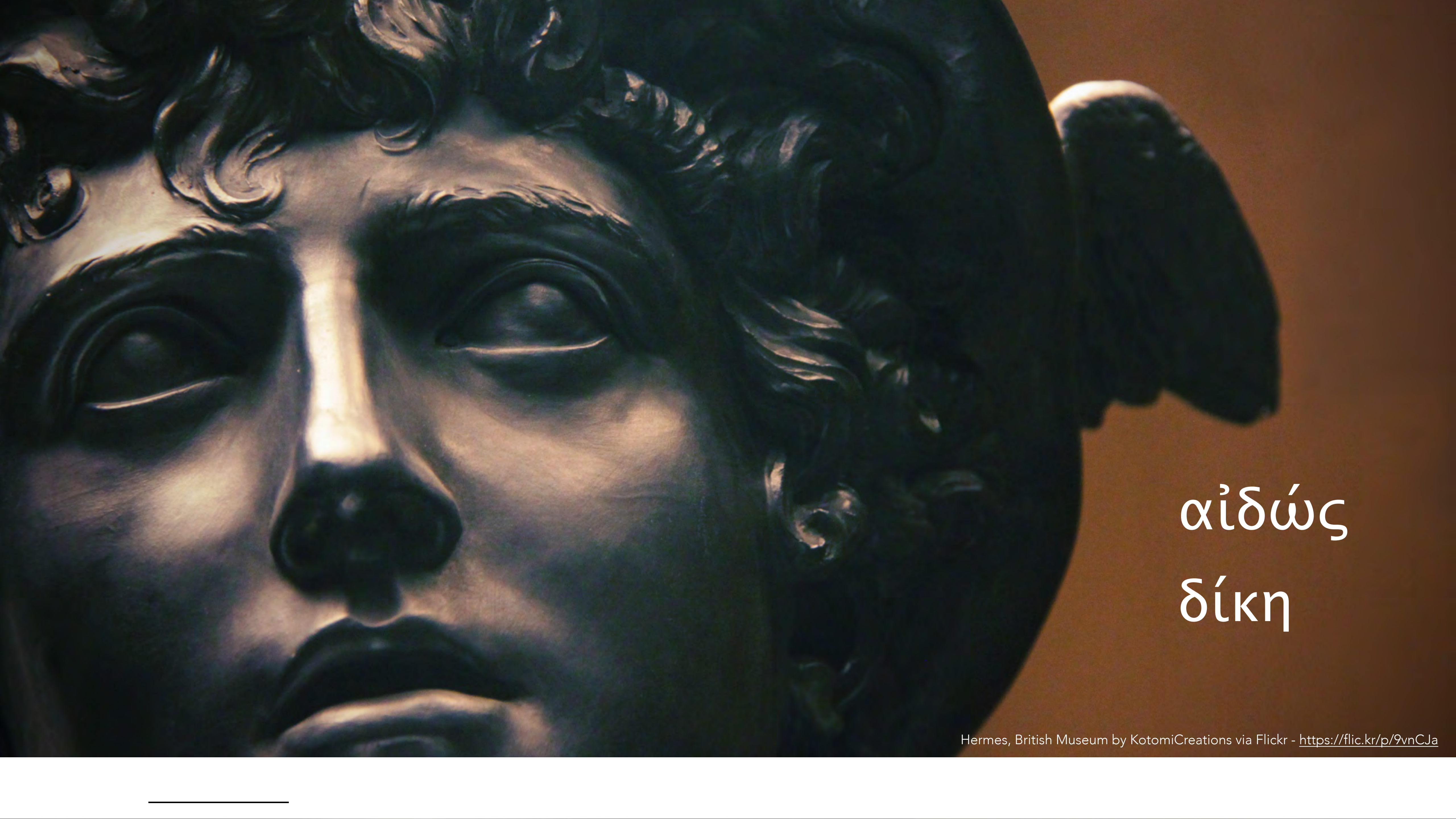
Candor

Fallibilistic

Discipline

Engaged





# αἰδώς δίκη

Hermes, British Museum by KotomiCreations via Flickr - <https://flic.kr/p/9vnCJa>





Hannah Arendt by Ben Norther via Flickr, <https://flic.kr/p/2oApAR>

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*





Hannah Arendt by Ben Norther via Flickr, <https://flic.kr/p/2oApAR>

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

Empathy

Candor

Fallibilistic

Generosity

Discipline

Transformative





Hannah Arendt by Ben Norther via Flickr, <https://flic.kr/p/2oApAR>

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*





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# The Ethical Virtues of Philosophy

**Inquiry**

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Sincerity

Candor

Discipline

**Attitude**

Pluralistic

Fallibilistic

Engaged

**Hermeneutic**

Empathy

Generosity

Transformative

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