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2 On “strongly fortified minds”

Self-restraint and cooperation in the discussion tradition

Sandra J. Peart and David M. Levy

Public reasoning is not only crucial for democratic legitimacy, it is essential for a better public epistemology that would allow the consideration of divergent perspectives. It is also required for more effective practical reasoning. It can bring out what particular demands and protests can be restrained in interactive public reasoning, in line with scrutinized priorities between a cluster of quite distinct demands. This involves a process of “give and take” which many political analysts, from Adam Smith and the Marquis de Condorcet in the eighteenth century to Frank Knight and James Buchanan in our time, have made us appreciate better.

(A. K. Sen 2012)

We are all subject to wishing that a thing be true or at least provisionally correct, so that our priors are confirmed. Indeed, John Stuart Mill recognized this in his 1843 *Logic*, a tour de force in making the case for inductive logic. Mill wrote:

We cannot believe a proposition only by wishing, or only by dreading, to believe it. ... [Wishing] operates, by making [a person] look out eagerly for reasons, or apparent reasons, to support opinions which are conformable to his interests or feelings; ... whoever was on his guard against all kinds of inconclusive evidence which can be mistaken for conclusive, would be in no danger of being led into error even by the strongest bias. There are minds so strongly fortified on the intellectual side, that they could not blind themselves to the light of truth, however really desirous of doing so.

(Mill [1843] 1981: 738)

Mill placed his faith in education – including, significantly, robust discussion – as at least a partial correction for this failing. In his view discussion was the means by which free individuals come to more fully understand what they believe. More than this, in the classical view of economics, the exchange of words, discussion, constitutes the means by which we come to moderate our selfish impulses and, increasingly, to cooperate.¹

Accordingly, this essay explores some unappreciated benefits of discussion.² While educators frequently favor discussion as a means to encouraging engaged learning, they nonetheless rarely attempt to explain how or why these benefits arise. More than this, the role of economists from Adam Smith through Frank Knight and his student, James Buchanan, in explaining the benefits associated with discussion has been neglected both within economics and throughout the academy. In this tradition one accepts the inevitability of an individual “point of view” and the good society is one that can govern itself by means of an emergent consensus among points of view. In this chapter we demonstrate that beginning with Smith and continuing through the experimental economists and Amartya Sen, economists have expounded upon the rich moral and material benefits associated with discussion – benefits that contribute to a well-governed social order.³ To emphasize the common themes in this neglected tradition, we shall refer to it as the “discussion tradition.”

Discussion, the self and trade: Adam Smith

Perhaps the first and hardest bias is the bias that places the self at the center of the universe. Without language there is no other and hence no requirement for reciprocity or civility: the sense that one resides at the center of the universe simply persists. With language, we convey our sense of self to others, and we learn how others perceive our self and our sense of self. We also learn about others; we exchange ideas and emotions with them. The first lesson about discussion, then, is that language forms the basis for imaginative exchange, for the placing of one’s self in another’s shoes and for giving and receiving approval or approbation.⁴

For Smith, this first type of exchange, the exchange of approbation helps us become moral persons. As is well known, Smith distinguished between “praise” and “praiseworthiness” in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and he held that we are all subject to the desire to be praiseworthy. While we may not always know how to obtain the approbation of others, we observe people’s reactions to our acts and we come to understand what constitutes appropriate, or virtuous conduct by observing what is generally approved. We come to moderate our actions in order to obtain general approval. We come to understand that we are not the center of the universe and we behave accordingly:

A very young child has no self-command; but, whatever are its emotions, whether fear, or grief, or anger, it endeavours always, by the violence of its outcries, to alarm, as much as it can, the attention of its nurse, or of its parents. While it remains under the custody of such partial protectors, its anger is the first and, perhaps, the only passion which it is taught to moderate. ... When it is old enough to go to school, or to mix with its equals, it soon finds that they have no such indulgent partiality. It naturally wishes to gain their favour, and to avoid their hatred or contempt.

Regard even to its own safety teaches it to do so; and it soon finds that it can do so in no other way than by moderating, not only its anger, but all its other passions, to the degree which its play-fellows and companions are likely to be pleased with. It thus enters into the great school of self-command, it studies to be more and more master of itself, and begins to exercise over its own feelings a discipline which the practice of the longest life is very seldom sufficient to bring to complete perfection.

(Smith [1759] 1976: 145)

The first significant benefit of (face-to-face) language, of discussion, in Smith’s view is therefore that it induces moderation and perhaps even something we would today refer to as tolerance. It is through language, and the exchange of approbation over time, that we come to understand what is generally approved and we try to act accordingly. To the extent that we succeed, we become virtuous individuals. Importantly, for Smith all that is required for this is language and discussion – exchange of approbation: civility and virtue emerge from our general desire for approval.⁵ In terms of governance, in the discussion tradition we are led to accept that ours is only one of many points of view in the search for consensus. Discussion is also a means by which our imaginative capacity is stretched to include at least partial understanding of the goals and arguments of others.⁶

But there is more to language for Smith than its role in generating virtue. In his account discussion also generates significant material benefits. As noted above, Smith famously held that without discussion there is no trade; with discussion there is. Without the ability to converse, creatures like greyhounds and mastiffs are therefore unable to obtain the material benefits attendant on language:

The strength of the mastiff is not in the least supported either by the swiftness of the greyhound, or by the sagacity of the spaniel, or by the docility of the shepherd’s dog. The effects of those different geniuses and talents, for want of the power or disposition to barter and exchange, cannot be brought into a common stock, and do not in the least contribute to the better accommodation and conveniency of the species. Each animal is still obliged to support and defend itself, separately and independently, and derives no sort of advantage from that variety of talents with which nature has distinguished its fellows.

(Smith [1776] 1904, I.2.5)

In contrast, humans have access to language and that enables them to obtain the benefits of specialization, trade and cooperation:

Among men, on the contrary, the most dissimilar geniuses are of use to one another; the different produces of their respective talents, by the general disposition to truck, barter, and exchange, being brought, as it

were, into a common stock, where every man may purchase whatever part of the produce of other men's talents he has occasion for.

(Smith [1776] 1904, I.2.5)

In this view, discussion is also the key means by which wealth is produced and increased over time. In today's vernacular, it is via discussion that we are able best to decide who should do what and when.

There is, then, an external economy in the realm of knowledge associated with discussion among free people. One dramatic example occurred at a celebrated dinner party hosted by Aaron Director with guests from the economics department at the University of Chicago. At this dinner, Ronald Coase famously changed the minds of his colleagues on the question of externalities and property rights. George Stigler described the conversation:

When, in 1960, Ronald Coase criticized Pigou's theory rather casually, in the course of a masterly analysis of the regulatory philosophy underlying the Federal Communications Commission's work, Chicago economists could not understand how so fine an economist as Coase could make so obvious a mistake. Since he persisted, we invited Coase (he was then at the University of Virginia) to come and give a talk on it. Some twenty economists from the University of Chicago and Ronald Coase assembled one evening at the home of Aaron Director. Ronald asked us to assume, for a time, a world without transaction costs. That seemed reasonable because economic theorists, like all theorists, are accustomed (nay, compelled) to deal with simplified and therefore unrealistic "models" and problems.

(Stigler [1988] 2003: 75)

It was this thought experiment that led to a deeper understanding of the role that property rights (and other social institutions that reduce the costs of exchange) play in fostering overall efficiency as individuals bargain with one another in a market context. We call attention to the deep respect that the Chicago economists and Coase had for each other. They discussed what divided them and through this discussion they changed the course of twentieth-century economics.⁷

Discussion and learning: J. S. Mill

As noted at the outset, Mill believed that education was a means by which we come to fortify ourselves against bias. While he was for the most part silent on the source of such priors, Mill was convinced that we come to rid ourselves of false beliefs and better to understand true ones through discussion.⁸

In Mill's view, all people⁹ are capable of being "guided to their own improvement by conviction or persuasion":

rectifying ... mistakes, by discussion and experience. Not by experience alone. There must be discussion, to show how experience is to be

interpreted. Wrong opinions and practices gradually yield to fact and argument: but facts and arguments, to produce any effect on the mind, must be brought before it.

(Mill [1867] 1984: 306)

Silencing discussion “is an assumption of infallibility,” the presumption of perfection.¹⁰

For Mill, we come to know a thing by knowing what is said about it:

[T]he only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject, is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind.

(Mill [1869] 1977: 232)

If, instead, we simply believe what we are told, we fail fully to understand the proposition and our belief might well be called “superstition.”¹¹

So, knowledge is better understood once experienced or discussed:

[T]here are many truths of which the full meaning *cannot* be realized, until personal experience has brought it home. But much more of the meaning even of these would have been understood, and what was understood would have been far more deeply impressed on the mind, if the man had been accustomed to hear it argued *pro* and *con* by people who did understand it. The fatal tendency of mankind to leave off thinking about a thing when it is no longer doubtful, is the cause of half their errors. A contemporary author has well spoken of “the deep slumber of a decided opinion.”

(Mill [1869] 1977: 250)

It is important to know and perhaps to learn from one’s critics, to develop a “steady habit of correcting and completing” our opinion “by collating it with those of others.”¹² This thought forms the basis for assigning students randomly to a “point of view” and then asking them to argue a conclusion that may well be contrary to what they bring to the classroom. As they do so, they may come to better appreciate the weight of their opponents’ arguments.

Arguments that try to silence discussion often, in Mill’s view, hide behind a pronouncement that we must avoid discussing an extreme case. Like Smith, Mill recognized the problem of faction; discussion may not break down the barriers of factionalized or party interests. While discussion may not successfully penetrate and alter the minds of those whose views have been hardened by faction, it will, nonetheless be useful to the “calmer and more disinterested bystander,” one who has yet to become factionalized:

I acknowledge that the tendency of all opinions to become sectarian is not cured by the freest discussion, but is often heightened and

exacerbated thereby; the truth which ought to have been, but was not, seen, being rejected all the more violently because proclaimed by persons regarded as opponents. But it is not on the impassioned partisan, it is on the calmer and more disinterested bystander, that this collision of opinions works its salutary effect. Not the violent conflict between parts of the truth, but the quiet suppression of half of it, is the formidable evil.

(Mill [1869] 1977: 259)

Free discussion leads to moderation, although here Mill suggested that the incentives are asymmetrically aligned. In a twist on Smith's theme, Mill argued that those who speak against received wisdom must practice moderation more systematically than those who hold received opinions:

In general, opinions contrary to those commonly received can only obtain a hearing by studied moderation of language, and the most cautious avoidance of unnecessary offence, from which they hardly ever deviate even in a slight degree without losing ground: while unmeasured vituperation employed on the side of the prevailing opinion, really does deter people from professing contrary opinions, and from listening to those who profess them.

(Mill [1869] 1977: 249)

Teachers consequently for Mill had a special obligation to teach from different perspectives:

If teaching, even on matters of scientific certainty, should aim quite as much at showing how the results are arrived at, as at teaching the results themselves, far more, then, should this be the case on subjects where there is the widest diversity of opinion among men of equal ability, and who have taken equal pains to arrive at the truth. This diversity should of itself be a warning to a conscientious teacher that he has no right to impose his opinion authoritatively upon a youthful mind. His teaching should not be in the spirit of dogmatism, but in that of enquiry.

(Mill [1867] 1984: 249)

The discussion tradition that recognizes the inevitability of a point of view can be contrasted with a tradition that idealizes anonymity, where because scientific knowledge is presumed anonymous the scientist ought not to have a point of view. In one sense the issue is trivial. If everyone agrees then there is nothing interesting to discuss. More dangerously, however, those with power can easily stigmatize those without power on the basis that the powerful have no point of view but the stigmatized do. The "impartial" are therefore better than the stigmatized and thus are to be trusted with power. The fundamental moral issue is respect for personal autonomy carried by a reciprocity norm. One is aware of one's point of view and by reciprocity one accepts that all

other moral agents are entitled to their own point of view. Open discussion is thus the signature of this mutual respect. Moreover, the respect for others carries with it a commitment to a seriousness that leaves open the possibility of being persuaded to alter one’s point of view.

Fair play and language

In the twentieth century, a helpful treatment of the role of moral restraint in discussion is found in the papers collected by his students and younger colleagues in Frank Knight’s 1947 *Freedom and Reform*. Knight’s dictum that he attributed to Lord Bryce – democracy is government by discussion – (Knight [1947] 1982: 219, 402) has attained a status in recent years as a substantial improvement over the approach to “social choice” laid out by Kenneth Arrow ([1951] 1963). Arrow’s initial formulation supposed that the preferences of the agents in the political process remained unchanged in the process of voting whereas, if discussion has any role to play in governance, it would seem to involve preference change (Buchanan 1954, Sen 1995). Here is Sen’s recent judgment:

By clarifying the role of that momentous engagement in a truly outstanding pair of articles in the *Journal of Political Economy* in 1954, Buchanan immensely enriched the subject matter with which social choice as well as public choice has to be centrally engaged. In contrast with Arrow’s initial inclination – as he put it – “to assume ... that individual values are taken as data and are not capable of being altered by the nature of the decision process itself,” Buchanan had to insist that seeing “democracy as ‘government by discussion’ implies that individual values can and do change in the process of decision-making” (Arrow, 1951 and Buchanan, 1954). It can be claimed that it is only through Buchanan’s expansion of Arrow’s departures that we can do justice to the Enlightenment enterprise of advancing rational decision making in societies, which lies at the foundation of democratic modernity.

(Sen 2013)¹³

Sen’s final sentence alludes to the issue of whether governance is an occasion for learning. Consistent with liberal tenants, Arrow had assumed that everyone’s views count and he then demonstrated that, given participants with fixed, coherent desires, the only way to obtain coherence at a group level was to give up liberality and let the decision be made by a single individual (Arrow [1951] 1963). For decades after Arrow first published his formulation Buchanan protested against Arrow’s assumption that nothing is learned in the democratic process. Buchanan challenged Arrow’s assumption of fixed desires and Sen points us to Buchanan’s objections in the passage above. The key problem, to which Sen draws our attention above, is that Arrow’s formulation assumes there is no learning in the course of discussion.

Knight, who was Buchanan's teacher at Chicago, described how preferences might change in the course of discussion. People enter into discussion in part because they are discontented with themselves:

In contrast with natural objects – even with the higher animals – man is unique in that he is dissatisfied with himself; he is the discontented animal, the romantic, argumentative, aspiring animal. Consequently, his behavior can only in part be described by scientific principles or laws.

(Knight [1947] 1982: 282)

Real discussion, as Knight ([1947] 1982: 414–415) sees it, is rare because it depends on public-spirited participants:

Genuine, purely intellectual discussion is rare in modern society, even in intellectual and academic circles, and is approximated only in very small and essentially casual groups. On the larger scale, what passes for discussion is mostly argumentation or debate. The intellectual interest is largely subordinate to entertainment, i.e., entertaining and being entertained, or the immediate interest of the active parties centers chiefly in dominance, victory, instructing others, or persuading rather than convincing, and not in the impartial quest of truth.

Knight saw the conflict in the discussion tradition between attempting to implement one's point of view by any means available and truth seeking. By requiring that economists in the discussion are truth seekers and allowing that ordinary people seek their own interests, Buchanan and Knight introduced a motivational heterogeneity – some people in discussion seek the truth, and others seek their own happiness. But the solution to this paradox is close at hand as long as we can accept ethical rules of conduct as constraints for all who enter into the discussion. In an extension of Buchanan and Knight, we have supposed that participants in the discussion bind themselves *ex ante* with rules of conduct that constrain how they argue their points of view.

Agreement on such constraints depends strongly on an awareness that those who participate in discussion generally have a “point of view.” Viewing the contending parties' views as equally deserving of respect is a critical step in the argument. It seems unlikely that constraints on discussion will come about without an awareness that, without them, unwanted results will emerge. Smith's principle of moral reform held that before we change ourselves or society, we need to come to view our own actions from the vantage point of outside observers. If we see others offering biased advice and we think poorly of the practice, then there is hope for a reformation. It is helpful to notice that for Smith there is little distinction between individual and social reform (Levy and Peart 2013).

In Smith's account we view ourselves and our society from an outside vantage. This result is taken for granted when Knight describes humans as the unique dissatisfied animal. But he did not lay out any plausible process of

reform. He could not have availed himself of *Theory of Moral Sentiments* since, when Knight wrote, *TMS* was known only to specialists. The greatest of these, Knight’s colleague Jacob Viner, had offered the judgment at the University of Chicago sesquicentennial celebration of the *Wealth of Nations* that there was a deep inconsistency between it and Smith’s early book (Viner 1927).

Thus, one of the most promising developments in the last four decades has been the recovery by economists of Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The recovery of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and the overcoming of Viner’s objections has had a considerable impact on the interpretation and the development of experimental economics. Many puzzles in the experimental results became coherent when viewed in light of Smith’s *TMS*. To this line of research we turn now.

Discussion and cooperation: experimental evidence

The recovery of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* by experimental economists (V. Smith 1998, 2003; Ashraf *et al.* 2005) brought about a sea change in how economists deal with the experimental regularities of cooperation and sharing. There is perhaps no stronger experimental evidence than the conclusion, confirmed in many experimental studies, that discussion strongly enhances cooperation. As guides to a large literature we point to a wide-ranging survey of the literature from 1992 and two meta-analyses, one from 1995 and one from 2010. Twenty years ago Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues (Ostrom *et al.* 1992) summarized a large body of empirical work, which addressed the neo-classical economic (Hobbesian) commonplace that language did not matter. They summarized the empirical findings:

- 1 In one-shot social dilemma experiments, communication alone leads to substantial improvements in outcomes.
- 2 In repeated social dilemma experiments, repeated communication alone leads to substantial improvements in joint outcomes.
- 3 In field settings of repeated social dilemmas, participants invest substantial time and effort monitoring and imposing sanctions on one another (1992: 405).

Three years later David Sally published a meta-analysis of the experimental evidence from 1958 to 1992 (Sally 1995). Sally noted that the standard model of rational choice had problems accounting for the observed regularities, and “This incongruity is widest with respect to the role of language in encouraging cooperation” (Sally 1995: 58). A meta-analysis in the 2010 *Journal of Conflict Resolution* summarized the results of experiments studying the impact of communication on cooperation as follows:

Among the most researched solutions to social dilemmas is communication. Since the late 1950s, it has been well known that communication

enhances cooperation in social dilemmas. This article reports a meta-analysis of this literature ... and finds a large positive effect of communication on cooperation in social dilemmas ... This effect is moderated by the type of communication, with a stronger effect of face-to-face discussion ... compared to written messages ... The communication-cooperation relationship is also stronger in larger, compared to smaller, group social dilemmas. Whether communication occurred before or during iterated dilemmas did not statistically affect the communication-cooperation effect size.

(Balliet 2010: 39)

Smith provides a valuable guide to this body of research because, as noted above and unlike the economists of the next two centuries, Smith anchors trade in language. Twentieth-century economists who are also careful students of Smith's work have expressed puzzlement over his claim that dogs do not trade because they lack a language in which to support the concept for "fairness" (Levy and Peart 2013). While Smith has a reputation of individualism, there is no mistaking his concern for how membership in a group influences one's conduct. The group could be a family, neighborhood, college campus, commercial association or a nation; Smith analyzes the impact of many such groups on individual choice (Levy and Peart 2009). But perhaps the group to which he gives the most substantial attention is that of a religious body. His celebrated defense of religion independent of government is offered as a means of changing the terms of discussion among religious leaders (Levy and Peart 2009, 2013). Here, in a passage that deserves to be quoted at length, Smith offers evidence of an American "field experiment" on the nature of discussion. This is where we see Sen's "give and take" is most clearly expressed:

The interested and active zeal of religious teachers can be dangerous and troublesome only where there is either but one sect tolerated in the society, or where the whole of a large society is divided into two or three great sects; the teachers of each acting by concert, and under a regular discipline and subordination. But that zeal must be altogether innocent where the society is divided into two or three hundred, or perhaps into as many thousand small sects, of which no one could be considerable enough to disturb the public tranquility. The teachers of each sect, seeing themselves surrounded on all sides with more adversaries than friends, would be obliged to learn that candour and moderation which is so seldom to be found among the teachers of those great sects ... This plan of ecclesiastical government, or more properly of no ecclesiastical government, was what the sect called Independents, a sect no doubt of very wild enthusiasts, proposed to establish in England towards the end of the civil war. If it had been established, though of a very unphilosophical origin, it would probably by this time have been productive of the most

philosophical good temper and moderation with regard to every sort of religious principle. It has been established in Pennsylvania, where, though the Quakers happen to be the most numerous, the law in reality favours no one sect more than another, and it is there said to have been productive of this philosophical good temper and moderation.

(Smith [1776] 1904, V.1.197)

In the statement we quoted earlier, Sen argued that Knight and Buchanan progressed a step beyond Smith’s enlightenment project with their appeal to government by discussion. Smith holds clearly and distinctly that justice is central to a well-governed society. He also makes the case that factionalized religion presents a clear danger to social order because religious doctrine is the path by which the duty of justice is diffused. The danger is that the dictates of impartial justice will be suspended for the benefit of one’s fellow sectarians (Levy and Peart 2013). The path away from that danger is, for Smith, to alter the terms of discussion.

Conclusion

If the foregoing insights, beginning with Smith and carried through Mill to Knight, Buchanan, and Sen are correct, do they provide any guidance for liberal learning? We take several lessons from the political economists who work in the “discussion tradition.”

That tradition suggests there may be real and unappreciated benefits associated with discussion on college campuses. While many educators pay lip service to discussion, they less frequently provide evidence of the benefits of discussion. Three major benefits have been sketched above. Smith emphasized, first, the development of a moral sense that emerges as one begins to see oneself as a part – and only a small part – of the universe. Mill accepted this argument and added a second benefit: conversation is corrective. Discussion yields insight into bias and profound learning. The Knight–Buchanan–Sen tradition takes a step beyond Mill to suggest that through discussion one becomes aware and self-aware. One may change one’s position in the course of discussion.

Experimental evidence confirms these insights and strongly suggests that discussion facilitates cooperation with others when private and group interests are not fully aligned.¹⁴ Though parties may begin as (only) self-interested entities, they come to perceive their interconnectedness in the course of discussion. A well-governed society requires that people enter into the spirit of laws and cooperate when their material interests urge them in another direction. Experimental evidence confirms the importance of discussion in encouraging such cooperation. Thus, we can extend these findings to suggest that the benefits from discussion on college campuses are both moral and material, and in either event they are significant.

Discussion requires respect for others and their point of view. The same respect for others and their actions is required in Smith’s account for

considerations of justice to have motivational force. For Smith people come into the world with two foundational principles: an instinct to trade and an instinct to persuade, and in fact he conjectured that these are actually the same principle ([1776] 1904: I.2.2). The experimental evidence suggests that Smith's conjecture holds. Modern writers tend to think of governance and justice in terms of trade, i.e., whether material dealings are fair and equitable. But if Smith is correct, the question of whether discussions take place in a fair and equitable manner is prior.

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Notes

- 1 The Mill passage we quote comes from the section of *Logic* that concerns fallacies. In this and in many other areas, it is helpful to read Mill and Richard Whately together. See Levy and Peart (2010).
- 2 Martha Nussbaum focuses on argumentation, as opposed to discussion, and she suggests that we must continue to support Socratic pedagogy on college campuses. See Nussbaum (2010: 46–61). We seek to broaden the focus to include all forms of communication.
- 3 Most recently, Deirdre McCloskey has argued that the material benefits associated with persuasion are significant. See McCloskey (2010: 385ff).
- 4 Language is the mechanism by which approval is conveyed, just as it is required for material exchange. We return to material trade below.
- 5 What can thwart this moderating influence of discussion, of course, is faction: the desire to obtain approval from one subset of the polity. When one belongs to a faction, one cares about approval from that group rather more than approval from everyone; consequently one might grandstand, showboat or behave poorly towards those who are not in the group, in order to obtain the group members' approval. Smith was well aware of this problem. We will return to factions below.
- 6 Our account is in line with that in Nussbaum (1997: 93) in which she links liberal education via imagination to an improved capacity for compassion. In the nineteenth century major figures in the discussion tradition, Mill and Whately, were important in the larger anti-slavery movement. See Peart and Levy (2005).
- 7 In an increasingly complex society in which knowledge is partial and local, many key innovations are similarly the result of discussion and collaboration amongst those who bring their separate expertise to the table.
- 8 What Mill called "false beliefs" might today be referred to as "implicit bias"; see Greenwald and Cooper (2006). Consistent with the argument below, Greenwald and Cooper maintain that such biases are malleable and they suggest that biases against "out group" individuals are reduced by inter-group interactions.
- 9 Mill provided the qualification that those who are child-like had yet to acquire this capacity. In his 1867 Inaugural Address at St. Andrews, Mill reiterated that "improvement consists in bringing our opinions into nearer agreement with facts; and we shall not be likely to do this while we look at facts only through glasses coloured by those very opinions. But since we cannot divest ourselves of pre-conceived notions, there is no known means of eliminating their influence but by

frequently using the differently coloured glasses of other people: and those of other nations, as the most different, are the best” (Mill [1867] 1984: 226).

- 10 “To call any proposition certain, while there is any one who would deny its certainty if permitted, but who is not permitted, is to assume that we ourselves, and those who agree with us, are the judges of certainty, and judges without hearing the other side” (Mill [1869] 1977: 223). For an egregious example of silencing an academic textbook, see Levy and Peart (2011). As we demonstrate there, Lorie Tarshis’s textbook was silenced and Paul Samuelson’s textbook thereupon obtained and maintained monopoly status. We have recently learned that F. A. Hayek refused to endorse William F. Buckley’s continuation of the attack on the Keynesian economics textbooks. See Peart and Levy (2013).
- 11 “The fact, however, is, that not only the grounds of the opinion are forgotten in the absence of discussion, but too often the meaning of the opinion itself. The words which convey it, cease to suggest ideas, or suggest only a small portion of those they were originally employed to communicate. Instead of a vivid conception and a living belief, there remain only a few phrases retained by rote; or, if any part, the shell and husk only of the meaning is retained, the finer essence being lost. The great chapter in human history which this fact occupies and fills, cannot be too earnestly studied and meditated on” (Mill [1869] 1977: 247). See also Mill ([1867] 1984).
- 12 We might also hold conversations with people in the past: “To question all things; never to turn away from any difficulty, to accept no doctrine either from ourselves or from other people without a rigid scrutiny by negative criticism, letting no fallacy, or incoherence, or confusion of thought, slip by unperceived; above all, to insist upon having the meaning of a word clearly understood before using it, and the meaning of a proposition before assenting to it; these are the lessons we learn from the ancient dialecticians” Mill ([1869] 1977: 229–230).
- 13 John Rawls’s dependence on Knight’s *Ethics of Competition* (Knight [1935] 1951) at the step in *Theory of Justice* (Rawls [1971] 1999) at which governance is supposed to be a form of truth seeking, is discussed in Levy and Peart (2015).
- 14 This is consistent with the claim that universities may serve to develop social capital; see Trani and Holsworth (2010: 6).

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