



Geijer as Moral Philosopher

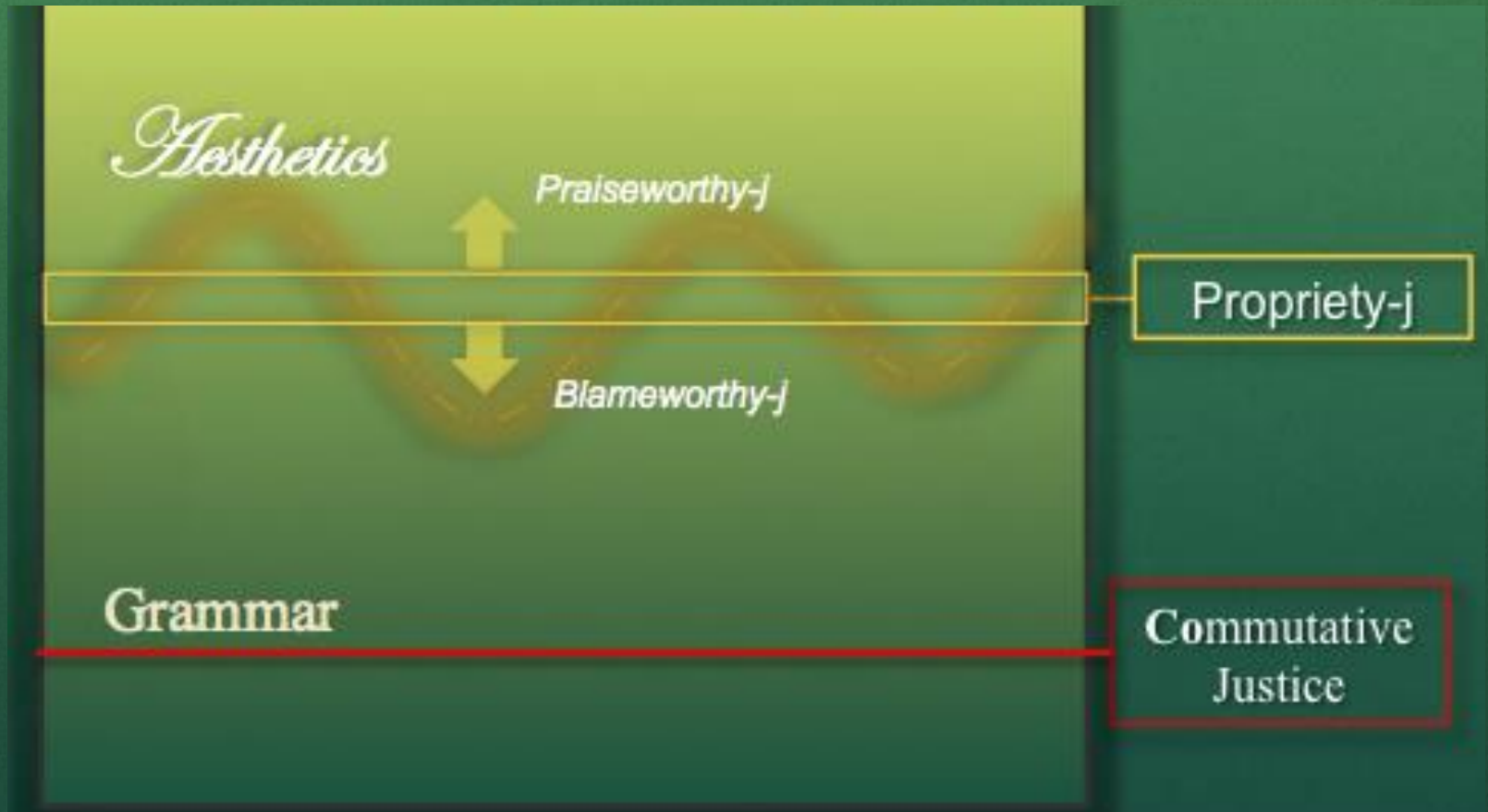
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In Adam Smith's day

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY – study of nature independent of man: Newton, Linnaeus

MORAL PHILOSOPHY – study of human conduct: History, morals, politics, linguistics, jurisprudence, economics, etc.

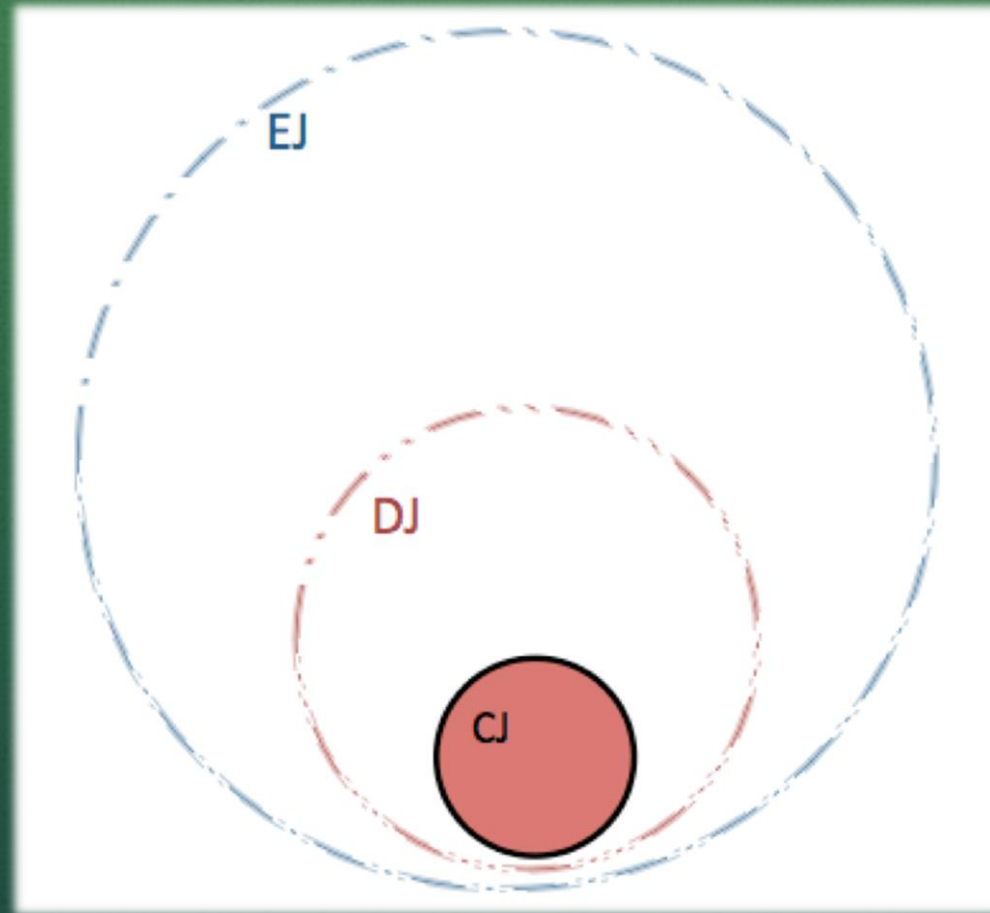
Aesthetics vs. grammar

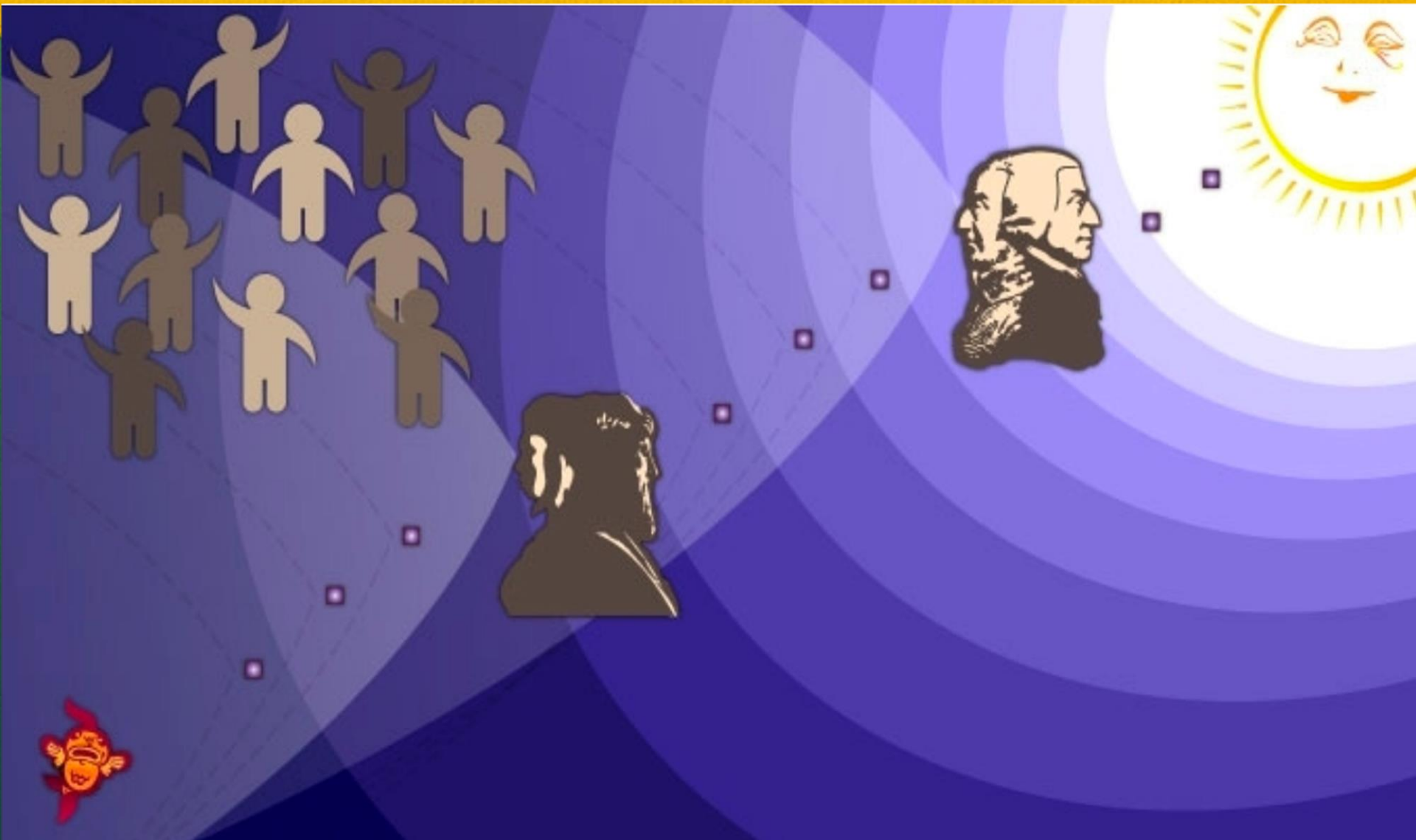




Type of rules	"precise and accurate"	"loose, vague, and indeterminate"
Types of expression	literal	figurative

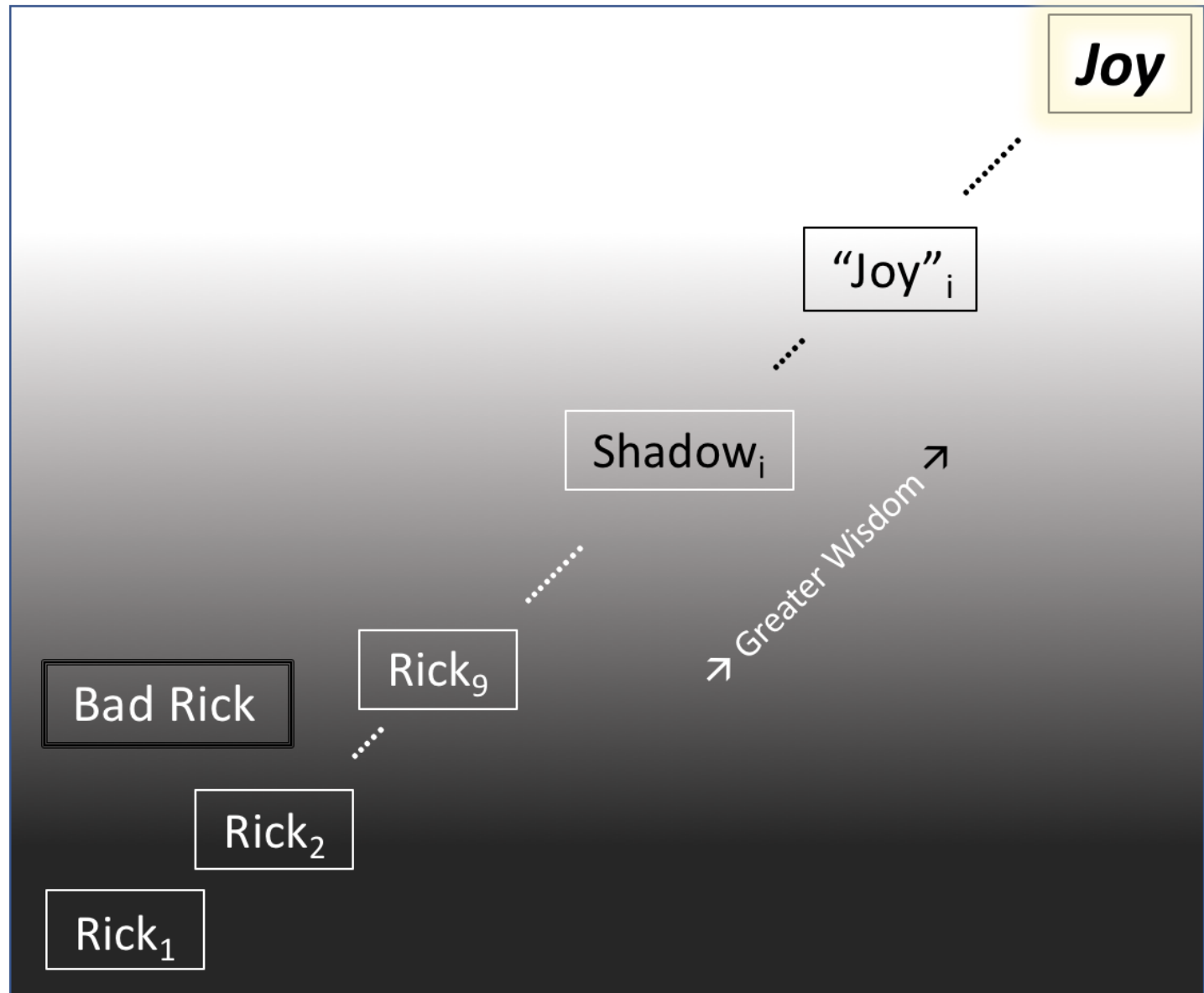
CJ in DJ in EJ





More intelligent
about the
matter
at hand

Less intelligent
about the
matter
at hand



Less beneficial towards
larger wholes

More beneficial towards
larger wholes

JGA Pocock

The 18C:

“The effect was to construct a liberalism which made the state’s authority guarantee the liberty of the individual’s social behavior, but had no intention whatever of impoverishing that behavior by confining it to the rigorous assertion of ego-centered individual rights. ... A commercial humanism had been not unsuccessfully constructed....”

Critics of Smith's TMS

Scotland: Henry Home Lord Kames, Thomas Reid, Adam Ferguson, Dugald Stewart, Thomas Brown, James Macintosh, Henry Brougham

England: Alexander Bain, J.S. Mill, H.T. Buckle, Leslie Stephens, Walter Bagehot, James A. Farrer, Harold Laski

France: Theodore Jouffroy

USA: Richard T. Ely

Criticisms

Opposed allegory or metaphor: (*impartial spectator, man within the breast, invisible hand*).

Smith was loose, vague, and circular.

Smith lacked “foundations.”

After Hume, Smith, Burke

- Turn against allegory (and God)
- Turn against historical dimension within theory
- Image of social science: Precise and accurate rules of method; exact laws (“deduction”)
- Turn toward separation of science and moral judgment/aesthetics (“value judgments”)
- Turn toward separate disciplines, separate sciences
- Later: Allegiance to idea of a “progressive research program”

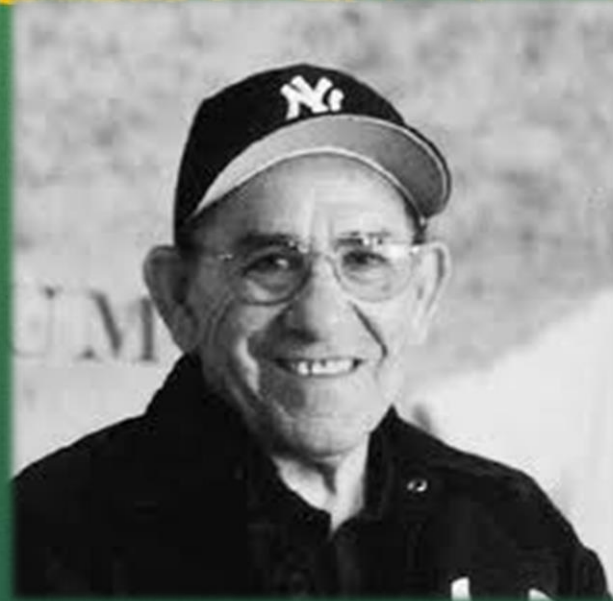
After Hume, Smith, Burke

- Rise of demarcationism, distinctions like “positive vs. normative”
- Pretensions of expertise
- From wisdom to logic/information/fact/reason
- Foundationalism
- Turn against and forgetting of esotericism (Melzer vii, 96)

Alas...

In those ways liberalism lent itself to being caricatured.

Yogi Berra



“If you don’t know where you’re going, you could end up somewhere else.”

The caricaturing of liberalism

- Forsakes high things for low things, forsakes virtue
- Prizes rights and liberty but disregards responsibilities
- Materialistic, ego-centric, selfish, “possessive,” economistic
- Atomistic (not only jurisprudentially, but also ethically)

Soap Operas *Uber Alles*

Romanticism vs. The Enlightenment (Reason)

Feeling vs. rationality, calculation, efficiency

Art vs. science

Society/community vs. the individual

Gemeinschaft vs. *gesellschaft*

Today: Humanity vs. neoliberalism

JGA Pocock

The 18C:

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But then:

“About 1789, a **wedge** was driven through this burgeoning universe, and rather suddenly we begin to hear denunciations of commerce as founded upon soullessly rational calculation and the cold, mechanical philosophy...”

(1985, 50)



GEIJER OVERCOMES THAT WEDGE!



Geijer

- Allegorical (and religious)
- History integrated into morals and politics
- Openness about own sense and sensibility, the voice of a friend, and avuncular voice
- Integrates social sciences: MORAL PHILOSOPHY
- Ethics pervades his discourse
- Sensitive to paradoxes, dilemmas, contrarities
- Esoteric



“An Economic Dream”

1847

“This *liberty* is tantamount with *disorder*, a thousand voices shout. On the contrary, she is **a new, self-evolving order**; so do others comfort themselves, **the more industrious, the wiser**. That liberty, even if she brings disorder for a passing while, follows her own rules and develops from within, implanted in her by the Creator, her own *law*: that is the full faith of **liberalism** and it leads to salvation.” (p. 443)



“What is the *new order of things*? With each day, its *law* evolves more clearly; its *substance* is already so apparent that one can thereof judge its nature and the spirit of progress. This substance is the *day-by-day, constantly evolving, all-encompassing fellowship and interaction of human powers and needs*. This new, but actually ancient law of labour is that of *intelligence*, which works in expanding circles. From there comes the dependency, from there the interaction in all occupations, equally familiar and acknowledged, and which, to the extent of this increasingly ardent acknowledgement, *communicates* ever more directly with its own essence and from this[,] new, greater powers emerge, day-by-day and without surcease. Therefore, every seeming defeat is a true victory for it. It needs hardly touch the earth to feel at home and rise again with renewed vigour.”



“One needs only to regard this immortal principle in detail in its effects to find oneself in the field of an infinite project that reaches in all directions and returns from all directions to its centre. — How could any occupation, any area of human enterprise, now be able to isolate itself? In so doing, it cuts itself off from its very breath of life, withers and inevitably dies. It thrives, flourishes, feels happy and promotes happiness utterly to the same extent that it both **communicates** and receives based on an enlivening influence.

And so, the separated groups of industries and trades finally flowed together before my eye. The artisan, not merely with his bodily strength, but with his intelligence, was the foundation of it all, for an enterprise that the factory owner used and distributed, that the merchant spread across the earth. I saw a new day ascend above it. It was the rising sun; and the Dancing Hours moving around the sun, in measured heavenly-harmonious orbits, were the beautiful performance at which I wakened from my dream.” (pp. 444–446)

Hayek's "communication" talk

"We must look at the price system as such a mechanism for **communicating** information if we want to understand its real function" (1948, 85-87).

Likewise, *cooperation*.

Allegory can help to answer in a liberal way the yearning for larger meaning and connection.

Allegory can help people to see that they must subdue or rechannel the yearning for larger meaning and connection.



Moral philosophers



Ngram 1750-2008





*Thank you for
your attention!*