

List of Epigraphs

0. Prologue

*'To understand an author's meaning all contradictory passages must be reconciled. [...] Every author has a meaning which reconciles all contradictory passages, or else he has no meaning at all.'*¹

1. Information

*'Let me be quite clear about what I mean here by matter. I mean an item that is not in itself a something and is also not a quantity nor said to be any of the other things by which that which is is defined.'*²

1.1. Material and immaterial information

*'Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.'*³

2. Beings

*'Any organism is held together in this action by the possession of means for the acquisition, use, retention, and transmission of information.'*⁴

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- 1 Blaise Pascal, *Pensees* (1670), trans. A. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin, 1995) 77. A plea is also made here to, same as Rawls, 'take to heart Mill's remark in his review of [Alfred] Sedgwick: "A doctrine is not judged at all until it is judged in its best form" ' (John Rawls, *Lectures on the history of political philosophy*, ed. S. Freeman (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007) xii.
 - 2 Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin, 2004) 175 (1029a).
 - 3 Walter Benjamin, "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 220.
 - 4 Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics: or control and communication in the animal and the machine* (1961), (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2019), 161.

List of Epigraphs

2.1. Humans

*'All persons exist to society by some shining trait of beauty or utility which they have.'*⁵

3. Things

*'Whatever exists, will either do
Something, or it is itself, by other things, done to'*⁶

4. Processing

*'For anything that is must be,
By definition, something.'*⁷

4.1. Reason

*'We have to make an exception of Descartes, the father of rationalism (and therefore the grandfather of the revolution), who granted authority to reason alone: but reason is only a tool, and Descartes was superficial.'*⁸

5. Need and opportunity

'On a Statue of Time by Lysippus

A. Who and whence was the sculptor?

B. From Sicyon.

A. And his name?

B. Lysippus.

A. And who art thou?

B. Time!* who subdueth all things.

A. Why dost thou stand on tip-toe?

B. I am ever running.

5 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nominalist and Realist," in *Essays: Second Series* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1844), 239.

6 Lucretius, *The Nature of Things*, trans. A. E. Stallings (London: Penguin Classics, 2007), 13 (Book 1, lines 428–429).

7 Lucretius, *The Nature of Things*, trans. A. E. Stallings (London: Penguin Classics, 2007), 13 (Book 1, lines 430–431).

8 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Marion Faber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), aph. 191.

- A. *And why hast thou a pair of wings on thy feet?*
B. *I fly with the wind.*
A. *And why dost thou hold a razor in thy right hand?*
B. *As a sign to men that I am sharper than any sharp edge.*
A. *And why does thy hair hang over thy face?*
B. *For him who meets me to take me by the forelock.*
A. *And why, in Heaven's name, is the back of thy head bald?*
B. *Because none whom I have once raced by on my winged feet will now, though he wishes it sore, take hold of me from behind.*
A. *Why did the artist fashion thee?*
B. *For your sake, stranger, and he set me up in the porch as a lesson.*
* *Time, that is, in his character of Opportunity, not of Length of Years*⁹

5.1. *A need specific to humans*

*'Man has been given a restless soul, always responding to novelties.'*¹⁰

6. *Control*

'ATHENIAN: Now then, this shows that there is one specific desire common to all mankind. Isn't this the upshot of our discussion?
MEGILLUS: What desire?
ATHENIAN: That events should obey whatever orders one feels like giving – invariably, if possible, but failing that, at least where human affairs are concerned.
*MEGILLUS: Very true.'*¹¹

7. *State definition: States are information platforms for their citizens*

*'If you leave this problem unsolved it will hardly be possible to solve the ones which come next.'*¹²

9 Posidippus, "On a Statue of Time by Lysippus" (poem 16.275), in *The Greek Anthology*, trans. W. R. Paton, vol. 5 (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1927), 388–89.

10 *Ecclus.* 40:1–8 (NRSV).

11 Plato, *The Laws*, trans. Trevor J. Saunders (London: Penguin Classics, 1970), 162 (4.709e–710a).

12 Cicero, "On Divination," in *Roman Readings*, trans. Michael Grant (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1956) 45.

7.1. Information platforms

*'On ne pense que par image.'*¹³

8. States are natural to humans

*'There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says "Morning, boys. How's the water?" And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes "What the hell is water?"'*¹⁴

8.1. Names

'ODYSSEUS: What shall I call him, Circe? Who was he when he was human?

*CIRCE: What relevance does that have? Call him Gryllus, if you like.'*¹⁵

9. State formation: from word of mouth to the modern state

*'For though the society we have described seems to me to be the true one, like a man in health, there's nothing to prevent us, if you wish, studying one in a fever.'*¹⁶

13 (*We think only in images*), Albert Camus, *Carnets, I: mai 1935–février 1942* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1962), entry for May 1936.

14 David Foster Wallace, *This Is Water: Some Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant Occasion, about Living a Compassionate Life* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009), 3.

15 Plutarch, *Gryllus* (That Brute Animals Use Reason), in *Moralia*, vol. 12, trans. Harold Cherniss and William C. Helmbold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 985d–e.

16 Plato, *Republic*, trans. G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), 48 (2.372e).

10. *What states need*

*'The grand, leading principle, towards which every argument unfolded in these pages directly converges, is the absolute and essential importance of human development in its richest diversity.'*¹⁷

11. *The nature of the state*

*'Philosophy cannot give us a satisfactory theory of man until it has developed a theory of the state. The nature of man is written in capital letters in the nature of the state.'*¹⁸

12. *The government*

*'Sir Humphrey: "Bernard, if the right people don't have power, do you know what happens? The wrong people get it!"'*¹⁹

12.1. *The political system*

*'For the constitution of a state is in a sense the way it lives.'*²⁰

13. *State justification*

'This part of Philosophy is in the same situation as the public roads, on which all men travel, and go to and fro, and some are enjoying a pleasant stroll and others are quarrelling, but they make no progress. The single reason for this situation seems to be that none of those who have dealt with

17 Wilhelm von Humboldt, *The Limits of State Action*, ed. J. W. Burrow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 51.

18 Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), 73. Cassirer directly invokes Plato's analogy from the *Republic*, where the nature of justice (and thus man) is 'written in capital letters in the nature of the state.' However, the underlying principle—that a theory of man is inseparable from a theory of the state—resonates perhaps even more strongly with Aristotle's foundational concept of man as a 'political animal' (*zoon politikon*), whose nature is fully realized only within the *polis* (see Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Ernest Barker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), Introduction, xi; cf. *Politics* 1.1253a).

19 "Yes Prime Minister, Series 2, episode 5" aired 7 January 1988, BBC.

20 Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. Ernest Barker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), 181 (4.1295a40–b1).

*this subject have employed a suitable starting point from which to teach it.*²¹

14. State legitimacy

15. State succession

*'The history of art is sometimes described as the story of a succession of various styles.'*²²

16. Sovereignty

*'But it does not require much effort to see that a virtual and always present entity is exactly the opposite of what is needed for the collective to be assembled: if it's already there, the practical means to compose it are no longer traceable; if it's total, the practical means to totalize it are no longer visible; if it's virtual, the practical means to realize, visualize, and collect it have disappeared from view.'*²³

17. Territory and borders

*'Whether you can observe a thing or not depends on the theory which you use. It is the theory which decides what can be observed.'*²⁴

18. Nation

*'He was a simple man – a Swiss (a people little given to vanity and lying).'*²⁵

21 Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, ed. and trans. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6.

22 E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 16th ed. (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), 15.

23 Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5.

24 Albert Einstein, comment during Werner Heisenberg's 1926 lecture in Berlin, recounted by Heisenberg and quoted in Abdus Salam, *Unification of Fundamental Forces* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 52.

25 Michel de Montaigne, "Of Cannibals," in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 152 (Book 1, Chapter 31).

19. Archipelago: where do the information platforms that are states live? The EU

*'I would first of all like to say something about archipelagos. I think the idea of the archipelago – as a place where we can begin to understand and resolve the contradictions of the world – should be propagated. The archipelagos of the Mediterranean must encounter the archipelagos of Asia, and the archipelago of the Antilles. These archipelagos must encounter each other because, across their many islands, interdependence and difference coexist – and, in this way, they carry the energy that is necessary for our whole globe, our whole world.'*²⁶

20. Law

*'The word law (lex) in an absolute sense signifies that, in accordance with which, each individual thing, or all things, or all things of the same kind, behave in one and the same fixed and determined way, depending upon either natural necessity or a human decision.'*²⁷

21. Rights

*'The light dove, in free flight cutting through the air the resistance of which it feels, could get the idea that it could do even better in airless space.'*²⁸

22. Human rights

*'The fortunes of ideas, like those of men, depend as much on accident as on their own worth and character.'*²⁹

23. Morality

'Who are you?'

26 Édouard Glissant, quoted in Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Archipelago* (n.p.: Common Ear Inc., 2021), 19.

27 Baruch Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Samuel Shirley, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001), 49 (Chapter 4).

28 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 129 (A5 / B9).

29 Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 9.

*The new number two.
Who is number one?
You are number six.
I am not a number! I am a free man!*³⁰

24. Property

*'Possession, ownership, are tactical matters.'*³¹

24.1. Intellectual property

*'Something that doesn't actually exist can still be useful'*³²

25. Freedom and liberty

*'Since we are not, in fact, free, but could not live without the conviction that we are, what are we to do?'*³³

26. Liberalism

*'As for me, I only exist 'at home' (in myself); and as for that other life of mine which lies in what those who love me know of me, [C] considered naked and simply in itself, [A] I am well aware that I feel no fruit or joy from it, other than from the vanity of an imagined opinion.'*³⁴

30 *The Prisoner*, season 1, episode 1, "Arrival," directed by Don Chaffey, written by George Markstein and David Tomblin, aired September 29, 1967 (UK), on ATV (ITC Entertainment).

31 Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 67.

32 Ian Stewart, *Infinity: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 90.

33 Isaiah Berlin, "Historical Inevitability," in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 80.

34 Michel de Montaigne, "Of Vanity," in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 758 (Book 3, Chapter 9).

Notes

*'As long as we live, we are devoted to self-improvement, and we shall not cease to make our writings more polished and more complete until we cease to breathe. No one is so good a man that he could not be made better; and no book has had so much work put into it that it cannot be made more perfect.'*³⁵

35 Erasmus, *Ep.* 1341A:1465–86, quoted in Erasmus, *The Adages of Erasmus*, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), xxi.

