# What do we care about in caring about freedom?

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Typically, when freedom is discussed in political philosophy, the discussion revolves around the question concerning the nature of freedom. In this essay, I want to ask a related but different question: why do we care about freedom? Or, what is it that we care about when we care about freedom?

Why do I propose this is a worthwhile question to ask? In discussions of the nature of freedom, it is usually assumed that freedom—or whichever specific notion of it is being defended—is something worthwhile of protection. However, for this conversation to remain calibrated around what matters most, it is critical to have a solid understanding of *why* we deem freedom to be worthy of protection. Clarifying the why-questions can help add clarity and precision to various other questions concerning freedom, some of practical importance. For example, it can illuminate discussions about what strategies are more or less apt for protecting and fostering freedom in society.

I proceed as follows. I will start with a broad discussion of why it is that we care about freedom. Of course, the *reasons* for caring about freedom are importantly intertwined with the question of the *nature* of freedom. The answer to the former will depend on which notion of freedom is being adopted. In Section 1, I thus aim to explore the spectrum of reasons underlying and evoked by the different notions of freedom, thereby situating this essay in the centuries-long discussion on the topic. In doing so, I identify three core reasons for why we care about freedom which I will briefly expand on in turn. Next, I will dive into one of those reasons in more depth, namely freedom as a protector of the *unfolding of humanity's collective potential*. I chose to focus on this reason because it remains the most scarcely discussed among them, all the while being of great moral importance. In Section 2, I will discuss what it is I mean by humanity's potential and why it morally matters. In Section 3, I will discuss *how* freedom enables the processes that drive cultural and moral progress, thereby protecting us from scenarios of cultural and moral lock-in.

### Section 1: Why Do We Care About Freedom?

It can hardly be said that the discussion of freedom among political philosophers is a shallow one. Given the amount of ink spilt on the topic, the avid reader can safely assume that thinkers at least agree on one thing: that freedom, whatever

exact definition one chooses to assume, is important. From here, a further question ensures: *why* is freedom important? Why do we care about it? What is it that we care about in caring about freedom?

I propose to central the space of possible reasons into three: freedom as protection from oppression and authoritarianism, freedom as an enabler of the unfolding of individual human potential, and, lastly, freedom as an enabler of the unfolding of humanity's collective potential. A given theory of the nature of freedom may agree with all three of these reasons while another may only buy into a subset of them, and different theories may put different emphasis on the importance of these reasons. We will discuss each of those reasons in turn.

**Reason 1:** *By protecting individual freedom, we protect ourselves and our society from oppression and authoritarianism.*

This *raison d'être* of freedom figures most centrally in the so-called notion of negative freedom. Negative freedom—a term first introduced by Isaiah Berlin in his seminal essay "Two concepts of liberty"—can be summarized as freedom *from* something.

Freedom *from what*, one may ask? For Hobbes, freedom was centrally about the absence of physical coercion of the body. Locke would later expand on this arguably rather thin notion of freedom by adding that a person can also be rendered unfree by means of coercion of the will. Freedom, as conceived here, carries the central purpose of protecting the individual from oppression and coercion by an external, more powerful source. Whether it be coercion of the body or the will, freedom is being limited in virtue of the fact that alternative choices, or alternative paths of action, were rendered ineligible by external agents. This view can be summarized as understanding freedom as *non-interference*. Out of this tradition grew political liberalism and the view that of central concern is to protect individual freedom from the freewheeling power of the state.

Some, however, thought the notion of freedom as non-interference too shallow. Consider the example of a master and their slave. A master may not interfere with his slave's will to eat their meagre lunch. Nevertheless, the slave is unfree in the sense that the master could, at any point, for no good reason but their own whims, decide to interfere with the slave's plan and take away the slave's meal. Thus, the slave is unfree in the sense of being unfree from the arbitrary application of power—or: domination. This is the idea of freedom as *non-domination*, sometimes also called 'republican freedom' (Pettit, 2001). This notion of freedom embraces the importance of the rule of law—the absence of arbitrariness in the functioning of a just state. Under this view, it is thus not power as such that necessarily limits

freedom, but whether or not the wielding of power is subject to a legitimate—as opposed to an absent or arbitrary—set of rules (Skinner, 2013).

While the protection from oppression and authoritarianism is a central concern of thinkers in the negative tradition, it is also one of the *raisons d'être*—although not the central one—of positive freedom. Here, freedom tends to be understood as residing in the collective governance over one's life as a means to individual and/or collective *self-determination*. Proponents of the positive tradition include thinkers like Rousseau and Marx,[1] among many others. Under this view, it is not required to limit state activity to its bare minimum. State activity can—in certain areas of life and under the right choices of institutional design—be desirable or even necessary for achieving certain goods critical to the goal of self-realization. That said, this view still places certain constraints on what *legitimate* structures of governance look like. For example, legitimacy can come from citizens' ability to participate freely in the democratic process, thereby co-determining its outcome. As such, oppression and authoritarianism remain an outcome that defenders of positive freedom aim to protect against by entrenching or making more secure our negative freedoms.

**Reason 2:** *By protecting individual freedom, we enable the unfolding of individual human potential.*

We find this *raison d'être* for freedom most prominently reflected in positive notions of freedom.

Insofar as the notion of positive freedom points at the idea of freedom as the *presence* of something, this 'something' (e.g. self-determination or self-governance) can often be understood as being at the service of a safe or virtuous unfolding of human nature.

When looking at the concept of freedom from a genealogical standpoint, we can find early traces of freedom as a means to the unfolding of human potentiality in thinkers who are typically classified as representatives of the negative tradition. Early defenders of negative liberty, as we have seen with Hobbes and Locke, viewed obstacles to freedom as always originating from *external* sources. John Stuart Mill, author of the seminal book *On Liberty*, however, recognised that one's freedom can also be curtailed by *internal* forces.[2] According to Mill, if I act from my passions—anger, fear, greed, lust, etc.—without appropriate consultation of

[1] See Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (1762) and Marx's "On the Jewish Question" (1843), among others.

[2] This is a reading suggested by Quentin Skinner in his 2013 lecture "A Genealogy of Freedom" at Queen Mary College, University of London.

reason, I am in fact acting unfreely. Similarly, if I am acting inauthentically—in other words, if my choices are determined in the absence of proper introspection and reasoning, but instead by habit, unreflectively adopted cultural norms and the like—I am acting unfreely. Or, if I am acting based on a 'false consciousness'—a misguided understanding of my real interests—I too am acting unfreely.

A similar idea was picked up and expanded on by more modern thinkers. Charles Taylor (1985), who stands more firmly within the positive tradition, defends a similar position by arguing that certain emotions—such as spite, irrational fear, vanity—are to be understood as *alien* to us. We would be, according to Taylor, better off without them, and getting rid of them would not cause us to lose anything important. Thus, he argues, there is a clear sense in which having such emotions can make us unfree with respect to our authentic or genuine goals, desires or purpose.

In order to help us think about freedom as enabler of self-realization, let us, in addition to the negative-positive axis, add another axis that can help chart out the space of notions of freedom: exercise- vs. opportunity-based notions. In the former, freedom is concerned with "the extent that one has effectively determined oneself and the shape of one's life" (Taylor, 1985, p. 213). In other words, freedom is determined not merely by my possibilities, but by what I *actually do*. In the case of opportunity-based notions, "freedom is a matter of what one can do, of what it is open to us to do, whether or not we do anything to exercise these options" (p. 213).

Self-realization—the idea of unfolding one's potential—maps onto the exercise concept. It is something that necessarily has to be acted out and realized for it to be of value. If someone is free to realize their potential in the sense of not being impeded from doing so, but has not realized that potential because, say, they are unaware of it, paralysed by doubt, or because the societally accepted notion of the 'good life' conflicts with their own sense of where their potential lies, they may still lack freedom insofar as we care about freedom as a means to self-realization.

Somewhere between a pure exercise and a pure opportunity-based conception of freedom, we can situate the so-called *capabilities approach*. It too recognises that opportunity alone may not amount to substantive freedom. Instead, it is only capabilities that amount to substantive freedoms, as it is capabilities that allow a person to acquire or achieve the things they desire. Resources, means, opportunities and even formal rights alone are empty if the person lacks the capabilities to realize them. Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum are perhaps the

most prominent names associated with this view.[3]

So far, we have discussed the idea of freedom as a means of unfolding individual human potential, of realizing some higher or true 'self', or of actualizing some authentic 'way of life'. This raises the question: what *is* this 'self' that is being realized? The notion of a higher (as opposed to lower) or true (as opposed to false) self appears to assume some view of the true essence of human nature. Different thinkers provide different takes on this. As we have just seen, Mill and Taylor find their notion of the 'self' that is meant to be realized by differentiating between lower and higher-order motivations, wherein some desires or drives may be considered foreign to us, while others represent what we really want, our 'true will'. Hannah Arendt holds a different notion of human nature: according to Arendt, freedom needs to be understood as freedom of *action*, in particular action within the political arena. Accordingly, we are only free insofar as we are free to exercise our power within the polis, or the political sphere.[4] As such, human nature is understood to be essentially political, and the unfolding of human potential is inevitably intertwined with the full and equal participation in collective political life (Arendt, 1961).

We have seen how these different notions of freedom all stand in the service of the unfolding of individual human potential. Such self-knowledge, authenticity and self-realization may be viewed as a moral good in and of itself, or as the right thing to aim for in virtue of tending to produce morally virtuous or happy people. The role of freedom in the unfolding of human potential can come in the form of protecting said unfolding from external or internal factors that may interfere with it; or in the form of supporting the realization of said potential by such means as material resources, capabilities and institutional or cultural structures.

**Reason 3:** *By protecting individual freedom, we protect and enable the unfolding of humanity's collective potential.*

Less has been written about the relationship between freedom and humanity's long-run trajectory, so we will explore it in more detail here. To do so, we will first discuss what it is I mean by 'humanity's collective potential' and why one might care about it. Then, I will explore the arguments for whether and how freedom may help with its unfolding.

[3]See, among others, Sen's "Equality of What?" (1979) and Nussbaum's *Creating Capabilities* (2011).

[4]In fact, many ancient Greek thinkers, including Aristotle, shared a similar view of human nature, even if they may not have theorized human nature in relationship to freedom specifically.

**Section 2: Humanity's Trajectory, Past and Future**

In the same way we just explored what we might understand by 'individual human potential' and its unfolding, we should also clarify the notion of 'humanity's collective potential'. To do so, we will first turn our metaphorical gaze toward the past. In doing so, we may conclude that humanity has come a long way. From hunter-gatherer tribes to the agricultural revolution, the discovery of the new world, the industrial revolution, the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, the introduction of the welfare state, the establishment of an international order aimed at limiting the inhumanity of wars,[5] the discovery of penicillin, the eradication of smallpox, the dawn of the internet—to name only a few milestones in human history. Zooming out to timescales of hundreds, thousands and millions of years, we can generally witness a drastic increase in human welfare. This increase stems, in large part, from economic growth, technological advances, better and more comprehensive protection of fundamental rights, and respect for a growing set of varied ways of life and means of human self-expression.[6]

Far from arguing that human history has not *also* been witness to an unspeakable amount and severity of moral tragedy, and far from claiming that, today, the face of the earth is free of injustice, violence or other forms of needless suffering—the average human being is drastically better off living today rather than 100, 1,000 or 10,000 years ago. Accordingly, we may harbour the hope that this trend of the general betterment of the fate of sentient life may continue.

In his 1981 book *The Expanding Circle*, Peter Singer introduces the idea of the moral circle as a way to conceptualize the nature of moral progress. Humanity, over the course of its own history, has expanded its circle of moral concern from the individual, the family and the tribe to include forms of life increasingly more dissimilar to oneself. At the time of writing, Singer was at the forefront of the up-and-coming animal liberation movement, based on the idea that non-human animals, in virtue of their capacity to experience suffering and pain, ought to be considered as moral patients and treated with the respective respect and care. As time passes and progress continues, the moral circle may expand yet further.

The point of this essay is not to make a substantive claim about where the moral circle ought to extend to next. Instead, its point is to argue that there are immense moral stakes in ensuring that the processes driving cultural and moral progress

[5]For example the four Geneva Conventions (1864, 1907, 1929, 1949), the establishment of the Red Cross, conventions for the limitation of biological, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction, international laws and courts for the prosecution of crimes of war, etc.

[6]For examples of such a bird's-eye view on human history and development, see for example Harari (2014) or Pinker (2011).

continue. As argued by Williams (2015), we may not know where, but chances are that there are moral atrocities unfolding at this very moment that we cannot even yet identify as such. Looking back at the relevant periods in human history, it is not that the ill-treatment of slaves, women and non-human animals was recognized as morally wrong yet tolerated—the first step to the emancipation of these groups resided in the mere acknowledgement of their moral worth. One thing we can learn from history in this regard is just how blind we may be to injustices that may unfold in front of our eyes. The specific lesson I am pointing at here is not to advocate for one or the other minority group to gain protection and a voice—albeit these may well be worthwhile missions to support. The specific point I am trying to make concerns a different puzzle: what ought one do when one is ignorant of *where one's* mistake lies, but has reason to believe that one may well be committing some mistake(s)?

The answer, or so I claim, lies at least in part in investing in the *processes* that tend to drive moral and cultural progress. From the point of view of the ignorant or morally uncertain (MacAskill et al., 2020), investing in those processes is the best guess for discovering that which you don't yet know you need to discover. We will explore what role freedom plays in the functioning of these processes in the next section.

Before that, however, let us consider one more thought. The argument for the importance of protecting the processes driving moral and cultural progress does not merely rely on an argument from ignorance. What is more, we live in a physical world that is ever-changing. This can be easily forgotten when reasoning from within history and inside a set of cultural narratives that conceive of humanity as the pinnacle of evolution. However, once spelt out, there is little question to the matter that the world, as well as the human species itself, keeps on changing. The answer to the question of what it means to be human—be that from a cultural, sociological or biological perspective—*is evolving* every second of every day. Biological evolution is shaping the human gene pool; niche construction is moulding the environment we live in; cultural evolution is forming and re-forming the institutions that govern our lives; scientific and technological progress is shaping our socio-economic realities. What is more, technological progress may in the not-too-far future start to affect life itself. Be it in the form of transhumanism, artificial intelligence, artificial consciousness, or new hybrid or fully-artificial forms of life: technological progress will force upon us new cultural and moral questions.[7]

[7]For examples of cutting-edge research in the life sciences supporting such a view of future possibilities, see: Levin, M., "Technological Approach to Mind Everywhere (TAME): an experimentally-grounded framework for understanding diverse bodies and minds", *Frontiers in Systems Neuroscience* (2022); and Levin, M., "Synthetic Living Organisms: Heralds of a Revolution

These aren't questions we can choose to ignore. As such, moral progress is not just about arriving at better and more nuanced views on questions that pose themselves against some static background. It is also about finding answers to entirely new questions that arise from changes to the background condition of life itself. The world will look different in 100, 1,000 and 10,000 years. In the same way that I do not want to live my life today based on the cultural preconceptions of the 16th century, so do I not want future generations to be forced to live based on the cultural and moral conceptions of today.

So far, I have claimed that one of the reasons we care about freedom is as a means for the unfolding of humanity's collective potential. We discussed what we might mean by collective human potential, and why it appears of great importance for the processes that drive cultural and moral progress to continue. However, we have not yet discussed in much detail *how* freedom is meant to protect and advance such progress. This is what we will tackle next.

## Section 3: The Role of Freedom in the Unfolding of Humanity's Collective Potential

So, what does *freedom* have to do with it? To explore this question, I will first introduce the idea that freedom acts as the engine of exploration, and then discuss how an engine based on individual freedom differentially selects its direction of progress on the basis of reason more so than power. We will see that this unfolding happens in an *open-ended* fashion, with no need to know its own destination before arrival, thereby providing some robustness against moral imperialism and related concerns. In making these arguments, I will draw on insights from evolutionary theory, Austrian economic thought, and complexity science.

In "Generalizing Darwinism to Social Evolution: Some Early Attempts", Geoffrey M. Hodgson (2005) writes: "Richard Dawkins coined the term universal Darwinism (1983). It suggests that the core Darwinian principles of variation, replication and selection may apply not only to biological phenomena, but also to other open and evolving systems, including human cultural or social evolution." Borrowing from this idea of Universal Darwinism, freedom can be understood as a socio-political institution that protects the production of 'variation' (in the form of 'ways of life', perspectives and ideas). In the analogy with Darwinian evolution, negative freedom can be understood as serving the purpose of preventing any small number of powerful actors (akin to, say, some invasive species) from taking over the entirety of the ecosystem, thereby locking in their singular 'way of life'

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(i.e. cultural norms, ideologies, moral perspectives, etc.). Conversely, positive freedom and the fostering of capabilities allow individual actors or groups to properly actualize, explore and develop their own ideas, perspectives and ways of life. In doing so, these ideas get a chance to mature, be tested, be improved upon and—if they prove unsatisfactory or non-adaptive—be dropped.

The insight that exploration is crucial to progress has long been understood in economics and the philosophy of science. In his 1942 book *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, Joseph Schumpeter introduced the concept of entrepreneurship into modern economic thought and argued for its critical role in innovation. It is individual people who notice problems, apply their creativity to come up with solutions and take risks who become the 'engine' of capitalism. Friedrich Hayek (1945), also a scholar of the Austrian School of Economics, added a further puzzle to this view by illuminating the epistemic function of the market. As opposed to a system of centralized economic activity, a decentralized market is able to exploit the local information of individual actors. These insights stand at the origin of the libertarian view that aims to protect individual (economic) liberty against state interventionism, with the goal of protecting innovation and the proper functioning of the 'free market'.[8] In the philosophy of science, we find a similar logic at play. In science, where the goal is for the truth to prevail, freedom of thought allows for arguments to meet each other, and for the better ones to prevail (Popper, 1935). In society, individual freedom allows individuals to pursue their own way of life, thereby allowing humanity at a collective level to explore and compare a wider range of possibilities. Insofar as we consider the current set and configuration of ideologies, cultural norms, and political economies as unsatisfactory, it matters that humanity continues to explore new configurations.

The study of complex systems provides us with useful vocabulary for talking about this general pattern. What we see is how the emergence of macro-level dynamics (such as economic growth, scientific progress, cultural trends or moral progress) is driven by micro-level processes (such as the actions and ideas of individual human beings). We can ask, according to this view, what happens to the macro-level dynamics if we protect (or fail to do so) individual freedom at the micro-level? In this framework, freedom can be understood as a constitutive factor in the mechanism of exploration. In its absence, we risk not exploring widely enough, resulting in a premature convergence to some local optimum that represents a suboptimal set of views.

At this point, we start to glimpse the connection between the *raison d'être* of

[8]Whether or not the libertarian argument provides sufficient evidence to justify the convictions and political demands purported by right-wing libertarianism is a separate question.

freedom as a means to the unfolding of individual potential and the *raison d'être* as the means of the unfolding of collective potential. If not for the first—if freedom isn't able to provide to the individual a space in which they can authentically and thoughtfully explore their ideas and ways of life—then freedom could never fulfil its purpose of driving collective progress.

However, exploration alone is not enough. The question arises: according to what criteria do the sociological processes driving cultural and moral progress select among new options? This question assumes—correctly so—that these processes are not merely random walks. The process is guided by *something*—but that something emerges from a bottom-up, decentralized logic rather than being imposed on the system in some top-down fashion. The hope is—after all, this is a philosophical essay—that reason may be the overwhelming factor in selecting between new forms and configurations of cultural norms and moral beliefs. But is that hope justified?

I claim it is, and freedom itself is the key to why. In short, it is precisely what freedom does—letting reason come to the surface and prevail. We can find support for this view in the writings of two authors we have encountered earlier, namely Mill and Dewey. Insofar as Mill recognises that freedom can be limited by internal coercive forces, he also believed that what it meant to be free from those forces is for reason to prevail over passion, inauthenticity or false consciousness. John Dewey provided a more detailed account of a similar idea, discussing how it is that reason—on top of mere habitual *re*action—interacts with human action and decision making. In *What is Freedom?*, Dewey explains how "the only freedom that is of enduring importance is freedom of intelligence, that is to say, freedom of observation and of judgment exercised on behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worthwhile" (p. 39), and continues: "impulses and desires that are not ordered by intelligence are under the control of accidental circumstances. [...] A person whose conduct is controlled in this way has at most only the illusion of freedom. Actually, he is directed by forces over which he has no command." (p. 42).

If it is the case that freedom is about the triumph of reason, then what we do when we protect freedom is to make sure that reason will trump power in the evaluation of new cultural or moral ideas. Furthermore, at the collective level, the protection of individual freedom and in particular values such as tolerance, respect and free speech creates a public arena in which different views and 'ways of life' can interact in a way that allows for the potential of mutual enrichment. This adds another element to the engine of moral and cultural progress.

One may object to this whole notion of moral progress that it risks being merely a

cover for some form of moral imperialism, or that it implies (without making the case for) some notion of value monism. However, there is in fact nothing inherent to the logic of these mechanisms that requires them to converge to some singular view on which cultural norms, way of life or moral view must triumph. This is not what we see in biology, economics nor science either. In fact, it is precisely freedom that constitutes a critical ingredient in the machinery of moral progress—in acting as a sort of buffer—which makes it compatible with value pluralism as discussed, among others, by Berlin (1958) and Sen (1981).

As such, the unfolding of humanity's collective potential should be understood as an open-ended process. We need not know where the journey takes us as long as the journey is guided by a process with the right properties. In fact, given the epistemic position we find ourselves in by virtue of reasoning from the point of view of an evolved human brain, we ought not to attempt to form firm views as to where the process should terminate, nor to aim to direct it in a fully top-down manner.

Max Stirner (1972) critiques the idea of freedom as self-realization on the grounds that it implies some implicit and normative notion of 'true' human nature that the process of self-realization is aimed at. Stirner critiqued this notion as one that is always and necessarily culturally contingent and can act as a coercive force that is itself inherently at odds with genuine freedom. Freedom is thereby reduced "to [some] kind of spectral ideal that always concealed deeper forms of domination" (Newman, 2019, p. 156). A related argument applies to the notion of potential at the collective level. Whenever in human history a person or group believed they knew where the journey was meant to take us, bad things ensued. Such individuals or groups tended to believe themselves possessed of some sort of moral licence that would permit them to disrespect individual rights and freedom. What is more, the attempt to steer this process in a top-down and centralized fashion, based on the assumption of having access to some sort of absolute moral truth, interferes with the functioning of the epistemic and social process as we have described at length before. If power dominates the equation, reason cannot prevail.

Importantly, the proper functioning of this process does not require that nobody ever forms and defends their own views as to what makes for a good life. On the contrary: the engine of collective progress lies exactly in individuals exploring different views and attempting to find the strongest version and argument for why their perspective is a valuable one to be included in the overall picture. The argument comes down to the following. Given our lack of moral omniscience, we should not try to steer the processes of moral and cultural development in a top-

down manner. Furthermore, the efficient and robust functioning of the processes of decentralized information gathering and processing—be that in economics, biology, science or society—is contingent on the integrity of the conditions of operation. In the case of cultural and moral progress, freedom captures a large part of what is required for the process to run effectively. It is as such that freedom is a critical ingredient to the unfolding of humanity's collective potential.

**Conclusion**

In this essay, I set out to investigate the question: why do we care about freedom? I identified three possible answers: freedom as a protective factor against oppression and authoritarianism, freedom as an enabler of individual self-realization, and freedom as the enabler of moral and cultural progress and the unfolding of humanity's collective potential. I situated the discussion of these reasons in the larger discourse on the nature of freedom and within the history of ideas. I then zoomed in on one reason specifically—the unfolding of humanity's collective potential. To do so, I clarified what I mean by humanity's collective potential, before exploring the mechanisms via which freedom is key to enabling its unfolding. I argued that freedom allows for the production of variation among moral and cultural views, and that, in strengthening freedom—in particular freedom as conceived of by Mill and Dewey—we strengthen the extent to which reason is the primary factor guiding the differential selection between different cultural and moral views. To make these points, I drew on insights from evolutionary theory, economic theory and complexity science.

Last but not least, let me reiterate the reasons why we should care about understanding the processes that guide the human trajectory. We can look at the past and notice the pattern of an expanding moral circle and infer that we are likely ignorant about yet many more issues of moral concern. Or we can look into the future, noticing its potential vastness and anticipating an ever-changing reality that will keep throwing new moral and social questions at us. As humanity expands its range of capabilities through technological progress, we are increasingly able to affect the fate of things at ever faster spatial and temporal horizons. It may thus be high time for us to start a collective conversation about how it is we choose to wield these capabilities. The moral stakes are high. In that, I see reflected our third—if not the strongest—reason for why we want to live in a society that protects and fosters individual freedom, for the sake of us all, and for the sake of future forms of life.

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