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NATURAL RIGHT AND A SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF POLITICS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE WORKS OF LEO STRAUSS

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I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under my supervision by John T. Bookman

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PREFACE

The purpose of this essay is to examine critically the Straussian case against a scientific study of politics and the Straussian alternative to a scientific study of politics. Professor Strauss has acquired a large reputation and numerous followers from his philosophical attack on contemporary attempts to reorient the discipline. Nevertheless, only one brief essay has been devoted to an examination of Professor Strauss' position.[1] In view of the place which Professor Strauss occupies in the pantheon of the profession and due to the very nature of the target of Professor Strauss' attack, namely, the methodology which currently sustains the behavioral movement in political science, the Straussian position seemed to demand more complete exposition and criticism.

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[1]Stanley Rothman, "The Revival of Classical Political Philosophy: A Critique," American Political Science Review, 56 (June, 1962), 341-52.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE EMPIRICISM OF THE BEHAVIORAL PROGRAM

A "Science" of Politics

The quest for a "science" of politics has animated political thought since the time of Plato. Moderns share with the ancients the desire to acquire a systematic body of knowledge concerning man's political activities. The quest, moreover, has largely been inspired by ethical considerations. Moderns and classics agree on the great importance, if not the primacy, of politics in human affairs, and on the usefulness of a "science" of politics to man. Despite this continuity one need only note the appearance of numerous articles bearing such titles as "Political Theory: What is It?"[1] and "An Approach to the Nature of Political Philosophy"[2] to conclude that the old may provide no sure guide, and perhaps not even an introduction, to the new. Those articles, after all, address themselves

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[1]George E. G. Catlin, Political Science Quarterly, 72 (1957), 1-30.

[2]Henry M. Magid, Journal of Philosophy, 52 (20 Jan. 1955), 29-42.

to the center and not just the periphery of the discipline. Upon further investigation one realizes that the quest has been extended to include a search for a method by which a systematic body of knowledge can be acquired.

The quest has been extended by political scientists who felt dissatisfied with the state of the discipline. Many remarked the poverty of political science as compared with the richness of the product of the natural sciences. For these political scientists the questions asked and the explanations employed by traditional political science seemed to have little heuristic value. Methodology, therefore, became a matter of concern for them. This is not to suggest that methodological questions are the most important confronting the discipline. Methodological sophistication does not create Newtons. Nevertheless, the methodological consciousness of some political scientists produced a revolt against traditional political science - a revolt which has made methodology an issue in contemporary political science and made methodology a matter of concern for all political scientists. In order to understand why the revolt has had those consequences, it is necessary to indicate what traditional

political science tried to do, and how, and to describe the form taken by the revolt against traditional political science.

Traditional political science can be analyzed into two components which are distinguished by their method. Political philosophy has sought to discover objective ethical principles which have often been believed to be immanent in nature. Political philosophers have relied upon intuition or reason and inferences from Is to Ought to validate their conclusions. Political science as a discipline in American universities largely abandoned the prescriptive task of political philosophy. Instead it sought to discover how governments actually worked. The performance of this descriptive task was felt to require the collection of the facts. The emphasis placed upon the collection of the facts attained such proportions as to constitute what Professor Easton has called "hyperfactualism," i.e., building an inventory of the facts.[1] Political science did not attempt to

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[1]David Easton, The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science (New York: Knopf, 1953), 66-77.

explain, to fit its singular generalizations into theories of higher generality. Admittedly, this description is brief. Nevertheless, let it suffice for the moment. The metaphysical assumptions and the epistemology of political philosophy will be the subjects of later chapters. The "hyperfactualism" of American political science will concern us hardly at all for reasons which will be made explicit shortly.

Behavioralism: Program and Movement

The participants in the revolt against traditional political science have named their program "behavioralism." There has been no definitive statement of that program to which all the rebels have subscribed.[1] Nevertheless, the rebels share the same views about a criterion of validity for the testing of knowledge-claims and the conduct of in-

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[1]See the survey by Robert A. Dahl, "The Behavioral Approach: Epitaph for a Monument of a Successful Protest," American Political Science Review, 55 (December, 1961), 763-72.

quiry for acquiring a body of systematic knowledge.[1] Thus Professor Easton describes the salient features of the revolt as follows:

> In the first place, never before has there been so great a demand for self-conscious attention to empirical theory at all levels of generality - middle range as well as general - that, in principle, can be reduced to testable propositions. In the second place, as part of this, the social sciences have been compelled to face up to the problem of locating stable units of analysis which might possibly play the role in social research that the particles of matter do in the physical sciences.[2]

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[1]See, for example, Heinz Eulau, The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics (New York: Random House, 1963), 10, 14; David B. Truman, "The Impact on Political Science of the Revolution in the Behavioral Sciences," Research Frontiers in Politics and Government: Brookings Lectures, 1955 (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1955), 203, 213; David E. Apter, "Theory and the Study of Politics," American Political Science Review, 51 (September, 1957), 747-62; and Samuel J. Eldersveld, Alexander Heard, Samuel P. Huntington, Morris Janowitz, Avery Leiserson, Dayton D. McKean, and David B. Truman, "The Implications of Research in Political Behavior," American Political Science Review, 46 (December, 1952), 1003-34.

[2]David Easton, "Introduction: The Current Meaning of 'Behavioralism' in Political Science," The Limits of Behavioralism in Political Science, ed. James C. Charlesworth (Philadelphia: The American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1962), 15.

Thus empiricism is a part of the behavioral program. This doctrine asserts that the validation of knowledge-claims is possible only by reference to experience. Statements must demonstrate their worth as explanations and descriptions of the world in tests by observation and experiment. Behavioralism, however, proposes norms not only for the validation of knowledge-claims but for the conduct of inquiry as well. Indeed, the emphasis of Professor Easton's remarks is clearly upon theory construction and concept formation. Let us make clear that behavioralism in political science does not seek to describe how we do in fact think, that is, arrive at hypotheses and concepts - the task of psychology - nor does it commit the genetic fallacy of judging the validity of an idea on the basis of its source. Behavioralism is, however, concerned with the effect which a particular approach may have on the outcome of an inquiry. It is the behavioral contention that theory construction and concept formation ought to be the first order of business because, in the long run at least, more significant results will be achieved. Inquiry could not, of course, proceed without the use of theories and concepts. Traditional political science certainly employed

both. The deficiences of the traditional modes of inquiry, from the behavioral view, lay in the unconscious, and hence unexamined, use of theories and concepts and in the use of theories and concepts which were devoid of empirical content.

Adoption of these norms throughout the discipline is the goal of the behavioral movement - a goal often expressed as the reorientation of political science toward a scientific study of politics. In short, the revolt against traditional political science can be regarded as an effort to bring the methodology of political science into closer correspondence with that of the natural sciences, i.e., theory tested by observation and experiment.

The behavioral movement has enjoyed some success in winning adherents to its program. Indeed, an "Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest" has already been written.[1] Nevertheless, there is evidence which suggests that political scientists have not reached a consensus on behavioralism. In fact the profession seems to be

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[1]Dahl, American Political Science Review, 55 (December, 1961), 763-72.

roughly divided between those who have a pro-behavioral orientation and those who have an anti-behavioral orientation.[1] Among the anti-behavioralists, there are some who think that the behavioral emphasis upon theory construction and concept formation is premature (not all the facts have been gathered yet) or self-frustrating (the phenomena are so complex). Others reject the behavioral criterion for the validation of knowledge-claims. The behavioralists, then, have been compelled to contend with representatives of both the components of traditional political science.

A New Conception of "Science"

We have already noted that the revolt against traditional political science made methodology a matter of concern for all political scientists. This concern is particularly acute among those in the tradition of political philosophy. As Professor Waldo has pointed out "the general interpretation of science [among political scientists at least] has not been one which exposed the 'value

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[1]Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, American Political Science: A Profile of a Discipline (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), 21-24.

problems'."[1] The political scientist has regarded "science" as any systematic body of knowledge. Behavioralism however implies a different conception of "science." This new conception denies scientific authority to Value statements.

The behavioral conception of "science" creates a "criterion of demarcation" which permits us to distinguish statements of concern to science and statements not of concern to science.[2] The statements of science must, in principle, be empirically confirmable. The proposals of those who wish to include statements which are not empirically confirmable in the class of scientific statements are then rejected.

Several observations are in order concerning the requirement of empirical confirmability. First, the require-

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[1]Dwight Waldo, "'Values' in the Political Science Curriculum," Approaches to the Study of Politics, ed. Roland Young (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1958), 103.

[2]The phrase is Popper's in Karl R. Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery (New York: Basic Books, 1959), 34.

ment does not demand an inquiry into the origin of an idea, how an idea was conceived. Indeed it does not concern this question at all. Parenthetically, imagination and intuition are as necessary in science as they are in philosophy for example. The requirement of empirical confirmability is applied in the process of determining whether an idea about the world is a discovery. The satisfaction of this requirement does not of course validate a knowledge-claim. If a statement satisfies the requirement, it is possible to confirm or disconfirm the statement by reference to experience.

Second, a statement may have successfully withstood repeated tests in which case it may be regarded as "confirmed," "corroborated," or "scientifically accepted." Confirmation is however not synonymous with truth.[1] "Truth" is customarily used as a time-independent term. What is true today was true yesterday and will be true tomorrow. There may be changes in what we believe to be true. If, however, we assert something as true today which we held to be false yesterday, then we discard

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[1]Rudolf Carnap, "Truth and Confirmation," Readings in Philosophical Analysis, ed. Herbert Feigl and Wilfrid Sellars (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949), 119-127; and Popper, Scientific Discovery, 273-76.

yesterday's belief as mistaken and affirm that today's belief was as true yesterday as it is today and will be tomorrow. A "confirmed" statement, as distinguished from a "true" statement is held only provisionally. The possibility always exists that counter-evidence will be adduced. Thus no claim of truth can be made for such statements although some may be true - science simply does not yield perfect knowledge.[1]

Third, there must exist the possibility of confirmation, that is, we must be able to specify those observations which would lead us to accept a statement and those observations which would lead us to reject it. Reichenbach distinguishes three kinds of possibility: technical,

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[1]That is, no claim of truth can be made for such statements if one subscribes to the correspondence theory of truth as developed in Alfred Tarski, "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics," Readings in Philosophical Analysis, ed. Feigl and Sellars, 52-84. Not only does science not provide perfect knowledge of reality as it is known to experience, but it provides no knowledge of any reality which is beyond experience. Of course, if the term "truth" is used to mean confirmed, then confirmed statements are true statements, But then another term would have to be created with the time-independent sense.

logical, and physical.[1] Technical possibility requires that it be within the practical competence of science to carry out the proposed method of confirmation, i.e., to create the opportunity for the making of those observations which would lead us to accept or reject the statement in question. Logical possibility requires that the statement in question must be neither tautologous nor inconsistent, i.e., it must not be true or false on the basis of its form alone.[2] Tautologous statements, e.g., the United States is now a member of N.A.T.O. or the United States is not now a member of N.A.T.O., cannot be disconfirmed by any observation. Inconsistent statements, e.g., the United States is now a member of N.A.T.O. and the United States is not now a member of N.A.T.O., can be disconfirmed by all observations. Physical possibility requires that the statement in question not be metaphysical, i.e., that the proposed method of confirmation not

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[1]Hans Reichenbach, Experience and Prediction (Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1961), 38-41.

[2]Rudolf Carnap, Introduction to Symbolic Logic and Its Applications, trans. William H. Meyer and John Wilkinson (New York: Dover, 1958), 15; L. P. C. Cuningham, "Contradictory Assertions Convey Infinite Information," Analysis, 23 (January, 1963), 72; and Popper, Scientific Discovery, 90-92.

violate any laws of nature.[1] Science of course has only imperfect knowledge of the laws of nature.[2] Therefore a proposed method of confirmation may lead to the discovery of some heretofore unknown law of nature. If, however, the proposed method of confirmation is found to violate the laws of nature, the statement in question is to be regarded as metaphysical. Obviously all three conditions must be satisfied if science is to validate the knowledge-claim raised by some statement. Only those statements which have successfully withstood tests can be said to represent the world, i.e., to be empirically valid. It is sufficient, however, for empirical confirmability that a statement satisfy the conditions of logical and physical possibility.

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[1]"Laws of nature" is here used in the sense of regularities in nature which have been discovered and formulated in empirically confirmable statements. Political philosophers often use the term to name prescriptive laws which are discovered by reason or intuition.

[2]Moritz Schlick, "Meaning and Verification," Readings in Philosophical Analysis, ed. Feigl and Sellars, 152-54.

Fourth, the requirement does not confine science to a "brute empiricism," i.e., to a mere collection of the "facts" or a mere description of what is given directly by experience. The achievement of the natural sciences has been the formulation of explanations which are empirically confirmable. These explanations are found in theories from which empirically confirmable statements can be deduced and tested given initial conditions. Scientific theories, moreover, often refer to that which is not observable, e.g., the electron. Unlike the unobservables of classical philosophy, the essences, the unobservables of modern natural science are given empirical meaning.[1] Statements in which those unobservables appear can be disconfirmed.

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[1]Carl G. Hempel, Fundamentals of Concept Formation in Empirical Science (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 20-49; Israel Scheffler, "Theoretical Terms and a Modest Empiricism," Philosophy of Science, ed. Arthur Danto and Sidney Morgenbesser (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), 159-73; Lewis White Beck, "Constructions and Inferred Entities," Philosophy of Science, 17 (January, 1950), 74-86; and John Hospers, An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1953), 203-207.

Scientific Value Relativism[1]

Only Factual statements, i.e., statements which are empirically confirmable, are regarded as belonging to science, as scientifically meaningful. Therefore, Value statements, i.e., statements of principles held to be intrinsically good or right and statements which prescribe or evaluate on the basis of such principles, are excluded from that body of statements of interest to science. In the case of Value statements, we cannot specify those observations which would lead us to accept such a statement and those observations which would lead us to reject such a statement. But this is precisely what is meant by empirical confirmability.

Moreover, Factual statements do not imply Value statements. Unless a Value statement appears among the premises, any inference from Factual statements to Value statement is fallacious. If a Value statement is introduced as a premise, the conclusion itself becomes a Value statement for which no scientific authority can be claimed. The fallacy of inferring

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[1]The phrase is Brecht's in Arnold Brecht, Political Theory (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959). See "Excursus on the Term 'Relativism'," pp. 256-60.

what ought to be from what is was first noted by Hume.[1] Its identification has become a commonplace in textbooks of logic. There have been several recent attempts to span this "logical gulf" between Fact and Value.[2] None seems to have been successful.[3] As a consequence of the Fact-Value distinction and the absence of any relationship of implication between the realms of Fact and Value, Value statements have no cognitive status in the science of the behavioralists.

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[1]David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), III (i) 1. See Geoffrey Hunter, "Hume on 'Is' and 'Ought'," Philosophy, 37 (April, 1962), 148-52 and the following exchange between Hunter and Antony Flew in Philosophy, 38 (April, 1963); and A. C. MacIntyre, "Hume on 'Is' and 'Ought'," Philosophical Review, 68 (October, 1959), 451-68 and the comments of M. J. Scott-Taggart and R. F. Atkinson on MacIntyre in Philosophical Review, 70 (April, 1961). Herbert A. Simon is probably most responsible for bringing the fallacy to the attention of political scientists. See his Administrative Behavior, (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 45-60.

[2]John R. Searle, "How to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is'," Philosophical Review, 73 (January, 1964), 43-58; and Max Black, "The Gap between 'Is' and 'Should'," Philosophical Review, 73 (April, 1964), 165-81.

[3]See the criticism in Philosophical Review, 73 (October, 1964), 512-16 and in Analysis, 25 (December, 1964), 25-41, Analysis, 25 (April, 1965), 179-81, Analysis, 26 (January, 1966), 104-10.

Science is confined in its determination of the value of something by the requirement of empirical confirmability. Therefore a scientific study of politics can determine the value of something in only two respects. It can determine the value which some group or individual places on something. For example, does the John Birch Society place a higher value on national security or freedom of speech? The answer to this question is a description of the relative place of those values in that group's hierarchy of values. A scientific study of politics can also determine the value of something for the realization of an end which is held to be of higher or ultimate value. If someone, for example, places a high value on popular participation in the election of governmental officials and wishes to increase such participation in the United States, he might inquire as to the value of holding elections for all governmental officials at the same time. The scientific student of politics can appropriately evaluate this suggested innovation as a means to achieve the desired end.

Professor Strauss and a Scientific Study of Politics

The conception of science described above and the concommitant doctrine of scientific value relativism have

elicited a reaction. In order to preserve a place for Value statements in the study of politics, those in the tradition of political philosophy have been compelled to attack the philosophical basis of the behavioral program and to elaborate a methodology of their own.[1] The principal opponent of an empiricist basis for the study of politics has been Professor Leo Strauss. Professor Strauss may well be articulating the view of a large group within the profession. Much of his work has been devoted to this theme in one way or another,[2] and he is regarded as having made a significant contribution to political science.[3] The American Political Science Review has on three occasions (March, 1957; June, 1962; and March, 1963) provided a forum

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[1]See, for example, John Hallowell, "Politics and Ethics," American Political Science Review, 39 (August, 1944), 639-56 and Hallowell's Main Currents in Modern Political Thought (New York: Henry Holt, 1950), ch. 9; and Eric Voegelin, The New Science of Politics: An Introduction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952).

[2]A complete bibliography can be found in Joseph Cropsey, ed., Ancients and Moderns: Essays on the Tradition of Political Philosophy in Honor of Leo Strauss (New York: Basic Books, 1964).

[3]Somit and Tanenhaus, American Political Science, 66.

for the airing of those differences which separate the Straussians from the behavioralists.[1] Those differences are fundamental. Professor Strauss regards a scientific study of politics as impossible and undesirable. The purpose of this essay is to examine critically the Straussian case.

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[1]The Straussians referred to here are a group of Professor Strauss' pupils who are quick to defend their teacher and his view of the proper study of politics. The most articulate have been Walter Berns, Joseph Cropsey and Harry V. Jaffa.

CHAPTER II

THE CRISIS OF MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Political Philosophy: The Straussian Alternative

Professor Strauss advocates the adoption of a different approach to the study of politics than the approach contained in the behavioral program. He argues that "the only alternative to an ever more specialized, an ever more aimless, social science is a social science ruled by the legitimate queen of the social sciences - the pursuit traditionally known by the name of ethics."[1] Professor Strauss is a spokesman for the political philosophy tradition in the discipline.[2] In contrast to political science, politi-

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[1]Leo Strauss, "Social Science and Humanism," The State of the Social Sciences, ed. Leonard D. White (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 418.

[2]"Political thought" will be used to refer to all thought which has politics as its subject. The term therefore includes the study of politics from both the ethical and scientific points of view. "Political philosophy" refers to the ethical study of politics, and particularly that exemplified by the classics, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and Aquinas. Political science refers to the scientific study of politics. These usages correspond closely to those suggested by Professor Strauss in What is Political Philosophy? (Glencoe, Ill." The Free Press, 1959), 12-14 Hereafter What is Political Philosophy? will be abbreviated as WPP.

cal philosophy is an "attempt truly to know the nature of political things and the right, or the good, political order."[1] It has as its theme "mankind's great objectives, freedom and government or empire - objectives which are capable of lifting all men beyond their poor selves."[2] Classical political philosophy is based upon two assumptions which together constitute the doctrine of natural right. One assumption is that "there is a universally valid hierarchy of ends."[3] This hierarchy of ends serves as the standard "for passing judgment on the level of nobility of individuals and groups and of actions and institutions."[4] Among these ends, justice is of particular importance because

> it is man's natural sociality that is the basis of natural right in the narrow or strict sense of right. Because man is by nature social, the

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[1] WPP, 12.

[2] Ibid., 10.

[3] Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 162. See also p. 32. Hereafter Natural Right and History will be abbreviated as NRH.

[4] Ibid., 163.

> perfection of his nature includes the social virtue par excellence, justice; justice and right are natural.[1]

In addition to a universally valid hierarchy of ends, political philosophy assumes that "the fundamentals of justice are, in principle, accessible to man as man. They [all natural right doctrines] presuppose, therefore, that a most important truth can, in principle, be accessible to man as man."[2] These are not the assumptions upon which much of the contemporary study of politics has been based. The failure of political scientists to accept these assumptions has produced, in Professor Strauss' view, a crisis in modern political thought.

The Nature of the Crisis

The crisis of modern political thought, according to Professor Strauss, is the disjunction of political philosophy and political science. This crisis was produced by the rejection of natural right. There are several other problems which are called "basic" or "fundamental" in the works of Professor Strauss. One problem is created by the

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[1] Ibid., 129.

[2] Ibid., 28.

assumption that all right is conventional. "This precisely is the theme of the basic controversy in political philosophy: Is there any natural right."[1] Another problem is created by the assumption that there is Divine Revelation. "The fundamental question . . . is whether men can acquire . . . knowledge of the good . . . by the unaided efforts of their natural powers, or whether they are dependent for that knowledge on Divine Revelation."[2] These statements do not, however, represent Professor Strauss' view of what constitutes the crisis of modern political thought. That crisis has been created by modern political thinkers who have rejected natural right. The critical consideration for Professor Strauss in his interpretation of the development of political thought is the place accorded natural right because

> the need for natural right is as evident today as it has been for centuries and even millennia. To reject natural right is tantamount to saying that all right is positive right and this means that right is determined by the legislators and the courts of the various countries.[3]

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[1] NRH, 93.

[2] Ibid., 74.

[3] Ibid., 2.

What then are the implications of conventionalism and Thomism for natural right? Both parties to the "basic controversy in political philosophy," i.e., the conventionalists and the exponents of natural right, accept nature as the standard.[1] They disagree about what nature requires - pleasure or justice? However, whatever nature requires in the way of human conduct is good. The conventionalist does not deny that there is in nature a valid hierarchy of ends nor does he deny that we can acquire knowledge of it. Therefore, the possibility of natural right remains. The identity of political philosophy and political science is preserved. Despite some doubt, Aquinas is placed in the classical tradition.[2] Certainly "no doubt is left . . . regarding the immutable character of the fundamental propositions of natural law."[3] However, "due to the influence of the belief in biblical revelation," Aquinas made philosophy the handmaid of theology.[4] Nevertheless,

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[1] Ibid., 94-95, 170.

[2] Ibid., 146, 163.

[3] Ibid., 163.

[4] Ibid.

philosophy, i.e., the use of unassisted reason, is considered necessary even though Thomism creates a presumption in favor of the divine law."[1] Thus, conventionalism and Thomism do not deny the possibility of natural right.

Modern political thought, according to Professor Strauss, denies the possibility of natural right and, therefore, separates political philosophy from political science. Modern political thought has its origins in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[2] At that time, "the tradition that originated in classical Greece was rejected . . . in favor of a new political philosophy."[3] Political science is the culmination of this new political philosophy.[4] According to Professor Strauss, political science rejects natural right on two grounds, positivism

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[1] Ibid., 164.

[2] Leo Strauss, "An Epilogue," Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics, ed. Herbert J. Storing (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 309. Hereafter abbreviated as "Epilogue."

[3] WPP, 79.

[4] Ibid.

and historicism.[1] Positivism asserts that "there is a fundamental difference between facts and values, and that only factual judgments are within the competence of science."[2] This seems to be the principal reason for the exclusion of value judgments from political science.[3] Nevertheless, Professor Strauss asserts that "positivism necessarily transforms itself into historicism."[4] This This doctrine denies the possibility of natural right because "human thought is not accessible to man as man, or that it is not the result of the progress or the labor of human thought, but that it is an unforeseeable gift of unfathomable fate."[5]

The disjunction of political philosophy and political science is a crisis because political philosophy is thereby denied the authority of science and political science is denied the direction of natural right. In the modern

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[1] NRH, 8; WPP, 18.

[2] WPP. 18.

[3] NRH, 78.

[4] WPP, 25.

[5] NRH, 28.

age "the distinction between a non-philosophic political science and a non-scientific political philosophy . . . takes away all dignity, all honesty from political philosophy."[1] Professor Strauss thinks that "the victory of the new philosophy or science was decided by the victory of its decisive part, namely, the new physics."[2] This is why contemporary students of politics find the positivist argument compelling and why they dismiss classical political philosophy as "vague and inane speculations."[3] As a result, "political philosophy is in a state of decay and perhaps of putrefaction, if it has not vanished altogether."[4]

The disjunction of political philosophy and political science has also had an enervating effect upon political science. Political science cannot answer or even address itself to questions of value. This means that political scientists must be blind or indifferent to the fundamental questions.[5] Instead political science concerns itself with

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[1] WPP. 17.

[2] NRH, 78.

[3] WPP, 14; "Epilogue," 313-14.

[4] WPP, 17.

[5] Ibid., 11, 24.

superficial matters and engages in "sterile investigations or complicated idiocies."[1]

In addition to these theoretical consequences, there have been "disastrous" practical consequences as well. "The contemporary rejection of natural right leads to nihilism = nay, it is identical with nihilism."[2] The political scientist avoids this consequence only by "conformism and philistinism."[3] The political scientist, according to Professor Strauss, admits that truth and democracy are values and thus beyond scientific validation. Then "he says in effect that one does not have to think about the reasons why these things are good, and that he may bow as well as anyone else to the values that are adopted and respected by the society."[4] This abstention of judgment helps to explain the rise of national socialism and communism.[5] In view of the manifest need for natural right

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[1] NRH, 49.

[2] WPP, 20.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] WPP, 27, 54-55; NRH, 42.

and the consequences which have flowed from its rejection, Professor Strauss seeks to determine why natural right has been rejected.

The Rejection of Natural Right: The Impact of Science

Two explanations for the rejection of natural right are advanced. Initially, Professor Strauss regarded the development of modern natural science as the reason for the rejection of natural right. This is the view expressed in Natural Right and History. A change in position is evident in his essay "What is Political Philosophy?"[1] No explanation is offered for that change in position. In the second explanation the influence of realism, i.e., the desire to actualize the ideal, is regarded as the reason for the rejection of natural right.

In the first explanation for the rejection of natural right, Hobbes is the central figure.

> The period between Hooker and Locke had witnessed the emergence of modern natural science, of nonteleological modern science, and therewith the destruction of the basis of traditional natural right. The man who was the first to draw the consequences for

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[1]This essay appears in WPP.

> natural right from this momentous change was Thomas Hobbes.[1]

It was Hobbes' intention to create a philosophy of natural right which could withstand the attacks of skepticism and which could be implemented at all times and in all circumstances.[2] The political philosophy of Hobbes has a moral basis but "he means to do adequately what the Socratic tradition did in a wholly inadequate manner."[3] Classical political philosophy had been unable to overcome skepticism. Hobbes, therefore, became concerned with the question of method, with the question of epistemology.[4]

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[1]NRH, 166; see also Leo Strauss, The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis, trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), xii. Hereafter The Political Philosophy of Hobbes will be abbreviated as PPH.

[2]NRH, 168, 171, 179: PPH, 150-51.

[3]NRH, 168; PPH, 6-29.

[4]PPH, 136.

> The mere fact that the only certain knowledge which was available is not concerned with ends but 'consists in comparing figures and motions only' created a prejudice against any teleological view or a prejudice in favor of a mechanistic view.[1]

This attitude was engendered because "the failure of the predominant philosophic tradition could be traced directly to the difficulty with which every teleological physics is beset."[2] Hobbes was convinced that the development of modern natural science made the teleological view untenable.[3] He concluded that classical political philosophy was vitiated by the metaphysics upon which it was based and that it was "rather a dream than science."[4] The mechanistic alternative, however, as a metaphysics offered no surer foundation for a political philosophy.[5] Hobbes,

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[1] NRH, 171.

[2] Ibid., 172.

[3] Ibid., 176.

[4] Ibid., 170.

[5] If reasoning, e.g., a materialistic metaphysics, is caused and caused by the unreasoned workings of nature, there is no assurance of its truth. Cf. NRH, 172-73.

therefore, on the basis of his understanding of modern natural science, postulated a "world of constructs" which "is exempt from the flux of blind and aimless causation" because it is created by man.[1] "Not the new mechanistic cosmology but what later on came to be called 'epistemology' becomes the substitute for teleological cosmology."[2] This "methodical" materialism makes the universe "wholly enigmatic" but it permits us to become the "masters and owners of nature."[3] Upon this "methodical" materialism Hobbes erected a political philosophy of hedonism and atheism.[4] The ethical neutrality of the universe lead Hobbes to base natural law upon the ends which men actually pursue. This natural law is made effective by authority rather than by reason.[5]

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[1] NRH, 173.

[2] Ibid., 176-77.

[3] Ibid., 174.

[4] Ibid., 169.

[5] Ibid., 186.

The Rejection of Natural Right: The Impact of Realism

In the second explanation for the rejection of natural right, Professor Strauss emphasizes the role of realism. According to Professor Strauss, there are two kinds of knowledge.

> At one pole we find knowledge of homogeneity: above all in arithmetic, but also in the other branches of mathematics, and derivatively in all productive arts or crafts. At the opposite pole we find knowledge of heterogeneity, and in particular of heterogeneous ends; the highest form of this kind of knowledge is the art of the statesman and of the educator. The latter kind of knowledge is superior to the former for this reason. As knowledge of the ends of human life, it is knowledge of what makes human life complete or whole; it is therefore knowledge of a whole. Knowledge of the ends of man implies knowledge of the human soul; and the human soul is the only part of the whole which is open to the whole and therefore more akin to the whole than anything else is. But this knowledge - the political art in the highest sense - is not knowledge of the whole. It seems that knowledge of the whole would have to combine somehow political knowledge in the highest sense with knowledge of homogeneity. And this combination is not at our disposal. Men are therefore constantly tempted to force the issue by imposing unity on the phenomena, by absolutizing either knowledge of homogeneity or knowledge of ends. Men are constantly attracted and deluded by two opposite charms; the charm of competence which is engendered by mathematics and every-

> thing akin to mathematics, and the charm of humble awe which is engendered by meditation on the human soul and its experiences. Philosophy is characterized by the gentle, if firm, refusal to succumb to either charm. It is the highest form of the mating of courage and moderation.[1]

Modern political thought, on the other hand, had its inception in a failure of nerve. It succumbed to the "charm of competence." [2] In the classical scheme the actualization of the best political order depends upon chance, i.e., on the coincidence of philosophy and political power.[3] It is a utopia whose realization is possible but extremely improbable.[4] Nevertheless, "it is a force in the soul of man." [5] The influence of a nonteleological modern natural science was central to the first explanation. Upon reconsideration Professor Strauss concludes that modern political thought is distinguished by a different quality. "This

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[1] WPP, 39-40.

[2] Leo Strauss, Thoughts on Machiavelli (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958), 297.

[3] WPP, 34; NRH, 139.

[4] NRH, 139.

[5] WPP, 41

principle can best be stated negatively: rejection of the classical scheme as unrealistic."[1] Modern political thinkers have sought to construct an order which could be instituted under all circumstances.[2] This "entailed a deliberate lowering of the ultimate goal. The goal was lowered to increase the probability of its attainment."[3] Ethical considerations were ignored because "all human things fluctuate too much to permit their subjection to stable principles of justice. Necessity rather than moral purpose determines what is in each case the sensible course of action." [4]

In the first explanation Hobbes had been the central figure. "Machiavelli . . . had discovered the continent on which Hobbes could erect his structure."[5] It remained for Hobbes, however, to develop a scheme "which has revolutionized human life everywhere on a scale never yet ap-

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[1] Ibid., 40.

[2] Ibid., 46-47.

[3] NRH, 178.

[4] Ibid., 178-79

[5] Ibid., 177.

proached by any other teaching."[1] In the second explanation Machiavelli becomes the founder of modern political thought.[2] Hobbes is now regarded as "the man who mitigated Machiavelli's scheme in a manner which was almost sufficient to guarantee the success of Machiavelli's primary intention" and as "an honest and plain-spoken Englishman who lacked the fine Italian hand of his master."[3] The impact of realism thus acquires a greater significance than the impact of modern natural science in the development of political thought. In fact modern natural science has been influenced in an important respect by political realism. Professor Strauss asserts that "there is a close connection between Machiavelli's orientation and the notion of torturing nature, i.e., of the controlled experiment."[4]

Strauss' Interpretation of the Development of Modern Political Thought

Hobbes and Machiavelli have unquestionably exercised

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[1] Ibid., 169.

[2] WPP, 40.

[3] Ibid., 47-48.

[4] WPP, 47; see also Strauss, Thoughts on Machiavelli, 232-33, 297.

great influence on the development of modern political thought.[1] Professor Strauss argues further, and with some justification, that these men initiated the modern period. But modern political thought is not of a piece; it includes both ethical and scientific components. To find the origins of political science in Hobbes or Machiavelli is to overlook fundamental differences between the Hobbesian or Machiavellian study of politics and a scientific study of politics. Both Hobbes and Machiavelli were political philosophers; they provided prescriptions for human behavior and they evaluated human behavior as Strauss himself indicates.[2]

Professor Strauss recognizes that political scientists restrict scientific investigations to statements which are empirically confirmable.[3] He recognizes further that political scientists dismiss inferences from Is to Ought as fallacious.[4] Nevertheless, Professor Strauss rejects the

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[1]But then so has Plato. See, for example, Karl R. Popper, The Open Society and Its Enemies (2 vols.; New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962).

[2]PPH, xiii and 6-29 passim; Thoughts on Machiavelli, 233; WPP, 40-49 passim; and NRH, 166-202 passim.

[3]See, for example, NRH, 35-80.

[4]Ibid.

limitations imposed upon a scientific study of politics in its determination of Value as "obviously not valid."[1] Indeed, the "proof" of scientific value relativism, according to Professor Strauss, "would require an effort of the magnitude of that which went into the conception and elaboration of the Critique of Pure Reason."[2] And no such proof has been formulated. Therefore, the acceptance of scientific value relativism by political scientists is an unreasoned acceptance - an acceptance which can be explained by either the "victory" of modern natural science or a desire to actualize the ideal.[3]

Professor Strauss' interpretation of the development of modern political thought is then an exercise in the sociology of knowledge. By a psychological analysis of Hobbes and Machiavelli, the alleged sources of a scientific study of politics, he hopes apparently to discredit the doctrine of scientific value relativism.[4] And, in the

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[1] NRH, 41.

[2] WPP, 22.

[3] NRH, 74; WPP, 23; and "Epilogue," 313.

[4] NRH, 7.

absence of a compelling case for a teleological view of man, a matter which will occupy us shortly, this is perhaps, the only possibility open to him if he is to return natural right to its central place in the study of politics. The restriction of scientific investigations to statements which are empirically confirmable is a convention. Moreover, Professor Strauss implies that no Ought is implied by any Is.[1] There is no proof of the convention that science be restricted to the investigation of statements which are empirically confirmable; one either accepts or rejects it. Political scientists may have adopted the convention to emulate the natural sciences or to actualize the ideal. But whatever the motivation, that notion of "science" entails scientific value relativism even if Professor Strauss were successful in his attempts to dissuade political scientists from adopting it.

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[1] Ibid., 41.

CHAPTER III

TELEOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF POLITICS

Statement of the Problem

Professor Strauss advocates the study of politics as exemplified by the classical political philosophers. He wishes to repair that break in political thought which occurred in the sixteenth or seventeenth century by restoring natural right to its central place in the study of politics. What difficulties attend an attempt to revive natural right? Professor Strauss puts the problem as follows:

> the teleological view of the universe, of which the teleological view of man forms a part, would seem to have been destroyed by modern natural science. From the point of view of Aristotle - and who could claim to be a better judge in this matter than Aristotle? - the issue between the mechanical and the teleological conception of the universe is decided by the manner in which the problem of the heavens, the heavenly bodies, and their motions is solved. Now in this respect, which from Aristotle's own point of view was the decisive one, the issue seems to have been decided in favor of the non-teleological conception of the universe. Two opposite conclusions could be drawn from this momentous decision. According to one, the nonteleological conception of the universe must be followed up by a nonteleologi-

> cal conception of human life. But this "naturalistic" solution is exposed to grave difficulties: it seems to be impossible to give an adequate account of human ends by conceiving of them merely as posited by desires or impulses. Therefore, the alternative solution has prevailed. This means that people were forced to accept a fundamental, typically modern, dualism of a nonteleological natural science and a teleological science of man. This is the position which the modern followers of Thomas Aquinas, among others, are forced to take, a position which presupposes a break with the comprehensive view of Aristotle as well as that of Thomas Aquinas himself. The fundamental dilemma, in whose grip we are, is caused by the victory of modern natural science. An adequate solution to the problem of natural right cannot be found before this basic problem has been solved.[1]

Here, as elsewhere, Professor Strauss speaks of the "victory of modern natural science" without explaining what he means.[2] Such an explanation might have contributed to the definition of the "basic problem" which that victory created. In the absence of an explanation it is not clear whether that victory compels the proponent of classical political philosophy to choose between a teleological view of man and a nonteleological view of the rest of the

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[1] NRH, 7-8.

[2] Cf. ibid., 78.

universe, on the one hand, and a nonteleological view of both man and the universe, on the other.[1] This ambiguity makes difficult identification of the basic problem. Crucial to any attempt to identify this basic problem is the relationship between classical political philosophy and a teleological view of the universe. If classical political philosophy is based upon a teleological view of the universe, the basic problem would seem to be the construction of a compelling case for the teleological view.[2] Such a case would permit the proponent of classical political philosophy to avoid choosing between alternatives which Professor Strauss considers unacceptable. If classical political philosophy is not based upon a teleological view of the universe, the basic problem would seem to be the construction of a compelling case for the study of man

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[1]Joseph Cropsey, "Reply to Rothman," American Political Science Review, 56 (June, 1962), 358; and James M. Roherty, "To the Editor," American Political Science Review, 56 (September, 1962), 685-66.

[2]Professor Stanley Rothman states another possibility in "Rejoinder to Cropsey," American Political Science Review, 56 (September, 1962), 684, viz., it might be argued that modern natural science is teleological. Professor Strauss does not do so. He always describes modern natural science as nonteleological.

solely as a being who has a "natural end," i.e., for a teleological view of man.[1]

Classical Political Philosophy and a Teleological View of the Universe

Professor Strauss has adopted two positions on the relationship between classical political philosophy and a teleological view of the universe. The earlier position asserts a relationship.

> Natural right in its classical form is connected with a teleological view of the universe. All natural beings have a natural end, a natural destiny, which determines what kind of operation is good for them. In the case of man, reason is required for discovering these operations; reason determines what is by nature right with ultimate regard to man's natural end.[2]

The classical political philosophers, then, regarded the universe as a purposively ordered whole. In this universe

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[1]A scientific study of politics does not preclude a study of man as a being who has a natural end. Nevertheless, if a scientific study of politics yields meaningful propositions about human behavior, the disjunction of political philosophy and political science is preserved.

[2]NRH, 7. See also NRH, 166, 172; PPH, xiii; and WPP, 285-86.

all particular sensible things have natural ends. These natural ends order the universe by exerting an influence directed toward their own realization upon the particular sensible things.[1] Thus, the relationship between a thing and its natural end is one in which a present state of affairs is moved toward a future state of affairs by the action of the latter upon the former. The natural ends, moreover, are eternal and immutable, unlike the particular sensible things which are perishable and changeable.[2] Therefore the natural ends are true beings; particular sensible things have being only contingently - only as they are informed by natural ends.[3]

In addition to this metaphysical aspect, the teleological view of the classics, according to Professor Strauss, also included an ethical aspect.

> A being is good, it is "in order," if it does its proper work well. Hence man will be good if he does well the proper work of man, the work corresponding to the nature of

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[1] NRH, 89, 122-23.

[2] Ibid., 89-90.

[3] Ibid.

> man and required by it. To determine what is by nature good for man or the natural human good, one must determine what the nature of man, or man's natural constitution is.[1]

Thus the natural end of a thing is the good for that particular thing. Not only will a thing move to a greater of lesser extent toward its natural end because of the influence exerted by the natural end upon the particular sensible thing but it ought to move toward its natural end. The degree to which a thing realizes its natural end determines the degree to which it is good.

It is not altogether clear just what is meant by these assertions. Professor Strauss contends, for example, that "all natural beings have a natural end." This could simply mean that there is regularity in the universe. Such an assertion, although metaphysical, might not appear strange to those in the scientific community. Modern natural science after all has discovered regularities in the universe, i.e., science has explained the behavior of many things with the help of empirically confirmable theories. The mode of explanation of the classics, however, does not bring together a future event and a present or past event

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[1]Ibid., 127. See also NRH, 7, 86, 92, 102.

into a causal relationship. In order to explain the behavior of some thing, one must answer the question - what is it? And among the attributes of that thing is the ability to behave in the observed way.[1] Thus the natural end of a thing is a property which that thing possesses to a greater or lesser degree. It is a property of "becoming"; it is the purpose of a thing, its "proper work."[2] Thus among the attributes of an acorn is the ability to become an oak tree. Indeed one cannot "understand" an acorn except as an oak tree in the process of becoming.

> The thing itself, the completed thing, cannot be understood as a product of the process leading up to it, but, on the contrary, the process cannot be understood except in the light of the completed thing or of the end of the process.[3]

The fact that some acorns become oak trees is explained not as a consequence of certain conditions but by the acorn's possession of the property of becoming an oak tree. This

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[1] NRH, 122-23. Cf. Francis M. Cornford, "Greek Natural Philosophy and Modern Science," Background to Modern Science, ed. Joseph Needham and Walter Pagel (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 13-15.

[2] NRH, 127.

[3] Ibid., 123.

implies that things have an end-in-view or have been invested with a purpose. If, however, all things have an end-in-view, then all things must have a mind which can anticipate a future desired situation. If, on the other hand, all things have been invested with a purpose, then an external agent with divine intelligence is required by whom things can be invested with purposes. Whether Professor Strauss subscribes to animism or postulates a supreme being is unclear. Professor Strauss has also asserted that the natural is good. This might be regarded as a proposal for a convention, i.e., a verbal definition. But in that case to assert that something is good is to assert no more than that it is natural. He may have intended to convey additional information by this assertion but no explanation is given of why the natural is good.

These classical assumptions concerning the structure of the universe may be correct. The possibility that the teleological view may be true remains unaffected by the discoveries of modern science because those knowledge-claims of classical political philosophy are not empirically confirmable. Nevertheless, modern natural science

has been able to dispense with such metaphysical assumptions in the explanation of phenomena. By employing empirically confirmable theories, science has successfully explained a variety of phenomena. It is not only the success of modern natural science, however, which destroyed for many the credibility of a teleological view of the universe. It seems to be possible to explain all physical phenomena as the consequence of some cause. Darwin, for example, in The Origin of Species by Natural Selection offered an alternative explanation for the development of living organisms. After Darwin, there was no longer any need to posit metaphysical forces.[1]

There are several apparent exceptions to the competence of explanation in terms of mechanical or efficient causes. Biologists employ functional explanations. In such explanations terms such as "in order that" and "for the purpose of" appear - terms which suggest a teleological relationship between thing and end as found in classi-

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[1]See George Gaylord Simpson, The Meaning of Evolution: A Study of the History of Life and of Its Significance for Man (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1949) and, in particular, the chapter "Historical Retrospect: The Evolution of Evolution."

cal explanations. Unlike the classics, however, contemporary biologists do not assume that an organism has an end-in-view or has been imbued with a purpose by some external agent. Metaphysical entities are not invoked to explain biological events. The statement of functional explanations in logically equivalent form as mechanical explanations demonstrates the absence of such entities.[1]

> If, as seems to be the case, the conceivable evidence for any given teleological explanation is identical with the conceivable evidence for a certain nonteleological one, the conclusion appears inescapable that those statements cannot be distinguished with respect to what they assert.[2]

In short, the functional explanations of biology are empirically confirmable and the same evidence may be adduced for a "teleological" explanation, that is, a functional explanation, as for its mechanical equivalent. The use of functional explanations reflects a difference in emphasis and perspective. Biologists emphasize the consequences of some event whereas physicists, let us say, emphasize

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[1]Ernest Nagel, The Structure of Science: Problems in the Logic of Scientific Explanation (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961), 398-446; and Felix Kaufmann, Methodology of the Social Sciences (New York: Oxford University Press, 1044), 121-22.

[2]Nagel, Structure of Science, 405-406.

the conditions for the occurrence of some event. Biologists, moreover, seek to find the consequences of some event for a particular system - the human, the plant or the fish, for example. Physicists, on the other hand, are not similarly interested in the consequences of some event for particular systems - in their formulation of theory at any rate.

Microphysics presents a very different problem in explanation.[1] The prevailing conception of quantum mechanics among physicists, namely, the Copenhagen Interpretation, is usually regarded as destructive of the universal competence

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[1]Henry Margenau, The Nature of Physical Reality (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950), 307-55; Norwood Russell Hanson, Patterns of Discovery (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 119-58; Ernest Nagel, "The Causal Character of Modern Physical Theory," Readings in the Philosophy of Science, ed. Herbert Feigl and May Brodbeck (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), 419-37; Popper, Scientific Discovery, 215-50; Henry Margenau, "Meaning and Scientific Status of Causality," Philosophy of Science, ed. Arthur Danto and Sidney Morgenbesser (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), 435-49; Paul K. Feyerabend and N. R. Hanson on "Niels Borh's Interpretation of the Quantum Theory," Current Issues in the Philosophy of Science, ed. Herbert Feigl and Grover Maxwell (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), 371-400; and J. P. Vigier, "De - terminism and Indeterminism in a New 'Level' Conception of Matter," Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science, ed. Ernest Nagel, Patrick Suppes and Alfred Tarski (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1962), 262-64.

of scientific explanation on the Newtonian model (there are determinate conditions for the occurrence of all events).[1] It does not however affect the explanatory and predictive ability of Newtonian concepts for macrophysical phenomena. The Copenhagen Interpretation moreover makes possible the prediction of events for statistical aggregates of elementary particles. Nevertheless, the Copenhagen Interpretation imposes limitations on the knowledge which scientists can acquire about elementary particles. These limitations arise from the indeterministic character of microphysical phenomena or the conceptual impossibility of acquiring determinate knowledge of such phenomena as long as physicists continue to employ the Copenhagen Interpretation. In either case the theory imposes the limitations since the laws of nature receive expression only in scientific theory. As an empirically confirmable theory, the Copenhagen Interpretation ought to be interpreted as saying that no precise laws of nature will be found to govern microphysical events but

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[1]Margenau, Nature of Physical Reality, 308; and Vigier, Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science, ed. Nagel, Suppes and Tarski, 262-64.

not as placing a prohibition upon making a search for such laws.[1] Physicists are now engaged in a search for such laws.[2] In conclusion, the modes of explanation employed by some contemporary scientists are not teleological in the classical sense and offer no support for a teleological view of the Universe.

In view of the relationship between classical political philosophy and a teleological view of the universe, the problem for the proponents of a philosophy of natural right is the construction of a compelling case for the teleological view. Professor Strauss adduces no evidence for the existence of the universe as a purposively ordered whole. His conception of a philosophy of natural right precludes, moreover, the adoption of two possible approaches to a solution of the problem created by modern natural science. Kant, for instance, argued that experience is the source of knowledge. Knowledge so acquired, however, is knowledge only of phenomena. Experience cannot provide knowledge of the ulti-

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[1]Popper, Scientific Discovery, 246-50.

[2]Vigier, Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science, ed. Nagel, Suppes and Tarski, 262-64; and Hanson, Patterns of Discovery, 159-60.

mate nature of reality. Science has a limited competence. Thus pure reason can ascertain the limits of a scientific understanding of the universe and can thereby free itself to speculate about matters beyond experience. Kant then rejected the notion that political philosophy yields knowledge of the "fundamentals of Justice." If Professor Strauss were to adopt the Kantian position, the disjunction of political philosophy and political science would be preserved.[1] Similarly, Professor Strauss must also reject the Thomistic position. Aquinas relied on Divine Revelation as evidence for the existence of purpose in nature. Reliance on faith, however, does not fulfill the requirement that knowledge of purposes can be obtained by the unassisted mind of man. Nevertheless, in spite of his failure to construct a compelling case for the teleological view of the universe, Professor Strauss might argue that the nonteleological view suffers from defects which militate against its acceptance. He might argue that a nonteleological view does not after all pose a challenge to the teleological view which merits a defense.

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[1]Cf. NRH, 20.

Professor Strauss offers no systematic critique of the assumptions upon which modern natural science is based. Such a critique might have indicated the limits of a scientific understanding of the universe. Instead, Professor Strauss confines himself to a few brief remarks. Thus modern natural science is said to be concerned with only the "how" and not the "why" of phenomena.[1] One cannot state with any assurance what is meant by this assertion. Modern natural science ascribes explanatory, not just descriptive, value to scientific laws. Thus the answer given to a particular "why" is a law from which the event to be explained can be deduced given initial conditions. But Professor Strauss rejects this scientific answer to the question "why," and, in so doing, he seems to be creating merely a verbal issue. According to Professor Strauss, science does not even attempt to answer the question "why." Classical political philosophy did attempt to do so.

Professor Strauss apparently restricts possible answers to the question "why" to teleological explanations. He is thereby able to conclude that modern natural science

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[1] WPP, 18.

has made the universe unintelligible. Science does not yield wisdom but only the means for the conquest of nature. He summarizes the modern position as it is exemplified by Hobbes:

> Reason is important because reason or humanity have no cosmic support: the universe is unintelligible, and nature "dissociates" men. But the very fact that the universe is unintelligible permits reason to rest satisfied with its free constructs, to establish through its constructs an Archimedean basis of operations, and to anticipate an unlimited progress in its conquest of nature.[1]

If wisdom is knowledge of the natural ends which all natural things have, then science does not yield wisdom. Whether or not science yields "wisdom" in some other sense, science does not make technological success the criterion for the validation of knowledge-claims.

The third criticism of a scientific understanding of the universe is that it "emerges by way of a radical modification, as distinguished from a perfection of the natural understanding."[2] Scientific understanding "implies a depreciation of pre-scientific knowledge . . . . If

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[1] NRH, 201. Cf. NRH, 175, 189.

[2] Ibid., 79.

this pre-scientific knowledge is not knowledge, all scientific studies, which stand or fall with it, lack the character of knowledge."[1] This criticism fails to state accurately the relationship between pre-scientific and scientific knowledge. First, science regards the statements of pre-scientific inquiry as raising knowledge-claims. If these knowledge-claims are empirically confirmable, then science adopts them as its own. If these knowledge-claims have successfully withstood tests by observation and experiment, they may become "confirmed," " corroborated," or "scientifically accepted," i.e., knowledge. Thus science is distinguished by a criterion of validity. Therefore, scientific knowledge does not stand or fall with pre-scientific knowledge; it is independent of it. Despite this independence, pre-scientific inquiry, i.e., the common-sense or natural understanding, has provided science with knowledge-claims of interest to it. This is rather obvious in the case of empirically confirmable statements. Here, the scientific contribution has been to determine the accuracy and the range of validity of the common-sense under-

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[1] WPP, 23-24.

standing, e.g., under what conditions will the addition of certain kinds of fertilizer increase the productivity of the soil?[1] Even in the case of statements which are not empirically confirmable, pre-scientific inquiry has had something to offer to science.[2] The atomic theory of Democritus has been adopted by modern natural science but science has given that theory an empirical interpretation.

Do these criticisms militate against the acceptance of a scientific understanding of the universe? Despite the asserted connection between the teleological view of the universe and classical political philosophy, Professor Strauss displays some ambiguity about the matter. He states, for instance, that

> however indifferent to moral distinctions
> the cosmic order may be thought to be,
> human nature, as distinguished from nature

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[1]Nagel, Structure of Science, 1-14.

[2]Hanson, Patterns of Discovery, 120-22; Stephen Toulmin, The Philosophy of Science: An Introduction (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 137; and Popper, Scientific Discovery, 39-39, 278.

> in general, may very well be the basis of such distinctions.[1]

This statement adumbrated Professor Strauss' revised view.

Classical Political Philosophy and a Teleological View of Man

Professor Strauss' revised view is that there is no connection between the teleological view of the universe and the philosophy of natural right as developed by the classics. Thus in "What is Political Philosophy?" he states that

> whatever the significance of modern natural science may be, it cannot affect our understanding of what is human in man. To understand man in the light of the whole means for modern natural science to understand man in the light of the subhuman. But in that light man as man is wholly unintelligible.[2]

The authority of Aristotle is also invoked to the effect that

> the Aristotalian distinction between theoretical and practical sciences implies that human action has principles of its own which are known independently of theoretical

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[1] NRH, 94.

[2] WPP, 38.

> science (physics and metaphysics) and therefore that the practical sciences do not depend on the theoretical sciences or are not derivative from them.[1]

This revision in Professor Strauss' position was required by his failure to construct a compelling case for the teleological view of the universe. Fundamental to both the earlier and the later positions is the conviction that modern natural science can explain man's behavior only as an effect of subhuman causes.[2] "But in that light man as man is wholly unintelligible."[3] The positions are distinguished by Professor Strauss' attitude toward modern natural science and its implications for a philosophy of natural right. In Natural Right and History it was asserted that "an adequate solution to the problem of natural right cannot be found before this basic problem, [i.e., "the issue between the mechanical and teleological conception of the universe"] has been solved."[4] In "What is Political Phil-

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[1]"Epilogue," 309.

[2]NRH, 8; PPH, xiii and 166; WPP, 38; and "Epilogue," 310 and 322.

[3]WPP, 38.

[4]NRH, 8.

osophy?" Professor Strauss says that "whatever the significance of modern natural science may be, it cannot affect our understanding of what is human in man."[1] Professor Strauss must, now, however, construct a compelling case for the study of man solely as a being who has a natural end.

What evidence does Professor Strauss adduce for the proposition that man has a natural end? The proposition might express a logically necessary truth deduced from a definition of man. Such a definition would of course be open to challenge from a political scientist. Professor Strauss does not, however, adopt a definition which departs from one acceptable to those in the scientific tradition. Man is distinguished from the rest of nature because man possesses reason and a conscience.[2] A definition of man in terms of reason and conscience does not, however, logically imply that man pursues a particular end, i.e., the "natural end," rather than other possible ends. Professor Strauss states, for example, that "by virtue of his rationality, man has a latitude of alterna-

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[1] WPP, 38.

[2] NRH, 127, 129 and 130; and "Epilogue," 31--11.

tives such as no other earthly being has."[1] Even in regard to the conscience Professor Strauss asserts only that it is "a sense that the full and unrestrained exercise of that freedom [of choice among alternatives] is not right."[2] Thus men will suffer psychologically for the performance of acts which violate the ethical standard to which they adhere. The defining characteristics of man, then, do not imply that man has a natural end. Therefore the proposition does not express a logically necessary truth. Perhaps the proposition expresses an empirically confirmable regularity of human behavior.

Socrates, according to Professor Strauss, was forced to turn to the facts to demonstrate the existence of natural right.[3]

> Socrates implied that disregarding the opinions about the nature of things would amount to abandoning the most important access to reality which we have, or the most important vestiges of the truth which are within our reach.[4]

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[1] NRH, 130.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., 126.

[4] Ibid., 124.

This suggests that the proposition can be supported by evidence obtained by the evocation of the attitudes which men actually hold regarding right. Thus Professor Strauss might seek to confirm the existence of an inner urge in all men which commands some "ought." He suggests that one could proceed empirically. Attention is directed, for example, to "the evidence of those simple experiences regarding right and wrong which are at the bottom of the philosophic contention that there is a natural right."[1] Professor Strauss assumes that the existence of such an inner urge is a fact.

> History seems . . . to prove that all human thought, and certainly all philosophic thought, is concerned with the same fundamental themes or the same fundamental problems, and therefore that there exists an unchanging framework which persists in all changes of human knowledge of both facts and principles.[2]

Indeed, Professor Strauss thinks that this human regularity is a distinguishing characteristic of mankind and, therefore, includes this characteristic in his definition of man as the "conscience."

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[1] Ibid., 31-32.

[2] Ibid., 23-24. Cf. NRH, 31-32.

A demonstration of the universality of the inner urge is, however, not enough. He recognizes that

> to leave it at this would amount to regarding the cause of natural right as hopeless. There cannot be natural right if all that man could know about right were the problem of right, or if the question of the principles of justice would admit of a variety of mutually exclusive answers, none of which could be proved to be superior to the others. There cannot be natural right if human thought, in spite of its essential incompleteness, is not capable of solving the problem of the principles of right in a genuine and hence universally valid manner.[1]

Professor Strauss must also demonstrate that the inner urge in all men commands the same "ought." He assumes, however, that an empirical inquiry would reveal that the inner urge does not command the same "ought."

> The facts to which conventionalism refers do not seem to prove that the principles of right are changeable. They merely seem to prove that different societies have different notions of justice or of the principles of justice.[2]

This assumption would seem to be destructive of Professor Strauss' position. It should be pointed out that even if science were to discover that man has a natural end in

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[1] Ibid., 24. Cf. NRH, 35.

[2] Ibid., 97-98.

this sense, such a discovery would be an inadequate basis for a philosophy of natural right which ethically prescribes and evaluates. Thus a scientific study of politics can seek to discover an inner urge which commands some "ought." It can seek to determine the content of the "ought" which is commanded. Were a scientific study of politics to discover that such an urge commands some particular "ought," a factual bridge from Is to Ought would be constructed.[1] Such a bridge would not rejoin political science and political philosophy. It would mitigate,but not eliminate, the impact of scientific value relativism. Political science would be able to state that

> an action which all human beings feel inescapably to be right or wrong, just or unjust, will find in all some inner support or opposition on the ground of its being felt to be right or wrong, just or unjust, respectively.[2]

Political science would not be able to state that such actions ought or ought not be taken because such a prescription would require an inference from Is to Ought. Therefore, Professor Strauss does not and logically cannot found his position on the structure of reality as it

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[1]Brecht, Political Theory, 367-86.

[2]Ibid., 374.

is known to experience.

Professor Strauss founds the philosophy of natural right upon an aspect of the structure of reality which cannot be discovered by science. The fact that men have value preferences at all serves as "the incentive for the quest for natural right."[1] The fact that men have different value preferences is interpreted to mean that there is natural right. Some men have simply been in error.

> The variety of notions of justice can be understood as the variety of errors, which variety does not contradict, but presupposes, the existence of the one truth regarding justice.[2]

There is a difference between "natural and (merely) human morality."[3] Natural right is an ethical standard which is intrinsically valid regardless of men's value preferences.[4] This is so because Professor Strauss assumes that man has a natural end. An assumption, however, is not a compelling case. Politics certainly can be studied from

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[1] NRH, 10.

[2] Ibid., 98.

[3] Ibid., 121.

[4] Ibid., 145, 152.

this point of view but it need not be. The disjunction of political philosophy and political science remains.

The Possibility of a Scientific Study of Politics

Professor Strauss asserts that man cannot be studied without evaluating his behavior.

> It is impossible to study social phenomena, i.e., all important social phenomena, without making value judgments . . . . Generally speaking, it is impossible to understand thought or action or work without evaluating it.[1]

A nonevaluative study of politics could be psychologically impossible or, due to the structure of reality, logically impossible.[2] Needless to say, if either alternative were to be demonstrated, there could be no distinction between description and evaluation. Professor Strauss, however, asserts that it is only "all important social phenomena" which must be evaluated. In view of the alternatives the implication that some, i.e., the unimportant, social phenomena can be studied without making evaluations is inexplicable.

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[1] WPP, 21. See also WPP, 22, 24; and "Epilogue," 310.

[2] Professor Rothman correctly states the conditions which would preclude a nonevaluative study of politics. See "Rejoinder to Cropsey," American Political Science Review, 56 (September, 1962), 683.

Professor Strauss does not make a psychological case. He does notargue that evaluation is a constant element in all human thought. Obviously many men have been able to distinguish between evaluation and description. Indeed much of Professor Strauss' work is addressed to those social scientists who make that distinction and who reserve the term "scientific" for statements about politics which describe, i.e., are empirically confirmable. Professor Strauss does make an assumption about the structure of reality. He assumes that man has a natural end. This natural end determines what men ought to do. Thus in the Straussian view Fact and Value are fused. If we describe the behavior of a man, we are at the same time evaluating that behavior because all descriptions imply an evaluation. Professor Strauss, however, does not construct a compelling case for a teleological view of either the universe or man.[1] Nevertheless, the student of politics is enjoined to follow the example of Socrates and view man "in the light

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[1]This failure does not compel the student of politics to accept the behavioral conception of politics and the concommitant doctrine of scientific value relativism but it permits him to do so.

of the mysterious character of the whole."[1]

Whatever the difficulties in a philosophy of natural right as an approach to the study of politics, the scientific alternative, according to Professor Strauss, suffers from difficulties equally as grave. In particular, the scientific mode of explanation is deficient. He describes that mode of explanation as follows:

> According to the new political science, or the universal science of which the new political science is a part, to understand a thing means to understand it in terms of its genesis or its conditions and hence, humanly speaking, to understand the higher in terms of the lower: the human in terms of the subhuman, the rational in terms of the subrational, the political in terms of the subpolitical.[2]

Now, we have noted that the appearance of the essay "What is Political Philosophy?" marks a change in Professor Strauss' thinking concerning the relationship between classical political philosophy and the teleological view of the universe. He criticizes a scientific study of politics on the grounds that the scientific mode of explanation is deficient both before and after his change in position. His explanation, however, of why the scien-

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[1] WPP, 39.

[2] "Epilogue," 311.

tific mode of explanation is deficient changes with his change in position.

In the earlier period, Professor Strauss regarded classical political philosophy as based upon the teleological view of the universe. The metaphysical assumptions of classical political philosophy did not include a distinction between the human and the non-human. Everything including man had a natural end. These natural ends constituted the objects of knowledge. For these reasons, only one mode of explanation was needed for all things. The use of just one mode of explanation, the teleological, by the classics does not represent, however, a "dehumanizing" of man, i.e., explanation of the human in terms of the subhuman. According to Professor Strauss, "traditional metaphysics were . . . 'anthropomorphistic' and, therefore, a proper basis for a philosophy of things human."[1] It is from this point of view that Professor Strauss first criticized the scientific mode of explanation.

The deficiency of that mode of explanation is mani-

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[1] PPH, xiii.

fested in its treatment of ends. According to Professor Strauss, "it seems to be impossible to give an adequate account of human ends by conceiving of them merely as posited by desires or impulses."[1] Thus, political science does not regard the human pursuit of ends as an instance of teleological action after the manner of classical political philosophy but as a causal relationship. From the scientific view, men attach value to things and often pursue those things. For science, then, men have purposes, i.e., conscious intentions to realize some desired situation, contrary to Professor Strauss' assertion that modern natural science renounced all purposes.[2] Men's purposes, however, are the cause of their actions. It is assumed that this view of human purposes as cause is what Professor Strauss means by "human ends . . . posited by desires or impulses." Furthermore, political science withholds judgment on the possibility that ends, or some ends have metaphysical support again contrary to Professor Strauss' assertion that science excludes such a possibility.[3] The inability of science to discover whether ends have meta-

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[1] NRH, 8.

[2] PPH, xiii.

[3] "Epilogue," 322.

physical support makes no difference in the explanation of events, including human behavior, in the world of experience. Nevertheless, Professor Strauss finds the scientific account of human ends inadequate.

> Modern natural science . . . which tried to interpret nature by renouncing all "anthropomorphisms," all conceptions of purpose and perfection, could, therefore, to say the least, contribute nothing to the understanding of things human, to the foundation of morals and politics.[1]

Professor Strauss, of course, means by "understanding" something quite different from the understanding provided by science. Certainly the scientific view of human ends is an inadequate foundation for a philosophy of natural right.

Following the change in position noted above, Professor Strauss argued that man is different in a decisive respect from all other things in nature and, therefore, that a special mode of explanation is required in the case of man.[2] The laws of nature as they are expressed in the causal explanations of science cannot be discovered for human behavior because "human action has principles of

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[1]PPH, xiii.

[2]Supra, "Classical Political Philosophy and a Teleological View of Man."

its own."[1] While the behavior of all other things in nature can be expressed in causal explanations, the behavior of man can only be expressed in teleological explanations.

From this point of view, Professor Strauss criticizes the scientific mode of explanation as inappropriate for the expression of the human "principles of action."[2] Furthermore, the use of causal explanations in the case of both man and the rest of nature represents a failure to distinguish between man and the rest of nature.[3] Contrary to Professor Strauss' assertion, science does distinguish man from the rest of nature. Science has discovered that men have purposes although "purpose" has a different meaning than it holds for Professor Strauss. In its explanations of human behavior, science must often include men's purposes among the conditions for the occurrence of some event. Science has not discovered similar purposes in other things in nature and therefore cannot and does not include purposes in its explanations of

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[1]"Epilogue," 309.

[2]Ibid. and WPP, 38.

[3]"Epilogue," 311.

nonhuman events. In this sense, science too recognizes that "human action has principles of its own," but science does not transform this discovery into a metaphysical given. Professor Strauss, of course, is not talking about conscious intentions. He means that human behavior has an ethical aspect in which Value is determined not by man but by some other agency. "The principles of action are the natural ends of man toward which man is by nature inclined and of which he has by nature some awareness."[1] Man may well have natural ends but the failure of science to assume that man does so does not seem to impose any limitations on the description and causal explanation of human behavior.

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[1] Ibid., 309.

CHAPTER IV

THE OBJECTIVE STUDY OF POLITICS

The disjunction of political philosophy and political science rests upon a difference in the method by which knowledge-claims are validated and, consequently, in what the political philosopher and the political scientist call "knowledge." Thus two criteria of validity now vie for the adherence of students of politics. Political philosophy subjects knowledge-claims to the "natural" or "common-sense" understanding of social reality. Political science subjects knowledge-claims to tests by observation and experiment.

The "common-sense" method of political philosophy yields statements which evaluate human behavior and institutions and yields statements by which those evaluations can be made. The empirical method of political science yields statements which describe phenomena. Professor Strauss contrasts the two approaches to a study of politics as follows:

> Aristotelian political science necessarily evaluates political things; the knowledge in which it culminates has the character of categorical advice and of exhortation.

> The new political science, on the other hand, conceives of the principles of action as "values" which are merely "subjective"; the knowledge it conveys has the character of prediction and only secondarily that of hypothetical advice.[1]

Professor Strauss concedes that knowledge of natural right is not yielded by the empirical method.[2] Such knowledge is acquired by different means. Nevertheless, Professor Strauss asserts that knowledge of natural right is not merely a matter of personal belief or speculation.[3] The classical political philosophers possessed knowledge of natural right.[4]

Professor Strauss denies "superiority" to the approach of political science.[5] Indeed he claims superiority for the approach of classical political philosophy because it yields knowledge which is evaluative whereas political

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[1]"Epilogue," 310. Cf. WPP, 88-89.

[2]NRH, 124-25; and WPP, 25.

[3]NRH, 78-80; WPP, 23-24, 27-28; and "Epilogue," 316-18.

[4]WPP, 80-81; and "Epilogue," 310.

[5]NRH, 126.

science does not. If the empirical knowledge which is yielded by political science were distinguishable from the knowledge yielded by political philosophy only by its non-evaluative character, the behavioral insistence that only the empirical method is "scientific" would be no more than an attempt to appropriate for political science the honorific connotations of that term. Both political philosophy and political science claim that they possess knowledge. A philosophy of natural right might be called "scientific" although not by virtue of the use of the empirical method. Empirical knowledge, however, is characterized by still another quality. It is objective.[1] This objectivity has two aspects.

The objectivity of empirical knowledge consists in part in its intersubjective testability. Students of politics may strive to eliminate manifestations of personal and cultural bias in their work. These efforts may even go far toward eliminating such bias. Nevertheless, how-

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[1]Herbert Feigl, "The Scientific Outlook: Naturalism and Humanism," Readings in the Philosophy of Science, ed. Feigl and Brodbeck, 11-12; Rudolf Carnap, "Testability and Meaning," Readings in the Philosophy of Science, ed. Feigl and Brodbeck, 49; Popper, Scientific Discovery, 44-48.

ever scrupulous the student, there is no assurance that personal effort will be sufficient to eliminate bias.[1] But the objectivity of empirical knowledge is not protected by individual will. "The term intersubjective stresses the social nature of the scientific enterprise."[2] Intersubjective testability means that empirical knowledge is capable of test by any person with sufficient intelligence and technical equipment to understand the symbols employed and to perform the necessary operations in order to confirm or disconfirm a statement. Not just privileged persons but everyone, therefore, has access to empirical knowledge.

The objectivity of empirical knowledge has another aspect. As noted above, the statements of science are held only provisionally. The knowledge-claims of science must be empirically confirmable, and, therefore, the possibility of disconfirmation always remains. Therefore, the decision to accept some statement of science as sufficiently confirmed as to constitute knowledge is in part a matter

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[1] Infra, 121-22.

[2] Feigl, Readings in the Philosophy of Science, ed. Feigl and Brodbeck, 11.

of convention. Science does not prescribe the sufficient grounds for the acceptance of some empirically confirmable statement as knowledge, e.g., how many confirming instances are sufficient for acceptance. The decision, however, is not entirely conventional. Let us distinguish two elements in a scientific communication - the evidence and the conclusions.[1] The conclusions consist of knowledge-claims, i.e., the events observed and described are truly facts and the hypotheses advanced are truly laws. The evidence consists of the observations made and the conditions (environmental circumstances, techniques, etc.) under which those observations were made. It is the evidence which permits the recipient to judge the validity of the knowledge-claims. And it is the evidence which constitutes the objective consideration in a decision to accept some knowledge-claim as knowledge.

Professor Strauss asks us to consider this possibility.

> Let us assume that we had genuine knowledge of right and wrong, or of the Ought, or of the true value system. That knowledge, while

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[1]Brecht, Political Theory, 113-16.

> not derived from empirical science, would legitimately direct all empirical social science; it would be the foundation of all empirical social science.[1]

If knowledge of natural right were objective, political philosophy and political science would be rejoined, and the doctrine of scientific value relativism would be overcome. This rejoining would not be produced by any logical link between Is and Ought which might be required by the ultimate nature of reality. Nor would the doctrine of scientific value relativism simply be mitigated by some factual link between Is and Ought. Factual and logical links between Is and Ought are not here at issue. This rejoining would be produced because the approaches of political philosophy and political science would provide the same basis for warranted belief. Does Professor Strauss claim that the approach of political philosophy yields knowledge which is objective and, if so, is the claim demonstrated?

Professor Strauss displays some ambiguity about the matter. He asserts, for example, that "all natural right

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[1] NRH, 41.

doctrines are, in principle, accessible to man as man."[1] It is not clear whether this claim simply means that some men can acquire knowledge of natural right or that such knowledge is objective. It should be noted that not everyone is capable of acquiring knowledge of natural right whichever of the foregoing alternatives is Professor Strauss' view. Some men cannot acquire knowledge of natural right on their own or as imparted by others.

> Some of the greatest natural right teachers have argued that, precisely if natural right is rational, its discovery presupposes the cultivation of reason, and therefore natural right will not be known universally, one ought not even to expect any real knowledge of natural right among savages.[2]

This qualification does not mean that knowledge of natural right is not objective. The empirical method after all requires that an individual be able to perform the operations and understand the symbols employed in a communication. The decisive consideration is whether those who believe in different ethical standards can subject their views to tests in order to discover which, if any, of those

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[1] Ibid., 28. Cf. NRH, 163.

[2] Ibid., 9. Cf. NRH, 99.

views is the one universally valid standard. If this were the case, the testimony of the classics could be adduced as evidence for the one universally valid standard.

Professor Strauss has asserted that "the knowledge of the political philosopher is 'transferable' in the highest degree."[1] Does this mean that knowledge of natural right can be communicated by narrating the content of one's beliefs and the means by which they were acquired but which the recipient cannot test or does it mean that knowledge of natural right is intersubjectively testable and, therefore, that the testimony of the political philosopher can be adduced as evidence for the one universally valid standard? To answer this question, it is necessary to examine Professor Strauss' account of the means by which knowledge of natural right is acquired. If political philosophy provides a method which everyone could employ to test statements concerning the one universally valid standard, then knowledge of natural right would be objective.

Two theories of knowledge are expounded. These theories have their bases in or are adumbrations of those pre-

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[1] WPP, 84.

sented by Plato in the early dialogues and the first part of the Meno (the Socratic method) and in the second part of the Meno and the later dialogues (the Platonic theory of ideas).[1] Professor Strauss cites Plato as saying in effect:

> Take any opiniom about right, however fantastic or "primitive," that you please; you can be certain prior to having investigated it that it points beyond itself, that the people who cherish the opinion in question contradict that very opinion somehow and thus are forced to go beyond it in the direction of the one true view of justice, provided that a philosopher arises among them.[2]

Apparently, if an individual who believes in a different ethical standard than that espoused by the classics were to subject his views to the scrutiny of a philosopher, he would be forced to modify his position. The role of the philosopher is to point out inconsistencies in the individual's thinking. The existence of these inconsistencies forces the individual to modify his beliefs, i.e., "to go beyond" his original beliefs. Professor Strauss thinks that this modification brings that individual's

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[1]See Norman Gulley, Plato's Theory of Knowledge (London: Methuen, 1961).

[2]NRH, 125.

views closer to coincidence with the true position. Furthermore, he asserts that the necessity for modification constitutes the potential consent of all men to the one universally valid standard.[1] This might be interpreted as a claim of objectivity for the knowledge of the political philosopher and, perhaps, Professor Strauss so intends. It is unclear, however, how the existence of inconsistencies in people's beliefs concerning justice reduces the number of beliefs to the "one true view," i.e., why the presence of inconsistencies in people's beliefs is evidence for the existence of "one true view." Many individuals might believe in different ethical standards with complete consistency. Thus they might all deduce the implications of their beliefs and eliminate all propositions which contradict their principal values. This would logically be possible were the principal value liberty, equality, pleasure or whatever. Furthermore, it is unclear why the elimination of inconsistencies brings the individual's beliefs closer to the "one true view of justice" unless of course logical consistency is itself deemed to be an aspect of natural right. Professor Strauss might mean by

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[1] Ibid.

"go beyond" that the individual is forced to abandon his original view altogether. The method offered here, however, for the testing of ethical beliefs is logical consistency. It is difficult to see why an original position would have to be abandoned altogether. It is also difficult to see why anyone would be forced to accept any particular consistent view offered in its place.

The second theory of knowledge introduces a different set of conditions for the acquisition of knowledge of natural right. Professor Strauss describes this method as follows:

> Philosophy consists . . . in the ascent from opinions to knowledge or the truth, in an ascent that may be said to be guided by opinions. It is this ascent which Socrates had primarily in mind when he called philosophy "dialectics." Dialectics is the art of conversation or of friendly dispute; the friendly dispute which leads toward the truth is made possible or necessary by the fact that opinions about what things are, contradict one another. Recognizing the contradiction, one is forced to go beyond opinions toward the consistent view of the nature of the thing concerned. That consistent view makes visible the relative truth of the contradictory opinions; the consistent view proves to be the comprehensive or total view . . . . In other words, the opinions prove to be solicited by the self-subsisting truth, and the ascent to the truth proves to

> be guided by the self-subsistent truth which all men always divine.[1]

The interlocutors are not a philosopher and an individual who believes in an ethical standard other than that espoused by the classics but a single philosopher who "converses" with himself. The philosopher does not rely upon evidence adduced by someone else. He is guided by the "self-subsistent truth which all men always divine." Perhaps someone else, another philosopher, has pointed out the inconsistencies in his view concerning justice. This, however, is not enough. Therefore, the dialectic here involves more than an attack upon the inconsistencies in one position. It involves the recognition that the "opinions about what things are, contradict one another." The things referred to, however, are not the things known to experience. The term "justice" for example is used by people to name different things; people have different ethical standards. The philosopher of Professor Strauss' account assumes that the term designates a thing apart from the things to which it is applied in the world of experience. Therefore when people disagree about what to call "justice," they really

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[1] Ibid., 124.

disagree about what justice is. Opinions about what thing in the world of experience to call "justice" can only differ; opinions about the thing, justice, in a world beyond experience can contradict one another. Thus the "ascent to the Truth" begins with the assumption that there is a world beyond experience. The philosopher posits such a world. He is then "forced . . . toward the consistent view of the nature of the thing concerned." However accurate a description this may be of the means by which knowledge of natural right is acquired, it is a description of the psychological development of belief rather than a description of a method by which everyone can test the beliefs for which universal validity is claimed. Political philosophers have claimed truth for a variety of views. No means are suggested whereby we can determine which of the various views is the "one true view." Therefore, the knowledge possessed by the political philosopher that his view is the "one true view" is personal. The "ascent," moreover, is evidence only for the individual who makes it. These conclusions would seem to correspond with Professor Strauss' characterization of philosophy as an ascent "from public dogma to essentially private knowledge."[1]

[1] Ibid., 12.

An examination of the theories of knowledge expounded by Professor Strauss suggests that political philosophy provides no method which yields objective knowledge. It has been noted, however, that ambiguous statements make it difficult to determine whether Professor Strauss has intended to make such a claim for knowledge of natural right. Nevertheless, the following comments bear quotation. Professor Strauss observes that

> In the sense in which these distinctions [e.g., "good" and "bad," "right" and "wrong,"] are politically relevant, they cannot be "demonstrated," they are far from being perfectly lucid, and they are exposed to grave theoretical doubts. Accordingly, classical political philosophy limited itself to addressing men who, because of their natural inclinations as well as their upbringing, took those distinctions for granted. It knew that one can perhaps silence but not truly convince such people as have no "taste" for the moral distinctions and their significance . . . and he [Socrates] admitted the limits set to demonstrations in this sphere by taking recourse to "myths."[1]

This suggests that Professor Strauss recognizes that knowledge of natural right is not objective and that the testimony of the classical political philosophers cannot

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[1] WPP, 89.

be adduced as evidence for one universally valid standard.

Finally, Professor Strauss notes that the

> political teaching of the classical philosophers, as distinguished from their theoretical teaching, was primarily addressed not to all intelligent men, but to all decent men. A political teaching which addressed itself equally to decent and indecent men would have appeared to them from the outset as unpolitical, that is, as politically, or socially, irresponsible.[1]

Professor Strauss, then, might argue that the classics, like science, demand that certain conditions be met for intersubjective testability. Whereas science demands that the individual possess sufficient intelligence to understand the symbols employed in a communication and the necessary equipment to perform the operations described, the classics demand that the individual be decent. In science, men of intelligence have tested and rejected particular statements of other intelligent men because the observations made were not truly facts or the hypotheses suggested were not truly laws. Can the same event

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[1]Ibid., 90. Cf. Leo Strauss, The City and Man (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), 25. The City and Man will hereafter be abbreviated as City.

occur when a knowledge-claim concerning natural right is made? Thus, is a "decent man" a man who accepts the political teaching of the classics, or can a "decent man" reject that teaching? If "decent man" is defined as one who accepts the classical teaching, then obviously knowledge of natural right is not objective. If "decent man" is not defined so as to exclude all who believe in a different ethical standard, then the conclusion that there is no one universally valid standard for which we have evidence seems inescapable.

CHAPTER V

A SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF POLITICS: THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

The social sciences, according to Professor Strauss, share a number of defects with the natural sciences. He asserts that science does not explain, it does not yield wisdom, it contradicts common-sense and it employs a mode of explanation which is deficient. In addition to these defects, the social sciences exhibit still other characteristics, peculiar to them, which Professor Strauss thinks "speak decisively against this school."[1] First, he charges that political science refuses to make value judgments but social phenomena canaot be studied without making value judgments.[2] Secondly, he charges that the positivism of political science "necessarily transforms itself into historicism," but this transformation destroys the so-called objectivity of political science.[3] These considerations are held to make a scientific study of politics im-

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[1] WPP, 20-21.

[2] Ibid., 21, 22, 24; and "Epilogue," 310.

[3] WPP, 25.

possible. Finally, he charges that the relativism of political science leads to or implies nihilism.[1] This consideration is held tomake a scientific study of politics undesirable.

One of Professor Strauss' theses is that social phenomena cannot be studied without making value judgments. He reiterates this thesis in raising the issue of definition. That issue consists of the several answers which have been given to the question - what is the immediate purpose of definition?

Professor Strauss raises the issue by observing that political science must distinguish between the political and the nonpolitical.

> Political science presupposes a distinction between political things and things which are not political; it presupposes therefore some answer to the question "what is political?" In order to be truly scientific, political science would have to raise this question and to answer it explicitly and adequately. But it is impossible to define the political, i.e., that which is related in a relevant way to the polis, the "country" or the "state," without

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[1] Ibid., 18-19; NRH, 42; and Strauss, The State of the Social Sciences, ed. White, 422.

> answering the question of what constitutes this kind of society. Now a society cannot be defined without reference to its purpose . . . . But by defining the state, or rather civil society, with reference to its purpose, one admits a standard in the light of which one must judge political actions and institutions: the purpose of civil society necessarily functions as a standard for judging civil societies.[1]

Thus a definition in Professor Strauss' view is an answer to a "what is" question, e.g., what is the "state"? An answer to this question, that is, a definition of the "state," must refer to the purpose of the state. But, then, according to Professor Strauss, all definitions re-refer to purposes because

> the "what is" questions point to "essences," to essential differences - to the fact that the whole consists of parts which are heterogenous, not merely sensibly (like fire, air, water, and earth) but noetically: to understand the whole means to understand the "What" of each of these parts, of these classes of beings, and how they are linked with one another. Such understanding cannot be the reduction of one heterogenous class to others or to any cause or causes other than the class itself; the class, or the class character, is the cause par excellence.[2]

Definitions, then are descriptions of reality. They can,

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[1] WPP, 22.

[2] City, 19. See also NRH, 122-23.

therefore, be true or false. One must describe the particular essence to which a "what is" question points. The student of politics must acquire knowledge of the essence of the state and this knowledge can then be expressed in a definition.

In raising the issue of definition, Professor Strauss confronts us with his whole philosophy. His metaphysical, epistemological and ethical views are closely connected with his views on definition. Essences are real; they are true beings.[1] They are the final causes of the particular sensible things.[2] The sensibles change; they are perishable; they are "in between being and not-being."[3] The particular sensible things have being only contingently - only as they are informed by essences.[4] Professor Strauss does not make clear whether he believes with Plato that essences exist in a realm apart from particular sensible things, or with Aristotle that essences are immanent in particular sensible things. In either case, the essences

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[1] NRH, 89.

[2] Ibid., 89, and 122-23; and City, 19.

[3] NRH, 89-90

[4] Ibid.

exist extra-mentally - independently of their conception by man. The essences are symbolized by universal terms, e.g., "state," "political," and "justice."[1] Because universal terms symbolize essences, universal terms are important clues in the acquisition of knowledge concerning reality. Therefore Professor Strauss asks - what is "political"?, what is "justice"? Such questions initiate the "ascent from opinion to knowledge."[2] They are the first step in the acquisition of knowledge by the method of classical political philosophy. Science cannot answer such questions. Sense experience does not provide us with knowledge of universals.[3] Such questions can be dealt with only dialectically. The structure of reality is also invested with an ethical aspect. The essences are natural ends; the essence of a thing is the good for that particular thing.[4] The character of the essence serves as a standard by which to judge the particular thing. Professor

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[1] Ibid., 122-23; and City, 19.

[2] NRH, 124; and City, 19.

[3] NRH, 124-25; and WPP, 25.

[4] NRH, 7, 86, 92, 102, and 127.

Strauss, then, shares the realism of Plato and Aristotle.[1] He espouses as well the view of definition developed by the classics.[2]

Professor Strauss' answer to the question - what is the purpose of definition? - is this. The term on the left-hand side of a definition, the term to be defined, symbolizes some thing. Thus it has a meaning independent of the right-hand term. The meaning of the left-hand term might be conveyed by giving examples or by pointing. The thing symbolized by a universal term is an essence by virtue of which the particular sensible thing is the kind of thing it is. Because universal terms symbolize essences, Professor Strauss asks - what is political? The answer

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[1]Campbell Crockett has provided an exposition of Platonic and Aristotelian realism as well as an examination of the whole problem of universals in "The Problem of Universals" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Philosophy, University of Cincinnati, 1949). Cf. R. I. Aaron, The Theory of Universals (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

[2]The classical view of definition is found in Aristotle, Topics I 4-6, VII 3; Posterior Analytics, I 2, 10, II 3-13; Metaphysics, Z 4-6, 10, 12, 15; H 3, 6; and in Plato, Euthyphro, Meno, Theatetus 146-48, 201-10; Sophist, Statesman, Phaedres, Letter VII 342-44; Laws X 895 de. See the discussions of Laura Grimm, Definitions in Plato's Meno (Oslo: Oslo University Press, 1962) and Popper, Open Society, I, 31-33, 216n27, II, 9-21, 287-301nn.27-54.

to such a question is an analysis of the essence symbolized by "political." Thus the left-hand term symbolizes some essence. The right-hand term also symbolizes some essence and is an analysis of it. Definitions can therefore be true or false. The left and right-hand terms must be equivalent. The immediate purpose of a definition is, then, to provide on the right-hand side a term which symbolizes the same essence as that symbolized by the left-hand term and which is a correct analysis of that essence. Definitions of this sort are usually called real definitions.[1]

This view of definition is burdened with several difficulties. First, what is the evidence for the existence of essences? Professor Strauss adduces no evidence. It is assumed that universal terms point to essences. This is the realist's answer to the question - what is the referent of universal terms? There is however another answer. The nominalist replies that universal terms point to resembling particulars. Whether the realist, the nominalist,

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[1]Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel, An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1934), 230-32; and Richard Robinson, Definition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 15-20, 149-92.

or the answer or neither is correct, it is clear that the existence of universal terms creates a problem and does not provide evidence for either view. Secondly, how can we decide if a true real definition has been formulated? A true real definition provides equivalent symbols for an essence and a correct analysis of that essence. But a real definition cannot be tested to determine its validity because the essence is metaphysical. How are we to decide if the knowledge which Professor Strauss or the classics possess concerning the essence of the "state" is true or false? And how are we to decide which of two competing definitions of the "state" is true? Professor Strauss recognizes these difficulties but fails to resolve them.[1] The true answer to a "what is" question will be evident only to those who have been initiated.[2] Nevertheless, Professor Strauss has directed our attention to an ultimate purpose of definition, namely, to make investigation and explanation possible.

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[1] NRH, 24; and WPP, 89.

[2] WPP, 89.

Political science must be able to distinguish between the political and the nonpolitical. If everything were relevant to a study of politics, inquiry and explanation would be impossible, our world of experience would be chaotic. Contrary to Professor Strauss' assertion, however, political science does not need to answer the question - what is political? The political can be distinguished from the nonpolitical in another way, namely, by nominal definition.

The political can be distinguished from the nonpolitical in this way because definition in science has a different purpose than it serves in classical political philosophy. Science does not attempt to express in a definition equivalent symbols for an essence and a correct analysis of that essence. Let us, following Robinson,[1] make several distinctions. First, let us distinguish between the purposes of definition. A definition may be intended to relate a thing to a thing, i.e., an understood meaning, e.g., the meaning of "justice," is related to another meaning, the essence of justice, which is the thing all refer-

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[1] Robinson, Definition, 15-27.

ents of "justice" have in common. In definitions of this kind it is the thing, justice, which is defined and not the word "justice." Let us call such definitions "real definitions." A definition may be intended to relate a word to a thing, i.e., a meaning for a word is reported (as in lexical definitions) or proposed (as in stipulative definitions). Let us call such definitions "nominal definitions."[1] Secondly, let us distinguish the purposes of definition from the method by which a definition is given. A definition, for example, which relates a word to a thing may be given by genus and difference, by pointing, by example, by explication or by other methods. If these distinctions are made and the proposed definitions are adopted, then science employs only nominal definitions and, more particularly, nominal definitions which stipulate a meaning for

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[1]Robinson also includes the relating of a word to a word in the class of nominal definitions. Such definitions are used in the axiomatized sciences but are of no concern to us here. See Peter Caws, "The Functions of Definition in Science," Philosophy of Science, 26 (July, 1959), 201-28; and Margenau, Nature of Physical Reality, 232-40.

a term.[1]

For the scientist, then, a definition is an invitation or an agreement to use words in a certain way. A new symbol is to be used for an already known group of words. The left and right-hand terms of the definition are equivalent in meaning. The left-hand term has no meaning beyond that expressed in the right-hand term. Therefore in any statement in which the left-hand term appears the right-hand term may be substituted. Stipulative definitions do not extend our knowledge; they are neither true nor false.

Definitions in science are conventions. Nevertheless, once a word has been assigned to a meaning, the connotation and denotation of that word are fixed. Once a

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[1]Caws, Philosophy of Science, 26 (July, 1959), 201-28; Torgny T. Segerstedt, Some Notes on Definitions in Empirical Science (Uppsala: Almquist and Wisksells Boktryckeri Ab, 1957); Michael Scriven, "Definitions, Explanations, and Theories," Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science, II, ed. Herbert Feigl, Michael Scriven, and Grover Maxwell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), 99-195; Hempel, Concept Formation, 1-19; C. I. Lewis, An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1946), 96-130; Cohen and Nagel, Logic and Scientific Method, 223-44; and Popper, Open Society, II, 289-301nn.38-54.

word has been chosen to designate certain sensible particulars, for example, the empirical aspects of those referents limit the connotation which we may attach to that word. Similarly, once a word has acquired connotation, the empirical aspects of a particular thing determine whether it belongs to the class of things designated by the word. As Lewis puts it, "we cannot stipulate relations between meanings: these are fixed when the meanings themselves are fixed."[1] Statements which assert relations between meanings are assertions about reality and for science such assertions must be empirically confirmable.[2]

The nominalism described above is a methodological nominalism and not a metaphysical nominalism. The distinction is important.[3] Nominalism as it has been expounded in the past has included assertions about the ultimate

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[1]Lewis, Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation, 108.

[2]Robert Bierstedt, "Nominal and Real Definitions in Sociological Theory," Symposium on Sociological Theory, ed., Llewellyn Gross (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1959), 131-33; and Hempel, Concept Formation, 6-9.

[3]Popper, Open Society, I, 32; II, 289-90n38.

nature of reality. Ockham's nominalism, for example, was founded on an ontological realism. For him, concrete, individual substances are the ultimate constituents of reality.[1] Science, however, can neither confirm nor disconfirm any assertions about a reality which lies behind or beyond the reality revealed to the senses. Therefore science must not adopt a metaphysical nominalism on pain of violating its own methodology. Methodological nominalism permits the political scientist to avoid commitment to any specific theory of universals, whether it be nominalism or realism. By the use of nominal definitions, the political scientist can distinguish among phenomena. He recognizes that there are repetitions of qualities in the world of experience and chooses to call one such repetition by the term "political." The metaphysical question of why we are able to call a number of things by the same name - common natures? or resembling particulars? - can be left to the metaphysicians.

A definition of the term "political" is a problem for the scientific study of politics because definitions stated in the past have had so little utility for inquiry

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[1]Crockett, "The Problem of Universals," 112.

and for the systematic organization of our knowledge. The definitions have been vague - they offered only a gross orientation for the student of politics confronted with the multiplicity and complexity of phenomena; they provided only a very imperfect criterion of relevance. Definitions of "political" as the state or something related to the state or as power suffer this defect. These definitions have also had little systematic import. They do not identify a segment of human behavior in such a way as to enable political scientists to discover other characteristics of the political or to systematize all the knowledge which has been acquired concerning the political. Political scientists have been in the position of zoologists before they developed the concept Pisces to replace, for scientific purposes, the concept Fish.[1]

> The zoologists found that the animals to which the concept Fish applies, that is, those living in water, have by far not as

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[1]An example used by Cohen and Nagel, Logic and Scientific Method, 223-24; and by Rudolf Carnap, Logical Foundations of Probability (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), 5-6.

> many properties in common as the animals which live in water, are cold-blooded vertebrates, and have gills throughout life.[1]

The concept Pisces has been fruitful whereas the concept Fish has not been.

Although there is no consensus on what constitutes the political, i.e., on the meaning of the term "political," and although definitions offered in the past are deficient, inquiry proceeds - inquiry which at least most would concede has as its subject-matter the political. There is then a basis for agreement on a new nominal definition of the term "political." Most political scientists would agree that at least some aspect of the behavior of a congressman or a judge should be a part of the denotation of the term.

These considerations suggest that any new definition of "political" must satisfy several requirements. First, it must be fruitful for the development of theory. And, secondly, it must be sufficiently similar to older concepts to embrace at least most of what was formerly denoted by the term "political." These requirements may be satisfied by an explication of the meaning of the term.[2] Specifi-

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[1]Carnap, Logical Foundations, 6.

[2]Ibid., 1-18; and Hempel, Concept Formation, 10-14.

cation of meaning by this method is guided initially by an analysis of meanings-in-use but the process is carried beyond this analysis to a new concept which has systematic import. Thus an explicative definition is not simply a report on usage, i.e., lexical and, therefore, true or false as a description of current usage. It proposes a new meaning for a term and, therefore, it is a matter for agreement. Nevertheless, explicative definitions are not wholly arbitrary for they must satisfy the two requirements stated above. Several recent definitions of the term "political" seem to be attempts at explication.[1]

Among these definitions, several have, in part, characterized the political in functional terms. Professor Almond, for example, defines the term "political system" as

> that system of interactions to be found in all independent societies which performs the functions of integration and adaptation (both internally and vis-a-vis other

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[1]Easton, The Political System, 90-148; and Gabriel A. Almond, "Introduction: A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics," The Politics of the Developing Areas, ed. Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 3-25, for example.

> societies) by means of the employment, or threat of employment, or more or less legitimate physical compulsion.[1]

A question then arises. Have not the Straussian observations concerning the definition of the "political," namely, "a society cannot be defined without reference to its purpose" and "the purpose of civil society necessarily functions as a standard for judging civil societies," been demonstrated? The philosophical basis upon which Professor Strauss rests his first claim has been examined and the difficulties to which his epistemology is subject have been noted. There seems, moreover, to be no reason why we must define the "political" with reference to a purpose or purposes. The question is - is it fruitful to do so?

To avoid confusion, let us distinguish several senses of the term "purpose" from the meaning given here to the term "function." The terms are often used synonomously. In one sense, the term "purpose" means end-in-view. Although political scientists may concede that much of human

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[1]Almond, Politics of the Developing Areas, ed. Almond and Coleman, 7.

behavior has a prima facie purposive character, they need not assume that the individuals who participate in Almond's "system of interactions" have "integration" and "adaptation" as ends-in-view. Functions can be latent as well as manifest.[1] The term "function" refers to objective consequences of behavior which may or may not be intended by the individual. In the Straussian sense, the term "purpose" means the natural end of a thing. The term "function," on the other hand, means the consequences for some system of a constituent part or process.[2] There is no assumption that the constituent part or process has either an end-in-view or has been imbued with a purpose by some external agent. Furthermore, the assertion that a constituent part or process does perform a particular function for some system is a statement which must be empirically confirmable. Political scientists, then, are not attempting to provide a correct analysis of an essence symbolized by the term "political" when they choose to adopt a definition which includes functional terms.

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[1]Merton, Social Theory, 19-66.

[2]Supra, 45-46.

From the nominalist point of view, definitions like Almond's which include functional terms can be regarded in several ways. Both these interpretations avoid imparting any synthetic content to such definitions which would transform what is a proposal or resolution into a statement which must be submitted to empirical test. First, let us assume that we simply want to name a system of interactions which performs certain functions by particular means. What shall we call it? Almond suggests that we call it the "political system." Secondly, let us assume that "political" is a term in use with a vague meaning to be explicated. Now to some Almond might seem to be asserting that the political, i.e., the things formerly denoted by the term "political," performs the functions of integration and adaptation. But as political scientists, we cannot, as Professor Strauss does, stipulate relations between meanings, i.e., describe the way things are by definition. Therefore, Almond may be regarded as proposing that for a thing to be political, and, therefore, to have the term "political" properly applied to it, it must be capable of performing those functions as a result of the discovery that the political, i.e., the things formerly de-

noted by the term "political," do have that capacity.[1]

A consequence of defining the "political" in functional terms is that the use of such terms requires evaluative judgments.[2] Thus a subsystem of a society which satisfies all the other criteria of what it is to be a political system must also perform the functions of adaptation and integration in order to be a political system. Must this subsystem maintain the society in "perfect" adaptation and integration? Or are actual subsystems which might vary in their performance of those functions political systems only to a degree? For whichever alternative we opt, we must evaluate the performance of the subsystem as a means of achieving the ends of adaptation and integration of the society. This kind of evaluation, however, is quite different from the "judging" which Professor Strauss has in mind in his observations concerning the definition of "political" quoted above.[3]

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[1]Ernest Nagel, "Fact, Value, and Human Purpose," Natural Law Forum, 4 (1959), 31n.

[2]Ibid., 30-31.

[3]Infra, 135-39.

CHAPTER VI

A SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF POLITICS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND HISTORICISM

Professor Strauss has devoted two essays to an examination of historicism and he has given the subject less complete attention in other places as well.[1] The prominence of the subject in Professor Strauss' works is due to his conviction that historicism is one of the two grounds for the contemporary rejection of natural right.[2] Indeed, historism, rather than positivism, is called the "serious antagonist of political philosophy."[3]

To avoid confusion, let us make clear about what we are talking. The term "historicism" has been used in several senses. The term was first used to name the approach

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[1]"Political Philosophy and History," WPP, 56-77; and "Natural Right and the Historical Approach," NRH, 9-34.

[2]NRH, 8.

[3]WPP, 26. See also WPP, 57.

of a German school of jurisprudence. Savigny, Puchta and their followers maintained that the law of a nation, like its language and songs, has its origins in the popular spirit. A nation ought not to alter existing law for to do so would interfere with the organic process by which that law is made to correspond to the needs of the nation.[1] This usage has acquired perhaps less currency than the following two. The term has also been used to name the contention of Hegel, Marx, Spengler, Toynbee and others that history is a process which proceeds by stages, each following inevitably upon the other, according to some

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[1]See Hermann Kantorowicz, "Savigny and the Historical School of Law," Law Quarterly Review, 53 (1937), 236-43; "Savigny" and "Puchta" in the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences by Kantorowicz; Edwin W. Patterson, Jurisprudence: Men and Ideas of the Law (Brooklyn, N.Y.: The Foundation Press, 1953), 411-14; and William Montgomery McGovern, From Luther to Hitler: The History of Fascist-Nazi Political Philosophy (Boston: Houghton-Miflin, 1941), 388-96.

fixed pattern of development.[1] Lastly, there is that "historicism" which asserts that thought is related in some way to a social or cultural base. This thesis was first asserted by Marx and later elaborated, principally by Mannheim, as the sociology of knowledge.[2] Professor Strauss has discussed all three of these meanings of "historicism."[3]

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[1]See Karl R. Popper, The Poverty of Historicism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), partic. Chap. II; Popper, Open Society, II; and Nagel, Structure of Science, 592-606.

Among historians the term has still another sense. This "historicism" has these properties: the denial of a systematic approach to history, the repudiation of any single, unified interpretation, an emphasis on change and particularity as basic concepts, the claim of uniqueness for historical explanation, and the contention that history is all-pervasive. See Hans Meyerhoff, ed., The Philosophy of History in Our Time (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), 27; Geoffrey Barraclough, "Scientific Method and the Work of the Historian," Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science, ed. Nagel Suppes and Tarski, 584-88; and Dwight E. Lee and Robert N. Beck, "The Meaning of 'Historicism'," American Historical Review, 59 (1954), 568-77. The assumption common to all these senses of historicism as stated by Lee and Beck is that "the nature of anything is entirely comprehended in its development."

[2]See Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge, trans. and ed. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936); and Merton, Social Theory, Chaps. 12 and 13.

[3]The historical school of jurisprudence: WPP, 58, and NRH, 13-16; history as process: WPP, 66-77 passim, and NRH, 16-18; sociology of knowledge: WPP, 25-25, 56-77 passim, and NRH, 18-34.

He has, however, reserved the brunt of his critical attacks for the historicist contention that all thought is situationally determined or related to a particular historical moment and, therefore, that no thought can be universally valid. This, according to Professor Strauss, is historicism in its most virulent form.[1] The historical approach to jurisprudence was historicism in its infancy.[2] The conception of history as a process was rejected by historicists themselves.[3] Professor Strauss criticizes extreme, or radical, historicism on two grounds. First, he observes that

> it is gratuitously assumed that the relation between doctrines and their "times" is wholly unambiguous. The obvious possibility is overlooked that the doctrine to which one particular situation is related, is particularly favorable to the discovery of the truth, whereas all other situations may be more or less unfavorable . . . . We cannot then stop at ascertaining the relations between a doctrine and its historical origins. We have to inter-

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[1] NRH, 26-27; and WPP, 26.

[2] NRH, 16.

[3] NRH, 17-18; and WPP, 26, 66-67.

> pret these relations; and such interpretation presupposes the philosophic study of doctrine in itself with a view to its truth or falsehood. At any rate, the fact (if it is a fact) that each doctrine is "related" to a particular historical setting does not prove at all that no doctrine can simply be true.[1]

Thus Professor Strauss concedes that thought may be related to a particular situation. He argues, however, that historicists have failed to distinguish between the origin and the validity of an idea. Although political scientists are in disagrement with Professor Strauss about the criterion of validity to be employed, they too insist on the possibility and necessity for making that distinction. As Professor Strauss has noted, historicism in its radical form is as destructive of the possibility of a scientific study of politics as it is of the possibility of a philosophy of natural right.[2]

Secondly, he observes that

> only under one condition could historicism claim to have done away with all pretence to finality, if it presented the historicist thesis not as simply true, but

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[1] WPP, 64.

[2] Ibid., 26.

> as true for the time being only. In fact, if the historical thesis is correct, we cannot escape the consequence that that thesis itself is "historical" or valid, because meaningful, for a specific historical situation only. Historicism is not a cab which one can stop at his convenience: historicism must be applied to itself. It will thus reveal itself as relative to modern man; and this will imply that it will be replaced, in due time, by a position which is no longer historicist.[1]

Thus, historicism can only produce a skepticism concerning all human thought including historicism itself.

In view of the difficulties to which historicism is subject, the relationship between a scientific study of politics and historicism assumes considerable importance. According to Professor Strauss, the positivism of political science "necessarily transforms itself into historicism."[2] This transformation is said to occur in two ways. First, he argues that social science uses conceptual schemes which preclude any understanding of cultures other than that of modern Western society.[3] These conceptual schemes

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[1] Ibid., 72-73.

[2] Ibid., 25.

[3] Ibid. Cf. NRH, 56.

originate in modern Western society, reflect that society, and are therefore inadequate for understanding other societies. Thus Weber's typology of legitimacy, for example, is described as manifestly inadequate because of its parochial origin.[1] Such conceptual schemes are inadequate because "the self-interpretation of a society is an essential element of its being."[2] This self-interpretation is ignored when an alien conceptual scheme is used to study a society. Therefore,

> social science must attempt to understand those cultures as they understand or understood themselves; the understanding primarily required of the social scientist is historical understanding. Historical understanding becomes the basis of a truly empirical science of society. But if one considers the infinity of the task of historical understanding, one begins to wonder whether historical understanding does not take the place of the scientific study of society.[3]

Professor Strauss has identified a problem which confronts all students of politics. Certainly political scientists

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[1] NRH, 57.

[2] Ibid., 56.

[3] WPP, 25.

have often used conceptual schemes which had only limited utility, e.g., the political institutions of Western Europe and the United States have informed the perspective of many and this perspective has discouraged the study of non-Western societies and obscured significant relationships in non-Western societies because Western institutions are not universal. Recently, considerable effort has been devoted to this problem.[1] The questions raised byProfessor Strauss' observation are whether this problem can ever be solved, and whether the requirement which must be met for its solution does not preclude a scientific study of politics.

Let us note initially that, even if we accept Professor Strauss' argument as sound, the conclusion does not contain the thesis of radical historicism. Whatever variant of historicism it may be, it is not radical histori-

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[1]See, for example, George McT. Kahin, Guy J. Pauker, and Lucian W. Pye, "Comparative Politics of Non-Western Countries," American Political Science Review, 49 (December, 1955), 10-22; Gabriel A. Almond, "Introduction: A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics," Politics of the Developing Areas, ed. Almond and Coleman; and David E. Apter, "A Comparative Method for the Study of Politics," American Journal of Sociology, 64 (November, 1958), 221-37.

cism and it is radical historicism which Professor Strauss has attacked. The "historical understanding" of which he speaks apparently does not entail the rejection of the distinction between Fact and Value. Indeed, that "historical understanding," according to Professor Strauss, is the only way to ensure "nonevaluating objectivity" in the study of thought produced in another time or place.[1] Thus the alleged necessity for historical understanding does not preclude a scientific study of politics for this reason. And yet radical historicism precludes a scientific study of politics for precisely this reason. According to Professor Strauss, however, historical understanding makes a scientific study of politics at least extremely difficult because the task of historical understanding is infinite. The task becomes infinite, however, only if an event or a thought must be described from every point of view. This is why conceptual schemes are essential for the acquisition of knowledge for they provide a criterion of relevance by which certain aspects of a thing may be selected in the formulation and testing of empirically con-

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[1] NRH, 56-57; and WPP, 67.

firmable statements. This leads us back to the first part of Professor Strauss' argument concerning the adequacy of particular conceptual schemes. He argues that historical understanding is essential to the creation of universally applicable conceptual schemes. This may well be so. Weber, among others, emphasized the heuristic function it may perform. Nevertheless, however fruitful such understanding may be, the use or nonuse of historical understanding is not a test of the adequacy of a conceptual scheme. The adequacy of a conceptual, however parochial its origin, is decided by using it to order our experience. Historical understanding, moreover, does not provide empirical knowledge; its use or non-use is not a criterion of validity which permits intersubjective test of knowledge-claims.[2] Therefore, an empirical social science is not trans-

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[1]Max Weber, "The Meaning of 'Ethical Neutrality' in Sociology and Economics," The Methodology of the Social Sciences, ed. and trans. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1949), 13-14. See also Theodore Abel, "The Operation Called Verstehen," American Journal of Sociology, 54 (1948), 211-18.

[1]Ernest Nagel, Logic Without Metaphysics (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956), 364-65; and Nagel, Structure of Science, 480-85.

formed into an historicist social science by either the use of conceptual schemes of parochial origin or the attempt to improve our conceptual schemes.

The transformation of political science into historicism occurs, according to Professor Strauss, in still another way.

> Social science is said to be a body of true propositions about social phenomena. The propositions are answers to questions. What valid answers, objectively valid answers are, may be determined by the rules or principles of logic. But the questions depend on one's direction of interest, and hence on one's values, i.e., on subjective principles. It is therefore not possible to divorce from each other the subjective and objective elements of political science: the objective answers receive their meaning from the subjective questions. If one does not lapse into the decayed Platonism which is underlying the notion of timeless values, one must conceive of the values embodied in a given social science as dependent on the society to which the social science in question belongs, i.e., on history . . . . Reflection on social science as a historical phenomenon leads to the relativization of social science and ultimately of modern science generally.[1]

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[1] WPP, 26-26.

I assume that Professor Strauss is describing the thought of another - a scientific student of politics perhaps? If this is the case, he has chosen a poor student from whom to learn the methodology of political science.[1]

Let us concede first that values and interests undoubtedly do have an influence on the selection of a problem for investigation. Among those values and interests, there might appear a belief in the desirability of democracy or a curiosity about a matter which impels the acquisition of knowledge to relieve that curiosity. The development of a sociology of knowledge has led many political scientists to acknowledge not only the influence of one's values and interests in the selection of a problem but in the formulation of a problem, in the selection of data and in the interpretation of data. Just what the

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[1]The issue under discussion is the alleged "relativization of social science," and, therefore, I have chosen to ignore several misrepresentations which do not directly affect the argument, e.g., propositions in science are not regarded as "true" but only as empirically confirmed and hence subject to further test and rejection; the criterion of validity peculiar to science is empirical test and not logic which science shares as an instrument of consistent thought with other mental enterprises, such as philosophy.

relationship is between values and interests, on the one hand, and inquiry, on the other, remains controversial. Nevertheless, few would deny that the basis for the particular form of an investigation is the particular complex of interests and values of the student. Thus any explanation of how a student produced some concept or hypothesis which omits mention of his values and interests is incomplete. Let us assume that a student has embarked on an investigation because he subscribes to certain ultimate values. Such values are subjective in that no test of their validity can be made by all. Professor Strauss, then, is quite right in stating that "it is . . . not possible to divorce from each other the subjective and objective elements of social science." This is the case, however, only with respect to a psychological explanation of how we come to adopt the conceptual schemes and to state the hypotheses that we do. It is possible to distinguish questions relating to the origin of an idea from questions relating to the validity of an idea. Social scientists make this distinction, and Professor Strauss himself has recognized the distinction.

Let us concede secondly that science can offer no final compelling case for the desirability of studying

politics scientifically. A scientific study of politics is considered desirable by some because they place a high value on the intersubjective testability of propositions and the results of such tests as a criterion of validity. Although a scientific study of politics holds at least the promise of a systematic body of knowledge by which we can explain and predict events in our world of experience, this does not imply that we ought to seek such knowledge. This is so even though a scientific study of politics would have great utility for helping us answer the ethical questions we ask as citizens. Professor Strauss, for example, believes that a scientific study of politics can address itself only to insignificant questions as contrasted to political philosophy which addresses itself to fundamental questions. Since political science cannot ask fundamental questions, let alone answer them (they can be answered only dialectically), such a study ought not to be undertaken. The conclusion, then, that "modern science . . . [is only] one historically relative way of understanding which is not in principle [ethically] superior to alternative ways

of understanding" is correct.[1] This conclusion, however, does not vitiate the distinction between the origin and the validity of an idea. Scientific understanding is not thereby transformed into historical understanding.

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[1]WPP, 26.

CHAPTER VII

A SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF POLITICS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND NIHILISM

Professor Strauss argues that not only is a scientific study of politics impossible but that it is pernicious. It is pernicious because scientific value relativism is connected with nihilism. The nature of the connection is believed to be two-fold. Professor Strauss asserts that scientific value relativism is both factually and logically related to nihilism. Thus it is his contention that there is a factual relationship between scientific value relativism and nihilism.

> Positivistic social science is "value-free" or "ethically neutral": it is neutral in the conflict between good and evil, however good and evil may be understood . . . . The habit of looking at social phenomena without making value judgments has a corroding influence on any preferences. The more serious we are as social scientists, the more completely we develop within ourselves a state of indifference to any goal, or of aimlessness and drifting, a state which may be called nihilism.[1]

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[1] WPP, 18-19.

Whether adherence to scientific value relativism does indeed lead to nihilism, whether such adherence "has a corroding influence on any preferences," is of course a question of fact. And how might this question be answered? An answer would seem to be provided by an examination of the biographies of social scientists. We might find, for example, that some social scientists have abstained from making value judgments while others have made such judgments. Professor Strauss apparently believes that an examination would reveal that those who have accepted scientific value relativism have become increasingly indifferent to ethical considerations.

It is rather curious that Professor Strauss uses this argument at all in support of his view that a scientific study of politics is undesirable. He informs us that "I have never met any social scientist who apart from being dedicated to truth and integrity was not also wholeheartedly devoted to democracy."[1] But, we are told, this devotion is no more than thoughtless acceptance of societal norms. "Social science positivism fosters not so much

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[1] Ibid., 20.

nihilism as conformism and philistinism."[1] Are "societal norms," thoughtlessly accepted or otherwise, not values? Nevertheless, Professor Strauss leaves no doubt that he regards nihilism as a contemporary danger created by scientific value relativism.

Max Weber, whom Professor Strauss calls the "greatest social scientist of our century," and Gunnar Myrdal have been among the most persuasive, influential and vigorous advocates for a scientific study of human affairs. One might well expect the nihilistic malaise to be well advanced in these eminent exponents of scientific value relativism. Both Weber and Myrdal, however, have demonstrated ethical commitment. Both pursued long and varied public lives in which they made many value judgments.[2] Myrdal as a member

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[1] NRH, 36.

[2] For biography of Weber, see the chapter entitled "A Biographical View" by Gerth and Mills in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: A Galaxy Book by Oxford University Press, 1958); the chapter by Bendix entitled "Career and Personal Orientation" in Reinhard Bendix, Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960); and J. P. Mayer, Max Weber and German Politics: A Study in Political Sociology (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), partic. pp.8--81. The standard work is in German by his wife: Marianne Weber, Max Weber (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1950). Myrdal has an autobiographical "Postscript" in Paul Streeten, ed., Value in Social Theory (New York: Harper, 1958).

of the Swedish Parliament, for example, made value judgments. Weber's nationalism is well known. It was nationalism which impelled Weber, as an advisor to the German Armistice Commission, to urge rejection of the Versailles Treaty. Furthermore, Professor Strauss' essay on Weber reveals quite clearly the latter's preoccupation with individual commitment.[1] These examples of course are far from conclusive. They do cast doubt on the truth of Professor Strauss' proposition which asserts a causal relation between adherence to scientific value relativism and nihilism. Whatever their significance, Professor Strauss' proposition remains a hypothesis - an hypothesis for which he adduces no evidence.

Professor Strauss also contends that scientific value relativism implies nihilism.

> I contend that Weber's thesis necessarily leads to nihilism or to the view that every preference, however evil, base, or insane, has to be judged before the tribunal of reason to be as legitimate as any other preference.[2]

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[1] "Natural Right and the Distinction between Facts and Values" in NRH.

[2] NRH, 42. See also "Epilogue," 326.

In a similar vein, Professor Strauss states:

> Let us popularly define nihilism as the inability to take a stand for civilization against cannibalism. The relativist asserts that objectively civilization is not superior to cannibalism.[1]

If that were the case, i.e., scientific value relativism implies nihilism, then those social scientists who have made value judgments have violated the rules of their own methodology. Whether scientific value relativism implies nihilism is a question of meaning. An answer to this question requires us to examine the definitions of scientific value relativism and of nihilism. Now Professor Strauss may define these terms as he wishes. If, however, he intends to direct his criticism at the relativism which science demands of the scientist, then we must examine that "relativism" rather than the "relativism" which Professor Strauss attributes to scientific inquiry. Scientific value relativism is a logical consequence of the limitations of science. Thus science can admit for investigation only those statements which are empirically confirmable. In view of the logical gulf between Is and Ought

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[1]Strauss, State of the Social Sciences, ed. White, 422.

science cannot make Ought statements. Therefore, science can determine the value of something only for some group or individual or for the realization of some goal which is held to be higher or ultimate. If these inferences are correct, then it is difficult to see any implication between this relativism and nihilism. Certainly no one can claim scientific authority for the assertion that there is no valid hierarchy of values or that all values are equal.

The scientist, then, is prohibited from making Ought statements. But does not this mean that Weber and Myrdal escaped nihilism only by violating their own methodology? It will not be argued that social scientists, including Weber and Myrdal, who strive to observe scientific value relativism have never claimed scientific authority for value judgments. "But [as Weber has pointed out] it is a long way from this acknowledgment of human frailty to the belief in an 'ethical' science of economics, which would derive ideals from its subject matter and produce concrete norms by applying general ethical imperatives."[1] When the

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[1]Weber, Methodology of the Social Sciences, trans. and ed. Shils and Finch, 55.

social scientist is confronted with implicit or explicit value judgments traveling under the guise of empirical confirmability, he may properly expose those judgments as not susceptible to empirical test.[1] Nevertheless, the question remains - did Weber and Myrdal violate the scientific prohibition on the making of value judgments in making those value judgments identified above? The answer is no. Weber distinguished quite clearly between the social scientist as scientist and the social scientist as citizen.[2] Scientific value relativism prohibits the social scientist as scientist from making value judgments. But scientific value relativism does not prohibit the social scientist as a citizen from making value judgments as long as he claims no scientific authority for those judgments.

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[1]Myrdal did just this in an appendix to An American Dilemma. See Streeten, ed., Value in Social Theory, 119-153.

Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation" in Gerth and Mills, eds., From Max Weber, 145-46; "The Meaning of 'Ethical Neutrality' in Sociology and Economics" in Shils and Finch, eds. and trans., Methodology of the Social Sciences, 1-10; and "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy" in Shils and Finch, eds. and trans., Methodology of the Social Sciences, 59-60.

It was Weber's conviction that the social scientist should champion his ethical preferences as a citizen but he recognized that this conviction was a value judgment. There are a number of roles which the social scientist might assume with regard to values and remain a consistent scientific value relativist.[1] The important point, however, is that the social scientist is free to evaluate ethically as long as he recognizes and makes clear that he is expressing preference for which he can claim no scientific authority.

Professor Strauss rejects the distinction between the social scientist as scientist and the social scientist as citizen. According to him, "the natural world, the world in which we live and act, is not the object or the product of a theoretical attitude; it is a world not of mere objects at which we detachedly look but of 'things' or 'affairs' which we handle." [2] Thus only one role is open to the student of politics, namely, the role of evaluating

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[1] Brecht identifies these roles in Political Theory, 132-35.

[2] NRH, 79.

participant. This is so because the structure of the universe compels it. "Political things are by their nature subject to approval and disapproval, to choice and rejection, to praise and blame."[1] Unless we accept Professor Strauss' metaphysics, however, we need not discard Weber's distinction - a distinction consistent with the limitations imposed by science. Professor Strauss' intention, moreover, was apparently to point out an implication of scientific value relativism and not to raise a metaphysical issue. If this was Professor Strauss' intention, his inferences are incorrect.

Professor Strauss also thinks that he has discovered in Weber's works recurrent use of ethical evaluation, not just the occasional departure from scientific norms that may be expected of fallible humans.[2] Professor Strauss says of Weber:

> His work would be not merely dull but absolutely meaningless if he did not speak almost constantly of practically all intellectual and moral virtues and vices in

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[1] WPP, 12.

[2] NRH, 50-56.

the appropriate language, i.e., in the language of praise and blame.[1]

Thus,

> the political scientist or historian has, for example, to explain the actions of statesmen and generals, i.e., he has to trace their actions to their causes. He cannot do this without answering the question of whether the action concerned was caused by rational consideration of means and ends or by emotional factors, for example. For this purpose he has to construct the model of a perfectly rational action in the given circumstances. Only thus will he be able to see which nonrational factors, if any, deflected the action from the strictly rational course. Weber admitted that this procedure implies evaluation: we are forced to saythat the actor in question made this or that mistake . . . . But . . . if the historian shows, by objectively measuring the action of a statesman against the model of "rational action in the circumstances," that the statesman made one blunder after another, he makes an objective value judgment to the effect that the statesman was singularly inept.[2]

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[1] Ibid., 51.

[2] Ibid., 53.

Before examining this argument, several observations are in order. First, the example presented by Professor Strauss is a case of evaluation. Secondly, many terms used in the social sciences, e.g., "rational," are normatively ambiguous, i.e., they have both a descriptive and an ethical sense.[1] It will be argued here that social scientists may properly use such terms in their descriptive sense.

Professor Strauss has failed to distinguish between two kinds of evaluation and has inferred incorrectly that scientific value relativism prohibits the social scientist from evaluating at all. Professor Nagel has identified two different senses of "value judgment":

> the sense in which a value judgment expresses approval or disapproval either of some moral (or social) ideal, or of some action (or institution) because of a commitment to such an ideal, and the sense in which a value judgment expresses an estimate of the degree to which some commonly recognized (and more or less clearly defined) type of action, object, or institu-

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[1] R. M. Hare, The Language of Morals (London: Clarendon Press, 1961), 111-26; and Abraham Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry (San Francisco: Chandler, 1964), 378.

tion is embodied in a given instance.[1]

He calls the former "appraising value judgments" and the latter "characterizing value judgments." Thus in characterizing the actions of a general as "rational" or"irrational," the social scientist must initially decide what type of action he will call "rational," and, secondly, he must decide if the actions of the general are "rational" in the defined sense. In characterizing the actions of the general as "rational" or irrational," the social scientist need not be expressing approval or disapproval, i.e., using the language of praise or blame. Thus the social scientist must make two decisions. First, he must decide to accept or reject a proposed definition, e.g., a definition of "rational." In making an "appraising value judgment," one also makes such a decision. But the political philosopher claims that his definition is true and the

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[1]Nagel, Structure of Science, 492, R. M. Hare makes the same distinction in Language of Morals, 111-26, as does Kurt Baier, The Moral Point of View (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1958), 47-84. Cf. Aristotle's distinction between the "good man" and the "good citizen," Politics, Bk.3, IV.

truth compels his acceptance; the social scientist regards this decision as conventional. Secondly, the social scientist must decide whether the actions observed possess the defining characteristics of "rational." This decision is guided by observations - do the actions have those characteristics or not? The question is open to empirical test. There may well be difficulties in deciding marginal cases, and there may be disagreement among social scientists. A decision, however, does not commit the social scientist to praising or blaming those actions. The difficulty in making a "characterizing value judgment" in a particular case is created by the complexity of the phenomena and not by disagreement over an ethical standard.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In the course of this essay, I have reached a number of conclusions about the Straussian position. This chapter will be devoted to a summary of five major conclusions. The first conclusion concerns Professor Strauss' interpretation of the development of modern political thought. The history of political thought is divided into two periods: the classical and the modern. Modern political thought had its inception in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At that time, according to Professor Strauss, the assumptions upon which political philosophy had been based were rejected. No longer did political thinkers assume that there is a universally valid hierarchy of ends which is independent of man's will and about which man can acquire knowledge by the unassisted use of his own reason. Following the example of Hobbes and Machiavelli, the founders of modern political thought, political scientists have rejected natural right in order to make the study of politics scientific or to insure actuali-

zation of the ideal. Professor Strauss, of course, is free to analyze political thought according to categories of his own choosing. The Straussian scheme attaches greatest significance to the place of natural right - a doctrine to which Professor Strauss is committed and which he thinks should serve as the focus for the study of politics. That scheme, however, ignores other distinctions which also deserve attention, e.g., the appearance of both descriptive and prescriptive elements in classical political philosophy, notably in the works of Aristotle. Nowhere does Professor Strauss discuss the possible utility of a scientific study of politics for political philosophy. Nor does Professor Strauss suggest that a merely descriptive study of politics may have some redeeming qualities in its own right - a position which seems to be at odds with that of Aristotle himself. That scheme also ignores the fact that modern thinkers have produced both descriptive and prescriptive works. Hobbes and Machiavelli, for example, certainly made prescriptive statements while the behavioralists, as scientists, are prohibited from making such statements. -

My second conclusion is that Professor Strauss' contention that human behavior can be explained only teleologically rests on a metaphysical assumption. He assumes that man has a natural end - an end which is set by some external agency and which determines what is good for man. On the basis of this assumption, Professor Strauss argues that a scientific study of politics is impossible and that the classical political philosophers alone studied politics in a manner which could produce understanding. To support his views, Professor Strauss must make a compelling case for the assumption that either the universe, including man, is purposively ordered or man is purposively ordered. Clearly, he fails to make such a case for the first alternative. Professor Strauss tacitly admits as much by changing his position regarding the relationship between classical political philosophy and a teleological view of the universe. Apparently, the competence of science to explain non-human events is undeniable. With regard to the second alternative, failure also attends Professor Strauss' efforts. Nevertheless, Professor Strauss may be right; man may have a natural end. There is simply no

evidence for the assumption. Nor can any evidence ever be brought to bear on this assumption to test its validity; knowledge of a reality behind or beyond reality as it is known to experience cannot be acquired by empirical means.

The third conclusion concerns Professor Strauss' criticism of empirical science. It is, for the most part, trivial. Professor Strauss' observations, for example, that science does not answer the "why" but only the "how" of events and that science does not yield wisdom seem to raise only verbal issues. Furthermore, instead of a full-blown critique of science, we get only a few asides. Professor Strauss' criticism of the scientific mode of explanation is more substantial. He contends that there are limitations on the competence of scientific explanation and, in particular, that the laws of human behavior cannot be expressed in causal explanations. His argument is a reiteration of the assumption that man has a natural end. Empirical science does not and cannot make this assumption, and, therefore, it cannot explain human behavior. Empirical science can only regard man's ends as posited by "impulses" and "desires." Contrary to Professor Strauss' assertion,

however, science does recognize that men have purposes; nor does science deny that ends or some ends may have metaphysical support. The real issue raised by Professor Strauss' criticism seems to be whether the failure of science to adopt the teleological assumption affects the ability of science to explain human behavior in causal terms. This does not seem to be the case.

My fourth conclusion concerns the Straussian case against political science. Professor Strauss' criticism of political science in particular, as compared with his criticism of empirical science in general, is more substantial. Clearly, he intends to rest his case against political science on the alleged deficiencies peculiar to that discipline rather than on any deficiencies it may share with the natural sciences. Professor Strauss, however, fails to demonstrate the impossibility of a scientific study of politics. He does identify several significant problems. Political science must be able to distinguish the political from the non-political. This distinction can be made by a nominal definition rather than a real definition. Contrary to Professor Strauss' assertion, then, political science need not answer the question - what

is political? In insisting on an answer to that question, Professor Strauss assumes a metaphysical position, i.e., realism, which no science can or need assume. Political science must also be able to develop conceptual schemes useful for the study of societies other than modern Western society. The requirement which Professor Strauss imposes on the formation of such conceptual schemes, i.e., historical understanding, might have to be met. Nevertheless, even if this were the case, that requirement is no test of the adequacy of a conceptual scheme; the adequacy of a conceptual scheme is determined by using it to order our experience. Professor Strauss also attempts to use the doctrine of scientific value relativism to demonstrate the historicism and the undesirability of a scientific study of politics. He has no difficulty in demonstrating that, if the political scientist subscribes to scientific value relativism, he must acknowledge that scientific understanding is not superior to other forms of understanding. Quite so, but the relativity which the political scientist must acknowledge is ethical relativity and not the relativity of all thought. The political scientist can continue to distinguish the origin from the validity of an idea. Scien-

tific value relativism, according to Professor Strauss, also leads to nihilism and, therefore, a scientific study of politics is undesirable. Professor Strauss, however, fails to adduce any evidence for the proposition that there is a factual relationship between the two, i.e., those who observe scientific value relativism become indifferent to ethical matters. In fact, several prominent scientific value relativists had long careers in politics and made many ethical decisions. Furthermore, scientific value relativism, contrary to Professor Strauss' assertion, does not imply nihilism. Logically, that doctrine forbids the making of those very judgments, e.g., all values are equal, that Professor Strauss charges the scientific value relativist with making. In this case, Professor Strauss has misrepresented the scientific position. Although in his other criticisms, he identifies several significant and difficult problems, there seems to be no reason why they cannot be solved by the united efforts of the scientific community.

My fifth conclusion is of a more general nature. Many students of human behavior have argued for and against

a scientific study of human behavior. The controversy, however has come only recently to political science. Some contemporary students of politics, dissatisfied with the state of the discipline, have advocated a reorientation of the discipline to bring the methodology of political science into closer correspondence with that of the natural sciences. Now, to be sure, a prescription for a scientific study of politics is nothing new. The novelty of the current prescription is imparted by certain characteristics of the behavioral movement and of the age. The behavioralists have demonstrated greater methodological sophistication. One manifestation of that sophistication is the explicit deduction of the value relativism imposed by an empirical science.- The behavioralists have also made a number of significant contributions to knowledge about politics. The promise of the scientific contribution, then, has not been without fruit. Furthermore, the behavioral program has been expounded in an age when certain systems of thought, anti-democratic in principle and wedded to state power, claim universal competence to both describe and prescribe.

In the face of this assault upon cherished values at both the theoretical and practical levels, it may seem to many that a cognitive status must be accorded prescriptive statements equal to or greater than that of descriptive statements. If such a conviction is widely held, this fact would go far toward explaining Professor Strauss' stature in the profession. Professor Strauss, however, is interested in much more than maintaining a condition of coexistence between political philosophy and political science. The political science of the behavioralists after all does not preclude a study of man as a being who has a natural end. Professor Strauss need not demonstrate the possibility of political philosophy - an easy enough task in view of the self-imposed limitations of an empirical political science. His efforts have been directed at rejoining political science and political philosophy on his own terms and this required that he demonstrate the impossibility of political science. Theoretically he has failed in his attempt, whatever weight his views may carry with some members of the profession.

In the absence of a solution to the basic problem confronting a philosophy of natural right, i.e., the con-

struction of a compelling case for a teleological view of man, Professor Strauss perceives this dilemma - "the more we cultivate reason, the more we cultivate nihilism."[1] Thus scientific value relativism as a manifestation of reason denies scientific authority to Value statements; scientific authority can be claimed only for those statements which have survived tests by observation or experiment. But this means that an empirical political science "cultivates nihilism" in the sense that it cannot simply condemn cannibalism (or fascism or communism) as ultimately wrong or bad.[2] A philosophy of natural right, however, which views man "in the light of the mysterious character of the whole" can judge human behavior and human institutions. Given the contemporary struggle between belief-systems at the practical level, the natural right position exercises an undoubted attraction at the theoretical level.

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[1] NRH, 6.

[2] The "inability to take a stand against cannibalism" is one meaning which Professor Strauss gives to the term "nihilism" as in The State of the Social Sciences, ed. White, 422, and NRH, 3. The term is used in other senses as noted supra, 128-29.

The doctrine of natural right, however seems an inappropriate instrument for combatting the dogmatisms of the fascist or the communist. The natural right position itself permits dogmatism. Furthermore, that position provides no means whereby we can all decide if a knowledge-claim is correct or incorrect. A scientific study of politics, on the other hand, has much to commend it at the theoretical level. It is quite true that science cannot decide the ultimate value of something. However, we are rarely confronted in theory with the argument of the stubborn man, i.e., my ethical standard is right and that is all there is to it.[1] People usually give reasons for their beliefs and science can subject those reasons to criticism.[2]

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[1]Professor Edel describes the phenomenon and its significance for ethical theory in Abraham Edel, Ethical Judgment: The Use of Science in Ethics (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1955), 70-91.

[2]Weber, Methodology of the Social Sciences, ed. Shils and Finch, 20-21; Brecht, Political Theory, 121-24; Edel, Ethical Judgment, 115-289.

Furthermore, science recognizes as extremely difficult the task of acquiring knowledge (in the name of which people have been suppressed for centuries) and, therefore, science solicits continuous criticism of our knowledge-claims.[1]

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[1]Karl R. Popper, "On the Sources of Knowledge and of Ignorance," Encounter, 108 (September, 1962), 42-57.

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