

As the Planet Lost Its Orbit:
The Myth of the Death of Political Philosophy

by

Steven Ray Shadbolt Orr

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

Political Science

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

© 2020
Steven Ray Shadbolt Orr

Abstract

The death of political philosophy is a label to a variety of debates in the mid-twentieth century. Those debates, however, only have the appearance of a singular, cohesive argument about the state of the art. Upon closer investigation, despite the fact that its interlocutors used similar language in their proclamations and protestations, its participants were not referring to the same discipline — let alone the same ‘death’ thereof. The 1971 publication of John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice* is widely credited as having renewed political philosophy, either reversing a steady decline in the tradition that had begun as far back as Machiavelli or altogether reviving a project that seemed untenable in post-war anglophone scholarship. Yet what was revived by Rawls’ defense of modern liberalism is significantly different than the discipline that came before, solidifying an academic conception of political philosophy that was suitable for institutionalization in liberal democracies. While the importance of *A Theory of Justice* in Western political thought is undeniable, it does not automatically follow that it resolved all of the many deaths of political philosophy that had been articulated over the preceding decades.

This dissertation is primarily a contribution to the disciplinary history of political philosophy as a sub-field of anglophone political science. As such, it is an investigation into the death of political philosophy as both a series of debates and as a theoretical concept in its own right. Although those debates are largely understood as a resolved matter and widely considered to be irrelevant to contemporary political philosophy, this project shows otherwise. Instead the death of political philosophy should be understood as a key moment in the development of the academic discipline as distinct from political

philosophy properly understood. While this does not uniquely emerge in the twentieth century, academic political philosophy does take on a new life in post-war anglophone institutions. Investigating the death thesis provides insight into contemporary assumptions about the shape, scope, and limitations of the discipline — and its implications for the practice of political philosophy. To that end, this project is also a critique of the contemporary discipline that has the appearance of an ossified body of knowledge which seems to be divorced from the active enterprise of political philosophy and pedagogy — albeit a hopeful critique that offers possible avenues for growth and renewal.

Dedication

For Doreen, Eve, Don, and Herb.

Acknowledgements

While acknowledgements always run the risk of falling into a laundry list, this project was made lighter work thanks to the hands of a great many people and I would be negligent were I not to attempt an accounting of that help. It can be fairly assumed that the best parts of this work are the result of many others' guidance and that any errors therein have arisen through my failure to listen to the same.

To my family, I owe more than I will be able to express. Despite the 4500 km between us for the vast portion of this project, the many years of my doctoral studies have been made lighter because of them. Their love and support from afar kept me afloat when I did not feel like swimming. Thank you, Mom and Dad. My successes here are a direct result of the much harder task you had in raising me. And to my brother, Scott, thank you for proudly telling people that I was a doctor long before I ever finished this project: you encouraged me to get this done to ensure that you were not a liar.

Carleton's Department of Political Science has a fantastic cast of characters who felt more a community than coworkers. The countless hours spent with them were fruitful for the development of my work and, more importantly, maintaining my sanity. I have certainly leaned on the administrative staff throughout my program and am immensely grateful for their assistance — particularly Brookes Fee, whose open office door I took advantage of probably far more than I should have. Sophie Marcotte-Chénard came to Carleton late in my PhD, but her friendship and advice were of immeasurable value in crossing the finish line. So too with John Ryan for enduring numerous conversations about my work when he should have been doing his own.

I have had a fantastic committee keeping an eye on me throughout this project — and they rose to the challenge of a video conference defence. Thank you, Farhang Rajaei, Waller Newell, and, especially, my supervisor, Marc Hanvelt. I hope that I will be half as good an advisor to others as Marc has been to me. While I have more laudatory things to say about him, I will restrain myself lest he force me to revise them.

Without Wes Lord's friendship and generous advice on SQLite and the structure of my database, I would still be wandering around the desert trying to make sense of an absurdly designed Excel table. My thanks also extend to Hannah and the entire Wyle family for their support. I hope never to believe myself to have outgrown the need for mentors from earlier in my career, as Brad Bryan and Janni Aragon have continued to develop me as a scholar and a thinker. To Milo Morris: I believe this is your first dissertation acknowledgement — which is quite the accomplishment at nearly-four years old, but you were a delight exactly when I needed a pick-me-up. Adam, Alli, Dave, Leonard, Missie, Nicole, and Thomas, despite being not quite as adorable, have likewise been of immeasurable support.

And, finally, to Colleen: it is strange to think that I did not know you when this project started, because I have leaned on you a great deal as it comes to an end. Thank you for the confidence, the joy, and everything in between. I am lucky that you joined me on this journey, and I am excited to see what adventures are waiting for us after this.

Ottawa, Ontario
April 2020

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Tables.....	viii
List of Appendices.....	ix
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: Mythmaking.....	17
1.1 The Manyness of 20th Century Political Philosophy.....	22
1.2 Ronald Beiner.....	29
1.3 The Exemplars.....	37
1.4 The Catalogue Genre.....	41
1.5 Neither Death nor Revival.....	48
1.6 Sheldon Wolin.....	57
Conclusion.....	62
CHAPTER TWO: The Many Deaths of Political Philosophy.....	66
2.1 Peter Laslett.....	66
2.2 Leo Strauss.....	80
2.3 Alfred Cobban.....	89
Conclusion.....	100
CHAPTER THREE: A Curious Revival.....	108
3.1 Re-Viewing Responses to A Theory of Justice.....	114
3.2 End of Ideology-ists.....	124
3.3 Isaiah Berlin.....	128
3.4 Strauss Revisited.....	137
3.5 Cobban Revisited.....	145
3.6 Laslett Revisited.....	154
Conclusion.....	172
CHAPTER FOUR: A Return to Form.....	175
4.1 Notes on Terminology.....	177
4.2 The Puzzle.....	185
4.3 On Presentation and Propriety.....	192

Conclusion.....	204
CHAPTER FIVE: Reorienting	209
5.1 Political Philosophy and Liberal Education	211
5.2 Carrying Fire.....	219
5.3 The Accident of Education.....	229
5.4 The State of the Art	235
Conclusion.....	241
FINAL REMARKS	249
APPENDICES	269
APPENDIX 1: Political Philosophy in Political Science	269
APPENDIX 2: Full Ranking of Texts Taught.....	287
APPENDIX 3: “History of Political Thought” Syllabus.....	290
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	294

List of Tables

TABLE 1: Course Offerings (2011-2016).....	273
TABLE 2: Thinker Occurrences.....	274
TABLE 3: Text Occurrences	276
TABLE 4: Top Readings as % of Course (Region).....	280
TABLE 5: # of Readings (Region).....	280
TABLE 6: Top Readings as % of Course (Course Type).....	281
TABLE 7: # of Readings (Course Type).....	281
TABLE 8: Ranking of Texts Taught (Split Courses).....	283
TABLE 9: Full Ranking of Texts Taught.....	287

List of Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Political Philosophy in Political Science	269
APPENDIX 2: Full Ranking of Texts Taught	287
APPENDIX 3: “History of Political Thought” Syllabus	290

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The curious are always in some danger. If you are curious you might never come home, like all the men who now live with mermaids at the bottom of the sea.

- Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*¹

By the midway point of the twentieth century, political philosophy, that long tradition of thought stretching back to Ancient Greece, was dead, but it was neither the disinterested masses nor the scientist-kings that finally toppled the gates and saw to it that the walls fell. No, when political philosophy died, blame for its death fell upon us, the murderers of all murderers. What was truest and wisest had bled to death under our knives. We, of course, being the caretakers of the discipline (if not philosophers ourselves, at least students of philosophy). Such was the attitude of some of the most influential voices of the 1950s. While there remained an active discipline that called itself political philosophy and a growing cadre of pretenders to its throne, this all was but a pale imitation of that once profound love of wisdom.

This, at least, was the mindset of a number of serious scholars and became a matter of considerable debate in the years and decades that followed World War II. Yet even as late as 1964, Henry David Aiken suggested that “[j]ust what is wrong with political philosophy as a genre nonetheless remains obscure”, despite the fact that it had been extensively argued about over at least the preceding decade.² The death of political philosophy is a label that is applied to a variety of debates in the mid-twentieth century that, at first glance, have the appearance of a singular, cohesive argument about the state

¹ Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit* (1985; repr., London: Vintage Books, 2014): 121.

² Henry David Aiken, “The Revolt Against Ideology,” *Commentary* 37, no. 4 (April 1, 1964): 30.

of political philosophy, but it is not immediately apparent that all its participants were referring to the same discipline — let alone the same ‘death’ thereof. Its many interlocutors used similar language in their proclamations and protestations, even engaging with each other at times on the topic, but it seems particularly important to determine whether they were speaking to different disciplines (and thus different deaths). Returning to those mid-century debates is instructive, not because of their predictive value nor even in their accuracy at assessing the situation of the day — indeed their core premises were undermined in a variety of ways before the decade had even come to a close and, by 1971, the death of political philosophy was itself widely declared to be well and truly dead — rather, the so-called death provides a lens through which we can understand what the discipline was perceived to be at the time, and the way that those ideas have endured into the now.

Beyond the historical justification for re-examining the debates, clearly articulating the nuances there helps reveal that we are still living under the myth of the death of political philosophy — much like Nietzsche’s madman warned about the shadow of Christianity. This remains the case despite the fact that the discipline was *supposedly* revived by John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice*. The emphasis on ‘supposedly’ here is not that Rawls’ work was somehow lacking, but the notion of selecting *any* thinker or text as a saviour of the discipline simply plays into and reinforces the logic of such a myth. There is something of an absurdity to singularly credit philosophical rebirth to one text of analytical philosophy that defended liberal democracy and the welfare state. This is similarly the case with those who refer to the boom-bust cycles of philosophy like Ronald

Beiner's 2014 *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*. Beiner is explicitly writing against the death of political philosophy, offering a number of thinkers and texts that he believes disprove the notion — and bridge the philosophical gap to *A Theory of Justice*, before moving beyond it — yet he ultimately concludes that we seem to be living in an “interlude” period in which political philosophy is dormant as we await the next golden age.³

It may be the case, as R. Bruce Douglass suggests, that *A Theory of Justice*

gave fresh life to a form of scholarly activity that appear at the time to many to be in danger of extinction. Not only did [Rawls] demonstrate conclusively ... that it was still possible to do constructive work in political philosophy in something like the traditional manner, but he did so in a fashion that provided an example that could be (and was) emulated by many other people. So rather than being a crisis, political philosophy once again became a flourishing field of inquiry that was full of ferment and creativity.⁴

Yet, when read carefully, one can find here a series of complicated claims about the significance of what Rawls achieved, and Douglass moves through them rapidly without pulling apart or interrogating their differences: that Rawls was working in accordance with some sort of tradition; that he was a convincing model for others; and that *A Theory of Justice* was somehow creative and novel. This is not an altogether abnormal approach to the death thesis. Douglass should, however, be read as having taken a somewhat ironic stance, given his ultimate conclusion:

[Rawls] may well have made a significant contribution to the development of liberal moral and political thought that will prove to be of lasting value, but it is an exaggeration to say that he revitalised political philosophy in any larger or more complete sense. Not only was the breakthrough he is said to have achieved

³ Ronald Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 238.

⁴ R. Bruce Douglass, “John Rawls and the Revival of Political Philosophy: Where Does He Leave Us?,” *Theoria*, 2012, 81.

confined largely to one particular philosophical school, but he accomplished what he did by significantly trimming the task of the political philosophy down from what it had previously been understood to be.⁵

In this, Douglass gives the lie to either the death of political philosophy or its revival, but because his focus is on a critique of Rawls, he mostly leaves aside those broader consequences. Yet in identifying the specific areas in which Rawls' accomplishments can be located, he exposes a significant question: what else appeared to be resolved by *A Theory of Justice* but was not — and does any of that remain so to this day? Before that question can be seriously considered, a thorough understanding of the death of political philosophy is required.

The way that the key interlocutors of the death of political philosophy spent a great deal of ink talking *at* rather than *with* each other was unlike the methodological debates that arose shortly thereafter in its wake. These methodological debates were sometimes related to concerns about disciplinary decline⁶ — although some thought inappropriately so, as Richard Ashcraft suggested at the time: “[i]t is time to say openly and bluntly that they are not discussing 'political' theory at all, but something else parading under that label” — however the rigour of the former had been nowhere to be found in the latter.⁷ This may be due to the nature of methodological problems or that the messiness of the earlier debates informed the academic literature that followed, but

⁵ Douglass, 90.

⁶ See: David Miller, “The Resurgence of Political Theory,” *Political Studies* 38, no. 3 (1990): 421-437; David Morrice, *Philosophy, Science and Ideology in Political Thought* (1996; repr., Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998); Petri Koikkalainen, “Peter Laslett and the Contested Concept of Political Philosophy,” *History of Political Thought* 30, no. 2 (January 1, 2009): 336–59; Petri Koikkalainen, “Contextualist Dilemmas: Methodology of the History of Political Theory in Two Stages,” *History of European Ideas* 37, no. 3 (2011): 315–24.

⁷ Richard Ashcraft, “On the Problem of Methodology and the Nature of Political Theory,” *Political Theory* 3, no. 1 (1975): 25.

neither the concepts nor the terminology surrounding the death of political philosophy ever solidified significantly enough for it to be wholly coherent. Unlike George Orwell's complaints about the laziness of dying metaphors⁸, the death of political philosophy was mostly an *empty* metaphor: while the early usages were deliberately aimed towards particular deaths, these varying definitions did not have a chance to coalesce into a single understanding before the metaphor became a common tool used by many writing about political philosophy. This likely has as much to do with its evocative quality as it does the dramatic nature of the claim. It became assumed that those reading would simply know what was meant by the term and, as a result, became a shorthand that anyone could fill with their own complaints about the discipline — or, more troubling, their *perception* of other's complaints about the discipline.

As J.G.A. Pocock reminds us, “[m]yth which insists that it is history, however, is far more deeply flawed than myth which only insists that there are ways in which it is truer than history” and, further, that “mythic statements cannot be guaranteed not to become pseudohistorical statements”.⁹ The problem with using a convenient shorthand to explain a complex matter is that its convenience can be mistaken for accuracy — or deliberately used to simplify those complexities. Consider Buckminster Fuller's observation about the commonly used terms ‘sunrise’ and ‘sunset’:

They will feel their western horizon to be rotating around with them and to be obscuring (or eclipsing) the Sun. They will spontaneously say “Sunclipse” instead of “Sunset.” In the same way they will say spontaneously “Sunsight” in the morning as the Earth revolves around the Sun into seeability, thus spontaneously

⁸ George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language,” *Concepts in Composition: Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Writing*, 1946, 221–31.

⁹ J.G.A. Pocock, “Reviewed Work(s): Political Theory: Tradition and Interpretation by John G. Gunnell,” *Political Theory* 8, no. 4 (November 1980): 564; 567.

acquiring two poetical, two-syllable, truly meaningful words to replace the two-syllable, misinformative, but poetical words of their ancestry—"Sunset" and "Sunrise."¹⁰

'Sunrise' and 'sunset' are misleading terms, because they are rooted a geo-centric conception of the universe. The idea of the sun 'rising' or 'setting' is in opposition to the understanding that we are standing on a planet that is rotating on its axis and orbiting a star while travelling through space.

If this seems too banal an example, consider the historical prominence of 'Indian' to describe Indigenous peoples: in Canada, the term is explicitly tied to a legal identity constructed by the *Indian Act*, but is inaccurate with regards to both geography and self-identification.¹¹ It serves to flatten significant differences between Indigenous peoples, as if to suggest that we can consolidate Haida, Inuit, and Ojibwe into a singular, homogenous identity. This classification issue goes back to Plato's *Statesman*:

The error was just as if some one who wanted to divide the human race, were to divide them after the fashion which prevails in this part of the world; here they cut off the Hellenes as one species, and all the other species of mankind, which are innumerable, and have no ties or common language, they include under the single name of 'barbarians,' and because they have one name they are supposed to be of one species also. Or suppose that in dividing numbers you were to cut off ten thousand from all the rest, and make of it one species, comprehending the rest under another separate name, you might say that here too was a single class, because you had given it a single name.¹²

It was a similar reduction of difference that was instrumental to the logic and operation of the Department of Indian Affairs that sought to 'kill the Indian in the child' through the residential school system. In this way, Canadian/Indian distinction was little more than a

¹⁰ Buckminster Fuller, *Critical Path* (New York: St Martins Press, 1981), 173.

¹¹ Similar identity shorthands are used to describe 'Asians', which reduces 4.5 billion people to a single identity — although the designation is commonly (if absurdly) understood to exclude those from countries in Central, Southern, and Western Asia.

¹² 262c-e *Statesman*

return to or continuation of the civilized/savage dichotomy — or that of the Hellenes/barbarians which Plato's Stranger is drawing attention to.

While it might seem unusual to connect the death of political philosophy to the injustices of the residential school system, there is reason enough to do so. In 2008, as a result of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to, among other things, produce "a report including recommendations to the Government of Canada concerning the [Indian residential schools] system and experience ... and the ongoing legacy of the residential schools".¹³ As a part of that report, the TRC issued a series of calls to action, some of which connect reconciliation to education: "to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into [post-secondary] classrooms"; and to "establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation".¹⁴ The Canadian Political Science Association struck a reconciliation committee to "develop a plan for responding to the challenges and opportunities the reconciliation process will entail".¹⁵ While the committee has released preliminary resources for "Introduction to Politics and Introduction to Canadian Politics courses [because t]hese courses are the gateways to political science for most of our students",

¹³ Schedule N of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, art. I(f)

¹⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Canada, "Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada" (Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 7.

¹⁵ Yasmeen Abu-Laban, "The CPSA and Reconciliation" (Canadian Political Science Association, 2016), <https://cpsa-acsp.ca/news11.php>.

there is, at least thus far, a distinct lack of attention to political philosophy.¹⁶ What might it look like to ‘reconcile’ political philosophy courses to meet these new challenges?

Despite being tied to contemporary political events, there is a sense in which this question is not a new one. Linda Zerelli suggests that “[f]eminism’s relationship to the tradition [of political theory] has been and in all likelihood will remain, if not agonistic, deeply critical”, but she still argues that there are reasons enough for feminist engagement with that tradition.¹⁷ That engagement, however, must begin from the question of “whether the existing tradition of political philosophy can sustain the inclusion of women in its subject matter”.¹⁸ Similarly, following Charles W. Mills, “boundary policing” in the mainstream discipline has resulted in an exclusion¹⁹ of non-Western and non-white thinkers from consideration.²⁰ How would we go about ‘decolonizing’ the canon?²¹

¹⁶ Canadian Political Science Association Reconciliation Committee, “Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials: A Resource for Political Science Instructors in Canada” (Canadian Political Science Association, September 24, 2018), 4.

<https://www.cpsa->

[acsp.ca/documents/committees/Indigenous%20Content%20Syllabus%20Materials%20Sept%204%202018\[27\].pdf](https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/documents/committees/Indigenous%20Content%20Syllabus%20Materials%20Sept%204%202018[27].pdf).

¹⁷ Linda Zerelli, “Feminist Theory and the Canon of Political Thought,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, ed. John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig, and Anne Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 106.

¹⁸ Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (1979; repr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 4.

¹⁹ Exclusion might be too strong a word as it implies a deliberate and meaningful choice, but one might argue that this outcome is the result of a system in which we are largely bound by what we already know. At what point, however, do unknown unknowns become wilful blindness?

²⁰ Charles W. Mills, “Decolonizing Western Political Philosophy,” *New Political Science* 37, no. 1 (2015): 7.

²¹ Although this may be the latest articulation of the question, it is not particularly new: critical race and gender scholars have addressed it for decades; there is an increasing consideration for ‘queering’ the canon; and the recent Rhodes Must Fall movement is a continuation of that question, explicitly tying these concerns to education.

In the words of the great 20th century philosopher Sam Cooke, “it’s been a long, a long time comin’ / but I know / a change gon’ come”.²² In some ways, the death of political philosophy debates were a response to these changes and the new circumstances that the discipline found itself after a half-century of war, and how to meet them — albeit that was not necessarily an explicit consideration.

This study is primarily a contribution to disciplinary history of political philosophy as a sub-field of anglophone political science. It is an investigation into the death of political philosophy as both a series of debates and as a theoretical concept in its own right. Beyond the obvious justification that our discipline is so often rooted in a history of ideas and that it should seemingly be of the utmost importance that we accurately understand our own history, investigating the death of political philosophy can provide insight into where we are today such that we can assess whether it is where we want to be. I argue that these debates are particularly significant because they shaped academic political philosophy through the late 20th century in ways that may have helped provide coherence to the discipline, but in a way that made it much more difficult to recognize political philosophy that did not adhere to the codes and conventions of academia.

Chapter One is a review of ways that the death of political philosophy is used by contemporary academics and shows that, broadly speaking, there is insufficient attention given the nuances of those debates and the contested nature of the concept(s) involved. While there have been some serious considerations of the death of political philosophy as

²² Cooke, Sam, “It’s Been A Long Time Coming,” Track 7 on *Ain’t That Good News*. RCA Victor, 1964.

a phenomenon worthy of study, this chapter highlights the ways that it largely serves as an unexamined disciplinary cliché either to speak to the worthy elevation of Rawls as the next canonical figure or to emphasize other figures and lines of thought that counter Rawls' sole significance for the discipline.

Chapter Two turns to the historical voices lamenting disciplinary decline and shows that those initial debates were far more complex than tend to be captured by contemporary deployments of the 'death of political philosophy' concept. It also shows that the concept was largely used to speak to a problem of texts, rather than necessarily with the practice of political philosophy. While there are a number of thinkers with whom I engage in this chapter, it is structured around Peter Laslett, Leo Strauss, and Alfred Cobban. Although Peter Laslett was not the first to voice these concerns, he did become their standard-bearer; Leo Strauss' articulation was a notable exception to the textual focus with his concern about the very possibility of political philosophy amidst the backdrop of Western politics following the turn towards modernity (although untangling the range of related claims that he was making proves to be a difficult task); and Alfred Cobban explicitly connected his thesis to ongoing political concerns in the era. These three thinkers serve as a frame around which I articulate the various deaths of political philosophy that were involved in the debates.

These first two chapters highlight how important the death of political philosophy debates proved to be for the discipline — and how they continue to influence contemporary academic practices. Yet these chapters also show the poverty of our understanding of that moment in the history of the discipline. In fact, even the suggestion

that this was a singular moment is mistaken. The mistake is partially the result of the way the primary interlocutors interacted with each other (or, as the case often was, the way they failed to interact with each other) But, as Chapter Three shows, it results also from the fact that the discipline of political philosophy was contested and fragmented in post-war scholarship. Amidst arguments for and against the death of political philosophy, a debate was also occurring about its nature and limits. If only implicitly, the scholars involved emphasized a particular style and form of the discipline such that the stage was set for the arrival and celebration of a text like John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*.

Chapter Three explores the reception of *A Theory of Justice* in the years following its publication, from both the wider discipline and key voices of the death thesis identified in Chapter Two. It begins with the immediate responses that appeared to largely frame the public and academic conversation that followed, not engaging with the argument itself but with its impact on political philosophy. While the influence of John Rawls on the discipline is undeniable, there is an important distinction to be made between a great work, even one that inspires significant reactions, and one that revives political philosophy. This is not meant to be an account of the merits of *A Theory of Justice*, but instead an investigation of its reception. The chapter then returns to the key thinkers identified in Chapter Two so as to (re)assess their contributions to the death thesis in relation to Rawls. Together, the first three chapters provide a clear explanation of the death of political philosophy as both an historical and a philosophical concept. These chapters also show how smoothly scholars transitioned from the historical phenomena, as represented by a dearth of academic disciplinary literature, to the loss of the very

possibility of political philosophy — a causal linkage which will be contested in the final chapters. Beyond that, the project thus far also contains an implicit critique of the version of political philosophy that emerged out of its supposed death and revival.

That critique is made explicit in Chapter Four, in which we return to Leo Strauss to consider a seemingly unrelated (and casual) statement about the “proper form of presenting political philosophy”.²³ This statement proves important for understanding not only the death debates, but also why John Rawls ends up in the role of disciplinary savior. While Strauss is a key voice in the death debates — and, as Chapter Three shows, likely not one to be satisfied by *A Theory of Justice* — this chapter is meant to highlight a difficulty that has long been a part of the discipline at large, but is particularly glaring around claims disciplinary death and revival: what counts as political philosophy is itself a contested matter and the lack of engagement on that topic has made it hard to understand what is going on in the discipline itself and, as we will see in Chapter Five, the way that it remains indebted to modes of liberal education. By looking to Strauss’ notions around esoteric writing, we can better understand the substantial gap between the practice of political philosophy and how it exists within academia. This, in turn, suggests a way to bridge that divide by attending more directly to considerations of form, genre, and style — suggestions that are then fleshed out and developed in the final chapter.

Chapter Five draws together a variety of threads around the death and revival of political philosophy to ask what academic political philosophy is and whether it is sufficient for the practice of political philosophy. Specifically, the chapter takes the idea

²³ Leo Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy?,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Hilail Gildin (1959; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 6.

that Rawls may revive one conception of political philosophy, but highlights that this conception is incompatible with liberal education and yet political philosophy training has not be reconsidered in the wake of this incompatibility. Although it may be the case that political philosophy is thriving within journal articles and university presses, this chapter suggests that these are not necessarily rooted in providing an opportunity to practice and pursue political philosophy with an already existing audience: our students. This is not meant to suggest that instructors do not take their pedagogical responsibilities seriously, but rather than the classroom experience and our students receive significantly less attention and scrutiny than publications. Accordingly, this chapter largely takes issue with the treatise, Great Books, and liberal education broadly, not as without value, but rather as ideals that are unconcerned with the realm of the possible. While this chapter is a call to action for new research into the political philosophy classroom, it also takes a preliminary step — albeit in a somewhat sideways manner, through the appendix, “Political Philosophy in Political Science” — towards that research in the Canadian context.

It should be noted that I have not attempted to provide anything resembling a *complete* account of the death or revival of political philosophy, because I see the value of this project as primarily of disciplinary mapmaking — and I take seriously Alfred Korzybski’s suggestion that “[a] map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness”.²⁴ Accordingly, I

²⁴ Alfred Korzybski, *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics* (The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Company, 1933), 58.

have tried to survey the territory in which we now find ourselves with sufficient attention to detail such that we can all recognize the landmarks.

I have most certainly missed voices from these debates.

One example being that there are significant gaps in this project that result from my own intellectual inadequacies: that I am anglophone scholar²⁵ and, although I am not totally unaware of non-anglophone scholarship, it is perhaps unsurprising that I have naturally focused on thinkers whose work is commonly found in English. As we will see in Chapter Two, most who write about the death of political philosophy do so from an anglophone position.²⁶

I have also avoided directly engaging with the methodological debates of the same era which are not altogether unrelated from the topic at hand. Although Quentin Skinner's intersections with the death of political philosophy are considered as something of an aside in Chapter Three, the rise and influence of the Cambridge School is largely left unattended. There is a considerable literature that already deals with that and, as can be seen in Chapter Four and Five, the fixation on how we read texts is part of what I identify as the problem. Further, although liberal education comes up at a few points

²⁵ While it is once the case that doctoral studies required a language component — and some programs still do — I was able to put that time into pursuits that would help me on the job market rather than broaden the scope of my dissertation. There is a degree to which this is simply another version of the issue to which I am aimed throughout this project: there are significant (dis)incentives that reshape the discipline in ways that are perhaps at odds with idealized versions of what political philosophers should be doing.

²⁶ This is not exclusively the case: Isaiah Berlin's contribution to those debates was originally written and published a year prior as "La théorie politique existe-t-elle?". The way that the death of political philosophy played out in France is worthy of broader consideration. Consider that Claude Lefort opens *Democracy and Political Theory* with clear intentions: "My purpose here is to encourage and to contribute to a revival of political philosophy. I am not alone in working to that end. Our numbers are, no doubt, small, but they have been increasing for some time, although it must be admitted that there is as yet little enthusiasm for the task" (1988, 9).

through this project, I have tried not to delve too deeply into that topic — although it shows up with Strauss in the later chapters as somewhat of an inevitability given his overall project. That said, I am trying to disentangle political philosophy from debates about the decline of liberal education largely because there is a degree to which I question whether the two are at odds with each other — at least in a contemporary teaching context. This is further addressed in Chapter Five.

But, even if I can reasonably justify these exclusions, the question remains: what is the usefulness of this map that I have constructed? If the goal of this project were simply to scold those who uncritically rely on ‘the death of political philosophy’ as a disciplinary shorthand, it might reasonably be said that I am overreacting to the significance of an evocative phrase that is ultimately harmless. After all, what harm could possibly be done in the evocation? Likewise, while it may be an overstatement to suggest that Rawls revived political philosophy, *A Theory of Justice* undeniably set off a flurry of intellectual responses in a way that was unmatched in the decades that preceded it. He may not have brought political philosophy to life, but it sure seemed livelier after 1971. Again, what harm is there to a bit of embellishing — or, if you prefer, poetic license?

Unpacking the ‘history of political thought’ as a disciplinary shorthand has helped trouble the canon as an inherently ‘great tradition’ rather than a (re)construction of what it meant to engage in political philosophy.²⁷ There is a degree to which I put this project in

²⁷ See: John Dunn, “The Identity of the History of Ideas,” *Philosophy* 43, no. 164 (April 1968): 85–104; Terrence Ball, “Discordant Voices: American Histories of Political Thought,” in *The History of Political Thought in National Contexts*, ed. Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk, Ideas in Context 61 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Iain Hampsher-Monk, “The History of Political Thought and the Political History of Thought,” in *The History of Political Thought in National Contexts*, ed. Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk, Ideas in

a similar category. The myth of the death of political philosophy is deeply embedded in particular conceptions of what counts as political philosophy and, it seems, who is permitted to engage in it. This project is ultimately meant to suggest that the harm of this myth is that it places boundaries upon the discipline that are assumed to be understood rather than made explicit. As Wendy Brown reminds us:

What is political theory ... today? To pursue the question without the temporal qualifier would be to eschew not only the contingency of identity production but its relentlessly historical quality. To pursue the question without the temporal qualifier is already to take a stance within the battle for political theory's future, one that aims for hegemony and refuses to avow its own dependencies and unconscious strategies ... And if we stipulate our question, 'What is political theory today in the American academy?' we still need to ask about the work of that tiny verb, 'is.' Are we searching for the soul of an existing practice or a possible one? Are we asking what we do now, how we signify to others (which others?), or what we might become? And if we are not forthrightly blending normative desire into our description—if we really endeavor to describe our activity rather than our own particular investments in it—what sleights of hand are we engaged in then?²⁸

One of the core contentions of this project is that political philosophy training *today* is in need of the same kind of precision, but that there are significant barriers to that level of understanding — and that unpacking the death of political philosophy, both as a series of debates and a disciplinary shorthand, can help us overcome those barriers.

Context 61 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 159–74; Stefan Collini, “Postscript. Disciplines, Canons, and Publics: The History of ‘The History of Political Thought’ in Comparative Perspective,” in *The History of Political Thought in National Contexts*, ed. Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk, Ideas in Context 61 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 280–302; John G. Gunnell, “History of Political Philosophy as a Discipline,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, ed. George Klosko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 60–74; Gary K. Browning, *A History of Modern Political Thought: The Question of Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

²⁸ Wendy Brown, “At the Edge,” *Political Theory* 30, no. 4 (August 2002): 558.

CHAPTER ONE: Mythmaking

For despite appearances, it is not the conflict between the two sets of stories that is the problem. The problem is our forgetting the contradiction between fact and fiction, the true and the not true, upon which any story—including our story—depends for its power; and ignoring the credit upon which any currency—like the currency of ownership, or of government—ultimately depends.

- J. Edward Chamberlin, *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?*¹

In framing his scathing critique of *A Theory of Justice* and the broader Rawlsian moment, Saad Malook suggests that “it can be safely concluded that in [the] 1960s political philosophy had completely flat lined”.² Malook marshals both Brian Barry and Isaiah Berlin to support this claim, although it should be noted that, despite appearances and as we will see in more detail with the following chapter, Berlin’s point actually proves to be the opposite. This common misunderstanding of “Does Political Theory Still Exist?” has arisen largely by taking a particularly provocative quotation out of context: “[P]olitical philosophy, whatever it may have been in the past, is today dead or dying. The principal symptom which seems to support this belief is that no commanding work of political philosophy has appeared in the twentieth century”.³ The *seeming* aspect proves to be an important qualifier for Berlin, as he ultimately does not find the absence of ‘commanding works’ to be sufficient evidence that the whole enterprise was dead or even in jeopardy: “To suppose, then, that there have been or could be ages without political philosophy is like supposing that, as there are ages of faith, so there are or could be ages of total disbe-

¹ J. Edward Chamberlin, *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2004): 233.

² Saad Malook, “The Post-Rawlsian Political Philosophy: A Critique of the Realist Standpoint,” *Al-Hikmat* 37 (2017): 47.

³ Berlin, “Does Political Theory Still Exist,” 59.

lief. But this is an absurd notion”.⁴ This absurdity is often missing⁵ from those who deploy the provocative opening remarks from Berlin’s essay.⁶ This rarely proves to undermine the broader arguments at play, including with Malook, as it is often used as a casual aside rather than a key component. For example, Malook is concerned primarily with Rawls and the death of political philosophy is merely a brief rhetorical point on the way towards his criticisms.

⁴ Berlin, 70.

⁵ See: Robert Amdur, “Review: Rawls’ Theory of Justice: Domestic and International Perspectives,” *World Politics* 29, no. 3 (April 1977): 438–61; John P. Langan, “Rawls, Nozick, and the Search for Social Justice,” *Theological Studies* 38, no. 2 (1977): 346–58; Douglas Rae, “Political Theory and the Division of Labor in Society: Asleep Aboard the Titanic and Steaming into Halifax,” *Political Theory* 9, no. 3 (1981): 369–78; G.H. Pirie, “Political Philosophy and Political Geography,” in *Political Geography: Recent Advances and Future Directions*, ed. Peter James Taylor and John William House (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1984), 227–; Glen Newey, *After Politics: The Rejection of Politics in Contemporary Liberal Philosophy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); J. Donald Moon, “The Current State of Political Theory: Pluralism and Reconciliation,” in *What Is Political Theory*, ed. Stephen K. White and J. Donald Moon (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 12–29; Keith Huxen, “The Value of Historical Study and the Clash of Civilizations,” *Forum on Public Policy: A Journal of the Oxford Round Table* 2, no. 3 (2007); Matt Matravers, “Twentieth-Century Political Philosophy,” in *The Routledge Companion to Twentieth Century Philosophy*, ed. Dermot Moran (London: Routledge, 2008), 883–912; George Klosko, “Contemporary Anglo-American Political Philosophy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, ed. George Klosko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 456–79; Gerald Allan Cohen, “Isaiah’s Marx, and Mine,” in *Finding Oneself in the Other*, ed. Michael Otsuka (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 1–15; Steven Orr, “The Problem with a Pitiably Rump: On Impropriety and Political Philosophy,” in *Flattering the Demos: Fiction and Democratic Education*, ed. Marlene K. Sokolon and Travis D. Smith (London: Lexington Books, 2018).

⁶ There are, however, a few exceptions: Richard King, “Old Problems/New Departures: American Political Thought since 1960,” *The History Teacher* 24, no. 1 (November 1990): 100; Mario Ricciardi, “Berlin on Liberty,” in *The One and the Many: Reading Isaiah Berlin*, ed. George Crowder and Henry Hardy (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2007), 124; Matthew Barber, “Freedom and Uncertainty: Contemporary Liberal Theory Examined from the Perspective of Moral Uncertainty” (Dissertation, University of Canterbury, 2008), 17; Thomas Schramme, “On the Relationship between Political Philosophy and Empirical Sciences,” *Analyse & Kritik* 30, no. 2 (2008): 615; Joshua R. Berkenpas, “The Ongoing Revolution in American Political Science” (Thesis, Western Michigan University, 2009), 89; William H. Pritchard, “Review: On Politics,” *The Hudson Review* 66, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 235; Bryan Edward Baise, “Reiding Rawls’: A Critical Assessment of Thomas Reid’s Common Sense Philosophy as a Response to John Rawls’s Doctrine of Public Reason” (Dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 29.

Alan Haworth, although admitting that “[s]ome significant work in political philosophy had been produced during the period in question”, suggests that “[w]hat was missing was not so much political philosophy *per se*, but a thesis with an overarching vision — a new ‘paradigm’, if you like”.⁷ Matt Matravers similarly (albeit briefly) points to a number of thoughtful political philosophy interventions in the post-war period, but suggests that:

Although these writers are important and all continue to be influential, their publications in the period do not blunt the general thrust of [the death of political philosophy]. Political philosophy — including some profound and long-lasting political philosophy — was being done here and there, but it was neither mainstream in departments of philosophy or political science nor publicly influential.⁸

A Theory of Justice, although a significant contribution to the discipline in its own right, was the beneficiary of an opportune convergence between the academic and political climate of the era. While “being timely is not quite the same as rescuing [political philosophy] from the dead”, Matravers ultimately focuses almost all of his account of twentieth century on Rawls.⁹ This is because, following Brian Barry, *A Theory of Justice* “raised the stakes in political philosophy to a quite new level ... Rawls has made writing general treatments of political philosophy hard in much the same way as Beethoven made writing symphonies hard: much more is involved than before”.¹⁰ Whether this ‘change’ can honestly be said to have occurred is, by and large, beside the point: the rhetoric became the reality.

⁷ Alan Haworth, “Rawls: Through Reason to Justice,” in *Understanding the Political Philosophers*, Second (2004; repr., London: Routledge, 2012), 253; 254.

⁸ Matravers, “Twentieth-Century Political Philosophy,” 886.

⁹ Matravers, 889.

¹⁰ Brian Barry, *Political Argument: A Reissue with a New Introduction* (1965; repr., Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), lxx.

Contemporary uses of the death of political philosophy like this, in which it is accepted as having happened and Rawls as having revived it, are much rarer than in the first few years after its initial publication. The death of political philosophy has, for almost half a century, seldom been taken up at all except as a disciplinary punching bag, not so as to suggest that we have returned to a period of decline,¹¹ but rather as a way of problematizing the conventional wisdom around contemporary political philosophy or the canon thereof. These attempts tend to acknowledge the significance of the death of political philosophy debates but do so to raise the point that it could have happened otherwise — and, further, suggest that there is merit to rewriting such history: it *should* have happened otherwise. They serve as a late insertion into a set of seemingly resolved disciplinary debates and, by doing so, they seek to elevate a particular strand of thinking or celebrate a particular thinker (or range of thinkers) to justify contemporary studies.

Broadly speaking there are three contemporary approaches to looking backward at the death of political philosophy in this manner: (1) crafting *a* narrative about the events of the twentieth century towards a particular point (scholarly or political), while acknowledging the manyness of political philosophy in the era; (2) cataloguing and championing thinkers who are either individually disciplinary exemplars or (3) who, together, articulate *the* narrative that describes the zeitgeist of the twentieth century. While some thinkers are more widely agreed upon than others, these retrospectives largely lack a serious engagement with the death of political philosophy itself. There is a tendency to treat the death thesis as a singular concern (or, occasionally, a set of concerns, but still largely unified), rather than a complex and contradictory set of debates whose interlocutors often

¹¹ At least, this is not often what is claimed.

disagreed in fundamental ways. The subject is not used as a method to better understand the death of political philosophy as a phenomena, but rather to dispute its timing: Hannah Arendt, for example, often is pointed to contradict the very notion that political philosophy, in the post-war discipline, was unwell — with *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in 1951, *The Human Condition* in 1958, and *On Revolution* in 1963 — and, instead of taking seriously the idea that political philosophy could be considered in decline *despite* the quality of scholarship from someone like Arendt, this approach highlights the absurdity of the post-war era as one of decline.

This review of the post-Rawlsian moment literature that draws upon the death thesis is not meant to be taken as comprehensive, but rather it is an attempt to make comprehensible the rhetorical tendencies that can be seen in contemporary reflections on the death of political philosophy. Accordingly, this literature review emphasizes three texts that look back on the death thesis with the suggestion that each epitomizes one of the aforementioned approaches: (1) Ronald Beiner's *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters* (2014); (2) Catherine Zuckert's *Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: Authors and Arguments* (2011); and (3) Michael Lessnoff's *Political Philosophers of the Twentieth Century* (1999).

There are, however, some thinkers who have attended to the death of political philosophy as a phenomenon that says something about the state of the academic discipline — troubling both those who accept and reject Rawls' position as saviour. This approach tends to respect post-war political philosophy debates as significantly more complex than the short-hand version that has become commonplace in the literature. They do not neatly

fit into either the idea of death or revival narratives. Sheldon Wolin's *Politics and Vision* is particularly helpful here, because he sits at both ends of the decline debate as one of its original interlocutors who returned to those concerns well after the Rawlsian moment.

1.1 The Manyness of 20th Century Political Philosophy

David Easton and John G. Gunnell's introductory remarks to *The Development of Political Science* suggest that "depth and diversity [of the post-war discipline] has also fostered fragmentation, communication overload, multiple approaches, conflicting schools, and, one suspects, considerable overlap and duplication".¹² Although the connection between political science and political philosophy is often murky,¹³ the approach in this edited volume illuminates both: each chapter is a disciplinary history from a different national context, showing that the developments were not evenly distributed because they were necessarily required. This troubles the very idea of a homogenous study of politics, attending to and emphasizing the importance of particularities. Easton and Gunnell express concerns about the lack of dialogue between these national political sciences, but they are not calling for a grand unification. Rather they argue that comparative investigations can lead to the transfer of knowledge between these separate but related disciplines that goes beyond the overly simplistic understanding that "contemporary political science is, historically and conceptually, a peculiarly American social science".¹⁴ It would, of course, be absurd to suggest that political philosophy is a peculiarly American

¹² John G. Gunnell and David Easton, "Introduction," in *The Development of Political Science: A Comparative Survey*, ed. David Easton, John G. Gunnell, and Luigi Graziano (London: Routledge, 1991), 1.

¹³ Broadly speaking, there seem to be three camps: those who see the latter as a subfield of the former; those who see the latter as the foundation of the former; and those who view them as completely distinct (or even contradictory).

¹⁴ Gunnell and Easton, "Introduction," 10.

discipline — and neither Easton nor Gunnell should be understood as making such a claim. However, both of them have given considerable attention in their careers to the discipline of political philosophy *as a discipline* and their remarks should be read within that context. Understanding the manyness of political *science* in the fertile period of disciplinary development is helpful for framing political philosophy in that same period, regardless of how murky the relationship is between them¹⁵, because it proves to be a common approach to looking back on the death of political philosophy.

In a wonderfully clear piece of invective, James Alexander dismisses the death thesis because, “[i]n retrospect, it is fairly clear that the ‘death of political theory’ was a story told to justify the restoration of a part of the canonical political theory which had been lost”.¹⁶ Although Alexander is explicit that he is writing a ‘sceptical polemic’, there is something instructive in what he takes as granted about the history of the discipline and what he feels obligated to support: there is no need to provide shape and scope to the death of political philosophy, as it is simply *understood*. While the idea has perhaps not quite reached this status yet, it does seem to be a relatively settled disciplinary cliché much like the division of ancients and moderns or the canon from ‘Plato to NATO’. The part of the discipline that was in decline is, according to Alexander, just that: a part and, in his view, not even the most interesting one.

¹⁵ It should be noted that there are those who point to the rise of political science as leading to the decline of political philosophy. Easton’s contribution to the death thesis, however, argued the opposite (Easton 1951). This will be seen in the following chapter.

¹⁶ James Alexander, “A Genealogy of Political Theory: A Polemic,” *Contemporary Political Theory*, November 20, 2018, 8.

In his pre-*A Theory of Justice* account¹⁷ of the history of political philosophy, Philip Cummings made a similar point: “The apparent death of one tradition of political philosophizing has perhaps been confused with the death of political philosophy”.¹⁸ He goes on to offer Karl Popper and T.D. Weldon as the epitome of two of those still living traditions, while suggesting that “the variety of work being done precludes any overall description”.¹⁹

Andrew Vincent’s *The Nature of Political Theory* is an attempt to “give some shape to political theory in the twentieth century” and, accordingly, briefly addresses the death thesis, calling its very possibility “deeply perplexing [because] [t]o characterize the 1920 to 1950s period as bereft of political philosophy (qua Laslett) is far-fetched and odd” and “to consider that the longer period from 1870 to the 1970s as bereft of theory is utterly cranky”.²⁰ As might be expected from a thinker who suggests that “a closer examination of twentieth-century theory reveals how varied its approaches and readings of politics actually are”, Vincent takes issue with the narrow definitions that inhabited the death of political philosophy.²¹ In this way, he epitomizes those who champion the manyness of twentieth century political philosophy:

What is also disturbing in the above reflections on the 'death of political theory', is, first, the level of ignorance and myopia in the various commentaries; and yet

¹⁷ Somewhat ironically (“Despite the recent claim that political philosophy is dead...”), Cummings’ piece is co-authored with Peter Laslett, although it appears that their two sections were written independently, with Cummings responsible for Kant onward. Peter Laslett and Philip W. Cummings, “History of Political Philosophy,” in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

¹⁸ Laslett and Cummings.

¹⁹ Laslett and Cummings.

²⁰ Andrew Vincent, *The Nature of Political Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3; 93; 94.

²¹ Vincent, 1.

the same vague bogus claims go on being repeated up to the end of the century. The most accessible reason for this kind of total weirdness is that there are those who still believe that their own immensely parochial and historically contingent understanding of philosophy is the only possible and correct understanding of the subject. This contains again all the hubris of Weldon, without some of the cultural excuses that make us smile at his eccentricity.²²

He offers an abridged survey of the death debates, largely to point out its strangeness and contradictions, but does little to interrogate the phenomenon itself. There is something interesting to the notion that such debates have a parochial quality to them, but, after presenting a laundry list of thinkers as contrary evidence, he simply moves on with his history of twentieth century political philosophy.²³

K.L. Jhulka advocates for a synthesis of behavioural and critical theory, beginning from the claim that it was "empirical political scientists [who] were relentless in their attack on political philosophy", which would appear to be a nuanced articulation of the death thesis, but he collapses lamentations and celebrations of the death of political philosophy into a single group to support this point.²⁴ Vincent Geoghegan frames his call for explicitly utopian theorizing around the "resurgence of political theorizing that appeared after *A Theory of Justice* [which] was very much in the mould of *liberal political philosophy*".²⁵ This nuance is an integral aspect of the point that he is making and so Geoghe-

²² Vincent, 94–95.

²³ This approach is fairly common in the literature. See also: Dante Germino, "Some Observations on Recent Political Philosophy and Theory," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 400 (March 1972): 140–48; John S. Nelson, "Natures and Futures of Political Theory," in *What Should Political Theory Be Now?*, ed. John S. Nelson (SUNY Press, 1984), 10; L.S. Rathore, "In Defence of Political Theory," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 36, no. 4 (December 1975): 340–41; Haworth, "Rawls: Through Reason to Justice," 243.

²⁴ K.L. Jhulka, "Empirical Political Theory an Appraisal," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 3 (September 1981): 36.

²⁵ Vincent Geoghegan, "Political Theory, Utopia, Post-Secularism," ed. Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academy Publishers, 2007), 72.

gan is well served when he expresses skepticism of “a simplistic ‘death of political theory’ thesis”.²⁶ While he only unpacks the point in as far as it serves his argument, Geoghegan’s approach distinguishes himself from most other uses of these debates which have little more than rhetorical force.

Some, like Terrence Ball, recognize that the death thesis is actually a series of only seemingly related arguments: “political theory was in some quarters dead or dying; and yet it could not die. We can resolve the paradox if we begin by drawing (and later withdrawing) a provisional distinction between first- and second-order theorizing”.²⁷ While he finds “trouble sign[s]” in the contemporary discipline and its turn towards professionalization,²⁸ he accepts as coherent the revival that occurred in the 1970s — albeit while contesting the narrative of Rawls as *solely* responsible.²⁹ *A Theory of Justice* coincided with a number of developments that all led to a flourishing discipline, even as, only twenty years later, Ball suggests that it is yet again in decline. He connects this to education, but not our role as educators:

Too much of modern education is concerned with learning about—that is, with acquiring 'information'. But education generally—and the study of political theory in particular—is not merely a matter of acquiring information, of 'learning about' some subject or other; it is, more importantly, a kind of *learning from*—of wrestling with, and critically appropriating, alternative perspectives that complicate and enrich one's view of the world and one's place in it by questioning conventional assumptions and conceptual schemes.³⁰

²⁶ Geoghegan, 72.

²⁷ Terrence Ball, *Reappraising Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 43.

²⁸ “The isolation of political theory from politics doubtless has a good deal to do with the dynamics of professionalization in the American academy. Political theory shows every sign of ceasing to be a vocation and of fast becoming a ‘profession’, with all that this entails about the division of labour, the specialization of functions, and the like” (Ball, 54).

²⁹ Ball, 53.

³⁰ Ball, 61.

From here, Ball goes on to not propose new thinkers to the canon, but rather new readings of its existing thinkers to reassess pressing issues of our present situation.

Donald Atwell Zoll, although he is writing in 1974 (and excludes Rawls altogether from his work) is particularly helpful for framing political philosophy in the twentieth century:

One need not use rash superlatives in order to describe the twentieth century. There is a distinct quality of lunacy about it ... the philosophical observer of the twentieth century finds himself in the same predicament as Nietzsche's 'rope-dancer,' striving, personally, to skip across the taut cable, while staring down into the abyss, cherishing the notion that what roils below is understandable can be reduced to the pristine clarities of rational propositions.³¹

He suggests that "the literature produced as a result of the First World War was far more poignant, fulsome, and volatile than anything nurtured by the Second World War", but also goes on to altogether dismiss the death of political philosophy after World War II.³²

What some called a decline

may be in fact attributed to the failure of the culture to make adequate use of its 'wise men' ... [in] an age of rapacious vanity, often cynically manipulated by opportunistic politicians, and such celebrations of popular prescience are rarely conducive to the recognition of philosophical significance and merit.³³

The title of Zoll's book is indicative of where he stands on the matter: *Twentieth Century Political Philosophy* is an exploration of those political philosophers who tried to make sense of the 'lunacy' of the era (which he attributes as having begun with World War I)³⁴

³¹ Donald Atwell Zoll, *Twentieth Century Political Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), xiii.

³² Zoll, 6.

³³ Zoll, 9.

³⁴ The notion of the 'short' twentieth century is a frustrating debt we owe to Eric Hobsbawm whose earlier work on invented traditions did nothing to stop him from inventing his own with his series *The Making of the Modern World*: having coined the long nineteenth century as a period stretching from 1789 to 1914, it was only natural that the twentieth century that followed would

— and that making sense is the thread that binds his collection together. He strives not for depth on any one thinker, but rather tries to capture the century’s full breadth: the “rush[] to keep up and to provide a theoretical basis of political activity”.³⁵ While Zoll ultimately also shows the manyness of political philosophy in the twentieth century, connecting Freud and Bergson to Sorel and Arendt to Lenin and Mao to Weber and Mannheim to Dewey, Schumpeter, Dahl and others, it is all part of a unified sentiment to counter the notion that political activities alone are sufficient — they must be grounded with philosophy. Accordingly, political philosophy in the twentieth century admits that the discipline has failed to provide foundations for contemporary political life³⁶ — and that it was marked by a frantic effort to build those foundations underneath the feet of Western civilization before it careened off into Nietzsche’s abyss.

The absence of John Rawls in Zoll’s assessment is interesting, because it is precisely in this period that *A Theory of Justice* was having a profound and widespread effect on the discipline: for many, Rawls not only renews political philosophy with his own work, but *A Theory of Justice* ushers in an era that altogether revitalizes of the practice of political philosophy. It is not simply that Rawls is an admirable addition to the canon or a continuation of the long tradition of political philosophy, but that his work becomes a foundation for an entirely novel set of answers to the questions of political philosophy

be abbreviated. From the lofty vantage of 1994, he declared that the period from 1914 to 1991 was a “*century*” best understood as the ‘age of extremes’. While I am certainly amenable to poetic license, pithiness replacing accuracy or nuance is precisely the problem that marks the death of political philosophy.

³⁵ Zoll, 176.

³⁶ A common enough point made by advocates of the death thesis, even those who similarly argue in favor of attention to particular selections from the supposed era of decline. See: Henry S. Kariel, ed., *Sources in Twentieth-Century Political Thought* (New York: The Free Press, 1964).

that were considered to be missing from precisely the thinkers that Zoll champions. Whatever meagre existence twentieth century political philosophy had, it was not until Rawls that it truly became alive again.³⁷

1.2 Ronald Beiner

It is against this sentiment that Ronald Beiner writes *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*: he is wholly in opposition to the notion that all other thinkers prior to Rawls (and starting after Mill) “had all reached a dead end, had exhausted their possibilities” and that it is Rawls who “can be located as the turning point between the barren³⁸ and the fruitful years [of political philosophy]”.³⁹ It is not that Beiner rejects Rawls’ inclusion as one of the great thinkers, nor the significance of *A Theory of Justice* for the discipline (although he offers *Political Liberalism* as the work of Rawls’ “that has far-reaching consequences for what political philosophy as a field of intellectual endeavour is supposed to be”) but rather that he asserts that a golden age of political philosophy had already begun when *A Theory of Justice* was published.⁴⁰ “[T]he world upturned and made to suffer vehement convulsions” that is the direct result of half a century of war leads to precisely some of the most ambitious and thoughtful engagements in political philosophy of the twentieth century.⁴¹

Beiner’s disagreement with Brian Barry, and the cadre of scholars who elevate Rawls to the savior of political philosophy, centers on the notion that doing so ignores or

³⁷ See Chapter Three for a survey of this tendency in the literature at the time.

³⁸ Beiner uses Barry as his initial foil, but also readily admits that Young is to be understood as of the same mindset. Indeed it is her language about “the barren field of political theory” in which Rawls becomes “the turning-point” from which Barry’s point is drawn (Young 1996, 481).

³⁹ Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*, 537.

⁴⁰ Beiner, 198.

⁴¹ Beiner, 234.

outright rejects the numerous thinkers whose work sets the stage for *A Theory of Justice*, to say nothing of those who are otherwise exemplary practitioners of “political philosophy in an epic mode”.⁴² The twelve thinkers that Beiner offers for his perceived golden age — or the nine that David Morrice claims “show[] that political philosophy was alive, if not fully well and acknowledged, in the 1950s” — are meant to speak to a form of disciplinary corrective.⁴³ It is not an argument *against* Rawls, but rather *for* others, that the canon of twentieth century political philosophy should not be understood to begin *ex nihilo* in 1971.

Unlike Vincent, even as Beiner rejects the notion that there is an absence of political philosophy in the post-war environment, he is not altogether opposed to the possibility of political philosophy becoming absent as he finds it coherent to ask, “Is [Richard] Rorty’s pragmatization of philosophy the swan song of the philosophical tradition?”⁴⁴ Even if it is Beiner’s assessment that political philosophy cannot completely die, he does see it to be in “an interlude, and — one hopes — a short one”.⁴⁵ In this we see another argument about the mortality of political philosophy which, it seems, is a result of his insistence on there being any sort of golden age for political philosophy: there will necessarily also be periods of inferiority and decline (or, if one prefers, simply *not*-golden ages). Deaths and interludes, if there is a difference between the two, are not merely statements about the quality of political philosophy, they offer an understanding of the world in which political philosophy does not occur. That is to say, there are political philoso-

⁴² Beiner, 235.

⁴³ Morrice, *Philosophy, Science and Ideology in Political Thought*, 21–22.

⁴⁴ Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*, 224.

⁴⁵ Beiner, 228.

phers who argue that there can be some conception of the human world in which political actions are entirely unaccompanied by discussions or debates about the underlying or philosophical nature of those actions. Either that or there are no longer political actions at all, or what Arendt called, “the rise of mass society” marked by the encroachment of the political into the social — but even she did not think it would be possible for there to be a subsumption of the former into the latter, not as long human beings, plural and together, still existed in the world.⁴⁶

If the foundations upon which political philosophy rest are contested such that political philosophy is in question, the questioning itself remains intimately tied to conceptions of the good. If the very idea of truth and the pursuit thereof has become so hollow that “we are always floating in mid-air to some extent”, the attempt to ground oneself remains inextricably linked to conceptions of the good — as does the active willingness to live without foundations altogether.⁴⁷ The choice to accept anti-foundationalism as a mode of living together in the world, as a mode of being human, is not and cannot be politically neutral. This is precisely the critique Beiner levels at “the non-philosophical (or even anti-philosophical) reconception of political philosophy by Rawls and the anti-foundationalist pragmatism of Rorty as well as the endeavor on the part of postmodernists to debunk reason and truth”: silence would be a more fitting mode of achieving those aims, but the political remains even in absence.⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that Beiner’s epilogue is titled “On Not Throwing in the Towel” in which, though he admits there to be a period

⁴⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (1958; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 41.

⁴⁷ Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*, 225.

⁴⁸ Beiner, 228.

of decline, he is ultimately optimistic about the future of political philosophy.⁴⁹ Silence and resignation, it seems, are not called for, but, beyond our studying the grand theories which came before so that we are prepared to wait for its re-emergence, it is not altogether clear how political philosophy will return.

Beiner's golden age — and the following interlude — rests on his distinction between two forms of political philosophy: those theories that “present [them]self as more rationally compelling than all alternative views” (what he calls the ‘epic’ mode) and those that do not.⁵⁰ The latter are works that fail to even aspire towards truth, instead written by authors content in their roles as historians, entertainers or, worse still, followers. As Beiner suggests:

Philosophy (or at least political philosophy) thrives when it is a contest of grand visions articulated by grand thinkers. Things are in a something less than thriving state when, as is largely true in our current theoretical situation, arguments get traded back and forth between third- or fourth- or fifth- generation Arendtians and Straussians and Habermasians and Foucaultians and Rawlsians, reflecting larger philosophical visions that originated in the 1950s or 1960s or 1970s. We are still largely drawing upon the intellectual capital of earlier decades.⁵¹

This is, of course, is to say nothing of the XXth-generation Aristotelians, Machiavellians, and Marxists.

⁴⁹ This optimism appears to have been tempered somewhat by recent events as his latest book, *Dangerous Minds*, suggests: “If it is indeed true that human nature is permanently warped—a proposition for which there is vastly more historical evidence than we would care to acknowledge—then it follows that translations from theory to practice are more likely to be realizations of bad (or even evil) theory than of good theory”. Ronald Beiner, *Dangerous Minds: Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Return of the Far Right* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), p, 133. However he is still ultimately hopeful of the role that political philosophy can play in treacherous times — and would seem to remain committed to the possible emergence of yet another golden era that can match the dangers of today.

⁵⁰ Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*, xxvii.

⁵¹ Beiner, 232.

What then is the solution? Or does there even need to be one? “The desire to see philosophy continue ... is something that preoccupies us all”, but that is not necessarily the case for the academic discipline itself (beyond self-interest).⁵² Beiner seems content with wakefulness until truly great works — and great thinkers — emerge out of necessity, although his style of waiting involves a rigorous and sustained engagement with past thinkers in the hope that doing so will offer a ground from which to understand, recognize, and enter into dialogue with those who break the disciplinary silence.

Interludes are then periods of groundwork, making easier or more likely the possibility of great (or epic) political philosophy, but, given that one of the markers of these works is their very novelty, it is unclear as to whether there is any particular need to do anything at all. More likely is that these thinkers do not occur in a vacuum: they and their works will be responses to the tradition and canon, even as they break away from it. There is no understanding Rawls without Kant, nor Arendt without Aristotle, nor Aristotle without Plato, and so forth. Even if (and when) they are offering critiques, correctives, and complete overhauls of those who came before, those pasts cannot be a foreign country for the discipline of political philosophy, because it removes us from the context of the text and obscures the dialogue that the thinker had entered into.

Thus, Beiner’s *Political Philosophy* is meant to establish a trajectory between the thinkers of his identified golden age of political philosophy that moves from Hannah Arendt to Richard Rorty. It is a canon of the (mid to late)⁵³ twentieth century, so as to pre-

⁵² Michèle La Dœuff, *Hipparchia’s Choice: An Essay Concerning Women, Philosophy, Etc.*, trans. Trista Selous (1989; repr., New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 1.

⁵³ Or following Hobsbawm, perhaps we should understand this as the ‘very short’ twentieth century.

pare us for that which comes next, in much the same way that understanding the canon of Western political philosophy was a groundwork for the start of Beiner's golden age. So too with those who mark *A Theory of Justice* as the starting point, with Nozick, Walzer, Sandel, and Okin being some of the interlocutors of that great dialogue. The discipline of political philosophy should be the study and knowledge of them in the same way that Nozick studied Locke and Kant, or Sandel knew Aristotle and Mill: in preparation for a contribution to either our own grand contributions into the tradition or to be part of another's discourse with the same.

Except that this is not at all the case. As John G. Gunnell has suggested, the history of Western political philosophy is best understood as a deliberately constructed thing: the progressive canon of thinkers building logically and casually from those that came before — as well as the alleged break that Rawls resolves — is what he calls “the myth of the tradition”.⁵⁴ This is not to reject the canon on the grounds that it is uninteresting or worthless, but rather that it is largely an assumption in which

[l]ittle or no attempt is made to offer evidence that the diverse works from Plato to Marx actually constitute an inherited pattern of thought with casual implications for contemporary politics and political ideas, and the very concept of tradition is seldom explicated in any precise and full manner. Any account of the historical relationships between the ideas of the figures who constitute the putative tradition or an explanation of their impact on politics is seldom offered.⁵⁵

The mere convenience of the chronological history of Western political philosophy does not delegitimize such an approach, but Gunnell highlights that it often serves a rhetorical purpose rather than an explanatory one: “[t]o speak of political philosophy as a tradition

⁵⁴ John G. Gunnell, *Political Theory: Tradition and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 66.

⁵⁵ Gunnell, 68.

begun by Socrates, transformed by Machiavelli, and atrophying in the modern age ... amounts to more evocation than demonstration".⁵⁶ All works of political philosophy are not simply in conversation with the tradition and its canon, but simultaneously against the backdrop of eternity and within the moments of history in which they are written.

Conal Condren likewise connects the death of political philosophy to a discussion about the mythology of the political philosophy canon:

[I]t might have been consoling to think that there was a 'classic'—some political Vico—only awaiting the recognition that time and a better perspective would bring. We all live on hope, but it is a somewhat hypothetical defense of the continuing vitality of political theory to be just waiting for Godot ... the air of apologetics is marked and the poverty of the present accepted as a contrast with the past. Yet depressing contrasts between past and present can be misleadingly simplistic.⁵⁷

Condren suggests that these debates were, somewhat ironically given the alleged fixation on the history of political thought, the result of poor disciplinary history that was "virtually unchallenged by political theorists".⁵⁸ The entrenchment of the unified canon from Plato to Mill and Marx resulted in "an illusion of vitality" that allowed for the relative dearth of the twentieth century to seem like a crisis: without an obvious successor to that tradition, it became coherent to speak of a decline.⁵⁹

Yet emphasizing this point is not meant to contest the golden ages as presented by Beiner (or any other similar such project), nor is it in opposition to the canon of political philosophy: Beiner offers a compelling narrative as to the contemporary state of the discipline, and it must be admitted that the Western canon has gotten us this far. The point is

⁵⁶ Gunnell, 73.

⁵⁷ Conal Condren, "The Death of Political Theory: The Importance of Historiographical Myth," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 9, no. 2 (1974): 147.

⁵⁸ Condren, 148.

⁵⁹ Condren, 148.

to offer a reminder that the death of political philosophy and these accompanying grand narratives, as with any canonical structure, are constructed things, which is not to say that they are without value, but rather that it is important to highlight that it is deeply embedded in a series of normative claims. It is a subjective matter and not an objective one. Beiner is more explicit on this point than most: “[w]ithout question, there are important thinkers who have been left out”.⁶⁰ It is possible, especially when we widen our gaze, to set any number of arbitrary ‘golden ages’ all of which reveal different things — and a great many of them may even be as committed to truth as Beiner is with his.

Ultimately, though, there would appear to be⁶¹ some merit to those aspects of the death thesis that relate to academic political philosophy: there has been (and continues to be) a great deal of ink spent on semantic debates and providing context to the various works of the Western canon, perhaps far more than will ever be needed. Vast swathes of the canon have been bled dry of their *disciplinary* value — although their *philosophical* merit shall remain so long as they remain signposts on the road towards truth. It is not that there is nothing new left to say about Plato’s *Republic* or Machiavelli’s *Prince*, but that fixating on merely novelty without a consideration of value is precisely what has allowed the discipline to atrophy. It may be that there is an infinity of papers to be written about factual disagreements and contextual details of the great works, but what good does each of those papers serve? That this can be understood as a rhetorical question speaks volumes to the state of the discipline, both when it was first proclaimed dead and today.

⁶⁰ Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*, xiv.

⁶¹ Without a serious empirical investigation, it is difficult to confidently state this point.

If political philosophy as a practice is considered not only desirable but something that discipline of political philosophy can lay the groundwork for, if an epic mode of theorizing demands there be philosophical custodians to prepare for it, and if we wish to retake territory that has been surrendered to the forces of science and history, such endeavours must begin by expanding our gaze to uncomfortable horizons — although perhaps not entirely new ones. Beiner's golden age is one such approach and rooting it in the twentieth century is a safe enough space to begin such a project, as widespread agreement about who belongs in the tradition ends roughly with Nietzsche (although there are a variety of attempts to question even that entrenched canon). Through the pretence of adding twelve thinkers to the canon of political philosophy, Beiner links texts together in a way that is far more radical than the simplicity of its title would seem: although he concludes his treatise with the omnipresence of anti-foundationalist thinking in political philosophy, the very way that he has done so challenges the validity that conclusion. If Rawls and Rorty knock philosophy off its pedestal, if the foundation of Western political philosophy can no longer bear the weight of the tradition, what might be required of us, in the discipline of political philosophy, is to let go, and begin again.

1.3 The Exemplars

For Beiner that means casting our gaze to the latter half of the twentieth century and looking to the exemplary scholars that emerged from it with philosophies of the epic mode, but many who do not necessarily endorse the elevation of grand theorizing use a similar sort of frame to advance individual thinkers to counter the death thesis. Looking back at the period in which political philosophy was in decline has become a typical

frame to advocate for the inclusion of new thinkers to the disciplinary canon. When James V. Schall writes that “Strauss did as much as anyone in recent decades to revive political philosophy”, he takes as granted that political philosophy was revived⁶² and does not elaborate on the point.⁶³ Kenneth Minogue identifies Michael Oakeshott’s work as an example — among others such as Karl Popper, Leo Strauss, and Eric Voegelin — of how “political philosophy had been flourishing” precisely when the discipline was said to be death.⁶⁴ Similarly, Vittorio Bufacchi suggests that “it is impossible to overstate the significance of the publication of [Brian Barry’s] *Political Argument* in 1965, as this book did more than any other work at the time to bring political philosophy back to life”.⁶⁵ The examples of this category are perhaps too numerous to list, as it is a genre unto itself, and there are a vast number of thinkers represented: Sheldon Wolin,⁶⁶ Bertrand Russell,⁶⁷ Quentin Skinner,⁶⁸ Hannah Arendt,⁶⁹ and many others.⁷⁰

⁶² Taking serious that “as much as anyone” is not a statement of subtle esotericism. It could equally be true if *nobody* played a role in the revival of political philosophy and that this was the manner in which Struass was equally responsible. I leave such interpretations to better equipped scholars.

⁶³ James V. Schall, *At the Limits of Political Philosophy: From “Brilliant Errors” to Things of Uncommon Important* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 3.

⁶⁴ Kenneth Minogue, “Oakeshott and Political Science,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (2004): 227.

⁶⁵ Vittorio Bufacchi, “Review Article: Why Political Philosophy Matters: Reading Brian Barry on Social Justice,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 7, no. 2 (April 1, 2008): 256.

⁶⁶ William E. Connolly, “Politics and Vision,” in *Democracy and Vision: Sheldon Wolin and the Vicissitudes of the Political*, ed. Aryeh Botwinick and William E. Connolly (Princeton University Press, 2001), 1–22; Jason A. Frank and John Tamborino, “Introduction,” in *Vocations of Political Theory*, ed. Jason A. Frank and John Tamborino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); James Wiley, “Sheldon Wolin on Theory and the Political,” *Polity* 38, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 211–34; Antonio Y. Vázquez-Arroyo, “Sheldon S. Wolin and the Historicity of Political Thought,” *The Good Society* 24, no. 2 (2015): 146–63; Harlan Wilson, “Sheldon Wolin: From Oberlin to Berkeley and Beyond,” *The Good Society* 24, no. 2 (2015): 198–209.

⁶⁷ Akehurst presents a compelling and complicated account of not just Bertrand Russell but the entire analytical tradition in post-war scholarship: “political philosophy died because it was deemed superfluous to the furthering of the broadly left-liberal political agenda shared by almost

Philip Pettit's history of twentieth century analytic philosophy accepts the notion that "[f]rom late in the [nineteenth] century to about the 1950s political philosophy ceased to be an area of active exploration", but suggests that this 'long silence' had changed as early as 1959 with Benn and Peters' *Social Principles and the Democratic State* but most certainly by 1965 Barry's *Political Argument* — and admits that the discipline after *A Theory of Justice* is a "post-Rawlsian world".⁷¹ Insofar as he concerns himself with the death thesis, it is solely to posit why analytical philosophers might not have been interested in questions of politics. In the same edited volume as Pettit's account, Richard Tuck describes the century preceding *A Theory of Justice* as "a very strange one

all the analytic philosophers in this period" (Akehurst, 689). Accordingly, much of this scholarship was rooted in a number of implicit political arguments, but that "there was no direct and satisfactory philosophical case for the alliance of analysis and liberalism" (Akehurst, 692).

⁶⁸ Nadia Urbinati, "The Historian and the Ideologist," *Political Theory* 33, no. 1 (2005): 89–95; Koikkalainen, "Contextualist Dilemmas: Methodology of the History of Political Theory in Two Stages."

⁶⁹ Shiraz Dossa, "Human Status and Politics: Hannah Arendt on the Holocaust," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 13, no. 2 (June 1980): 309–23; Ilya P. Winham, "After Totalitarianism: Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin, and the Realization and Defeat of the Western Tradition" (Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2015).

⁷⁰ See: Stanley Rothman, "The Revival of Classical Political Philosophy: A Critique," *The American Political Science Review* 56, no. 2 (June 1962): 341–52; Stanley Hoffman, "Judith Shklar as Political Thinker," *Political Theory* 21, no. 2 (May 1993): 172–80; N.J. Rengger, "Trust, Prudence and History: John Dunn and the Tasks of Political Theory," *History of Political Thought* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 416–37; Walter Nicgorski, "Theory Redivivus," *The Political Science Reviewer* 25 (1996): 74–100; Sonu Trivedi, "State of the Discipline," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 67, no. 1 (March 2006): 21–30; Ricciardi, "Berlin on Liberty.:"; Kelvin Knight, "After Tradition?: Heidegger or MacIntyre, Aristotle and Marx," *Analyse & Kritik* 30, no. 1 (2008): 33–52; Samuel Goldman, "Beyond the Markers of Certainty: Thoughts on Claude Lefort and Leo Strauss," *Perspectives on Political Science* 40, no. 1 (2011): 27–34; Jason William Blakely, "Three Political Philosophers Debate Social Science: Leo Strauss, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Charles Taylor" (Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2013); Davide Orsi, "Oakeshott on Practice, Normative Thought and Political Philosophy," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 23, no. 5 (2015): 545–68; Facundo Vega, "'God Is Death': The Oblivion of Esotericism and Stimmungen in Leo Strauss's Heidegger," *Philosophy Today* 62, no. 3 (Summer 2018): 823–45.

⁷¹ Philip Pettit, "Analytical Philosophy," in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ed. Robert E. Goodin, Philip Pettit, and Thomas W. Pogge, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 6; 13.

in the history of thinking about politics in the Anglo-American world (and, to a lesser extent, on the Continent also)”, going on to allude to (and seemingly endorse) different conceptions of the death of political philosophy in which the practice is politically irrelevant, intellectually discouraged, or “morally hazardous”.⁷² His account is largely focused on understanding the history of ideas through that same period, but he ties those debates to the emergence of modern political philosophy “[i]n the later 1960s [with] philosophers such as John Rawls”.⁷³ Yet despite briefly emphasizing Rawls in that development, Tuck’s account of the methodological debates actually highlights the role that John Dunn, Quentin Skinner, and John Pocock (among others) played the revival of political philosophy.

Stephen K. White’s introduction to *What is Political Theory?* opens by similarly endorsing the death thesis and the notion that political philosophy was revived in the 1970s, but seems to imply that attributing that revival *solely* to Rawls misses the mark. Beyond that, White suggests that “a persistent challenge to the activity of political theory since the end of World War II ... [is that] some scholars in social science departments still harbor disciplinary ideals that, at best, denigrate political philosophy or, at worst, leave no room whatsoever for it”.⁷⁴ He connects this to the death of political philosophy debates, but the allusion is not unpacked further. Unlike White, whose suggestion that “incitement was what was really on [Peter Laslett’s] mind” primarily positions him as

⁷² Richard Tuck, “History,” in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ed. Robert E. Goodin, Philip Pettit, and Thomas W. Pogge, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 69.

⁷³ Tuck, 77.

⁷⁴ Stephen K. White, “Pluralism, Platitudes, and Paradoxes: Fifty Years of Western Political Thought,” in *What Is Political Theory*, ed. Stephen K. White and J. Donald Moon (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 9.

speaking to disciplinarily politics, Petri Koikkalainen attends to Laslett's broader contributions and offers that work as influential in the revival of political philosophy; and Rawls still matters in this account — as does Quentin Skinner, among others — but Koikkalainen understands Laslett as uniquely “pathbreaking”.⁷⁵

1.4 *The Catalogue Genre*

Catherine Zuckert's *Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* is perhaps the best example of the catalogue genre approach to reappraising the political philosophy during its supposed period of decline without appealing to a grand narrative: she has collected essays on eighteen different thinkers across four categories of thought that are so broad as to make unlikely philosophical bedfellows, with each piece written by a different author from their own perspective on the value of their chosen thinker. While Zuckert has a loose introductory narrative of her own that ties them together, the most common thread between them is chronological: they are all political philosophers writing *in* the twentieth century.⁷⁶ It may be the case that some of the individual chapters make arguments as to why we should consider a particular thinker as connected to a twentieth century zeitgeist, the overall structure that Zuckert provides is largely one of chronological era and quality of work. Some of the thinkers are more obscure selections,⁷⁷ but Zuckert is not primarily interested in recovering ‘lost’ thinkers of the twentieth century. Instead

⁷⁵ White, “Pluralism, Platitudes, and Paradoxes: Fifty Years of Western Political Thought,” 2; Koikkalainen, “Peter Laslett and the Contested Concept of Political Philosophy,” 357.

⁷⁶ From John Dewey's work in the late 1800s to a number of thinkers who have continued to publish through to 2019. The substantive portion of the analysis is limited to the twentieth century itself.

⁷⁷ Not to denigrate Yves R. Simon, but he is certainly less widely known in political philosophy than Carl Schmitt or Michel Foucault.

Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century is about providing individual arguments as to why these eighteen thinkers are great minds worthy of serious consideration.

The special issue of *The Review of Politics* from which *Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* emerged does not initially position itself in opposition to the death of political philosophy, instead presenting essays that "celebrat[e] the lives and works of some of the most pre-eminent political philosophers who wrote in the twentieth century".⁷⁸ However, both Arendt and Strauss are subjects of the special issue as thinkers attempting to recover "a more original, but forgotten understanding of politics and philosophy" — and this is further echoed through Ellis Sandoz's contribution on Voegelin⁷⁹ and his concerns about political science as a vocation.⁸⁰ As Bernard Flynn notes, despite significant differences in their overall thought,⁸¹ Arendt and Strauss in particular are drawn together by their attention to the "curious absence" of political philosophy in modernity.⁸² Flynn criticizes some of the thinkers that are focused on in *Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* for "the politicalization of philosophical concepts" (namely Sartre and Habermas), before going on to offer Claude Lefort who, "in the process of interpreting the phenomenon of totalitarianism, has created a political philosophy which deals with the same concerns as those addressed by classical political philosophy; it is a politi-

⁷⁸ Catherine H. Zuckert, "Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century," *The Review of Politics* 71, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 1.

⁷⁹ Ellis Sandoz, "The Philosopher's Vocation: The Voegelinian Paradigm," *The Review of Politics* 71, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 54–67.

⁸⁰ Zuckert, 2.

⁸¹ Regarding the depth of the connections between Arendt and Strauss — and the lack of intellectual engagement between the two — see Ronald Beiner, "Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: The Uncommenced Dialogue," *Political Theory* 18, no. 2 (1990): 238–54.

⁸² Bernard Flynn, *The Philosophy of Claude Lefort: Interpreting the Political* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005), xiv.

cal thought that has been engendered out of a prolonged reflection on political phenomena”.⁸³ While Lefort is absent from both versions of Zuckert’s curation, evident in her selection is this same concern for moving beyond those thinkers who were engaged in the narrowing of philosophy to politics — and towards those who were philosophically responding to the crises of modern politics.

It should be noted that Zuckert is not suggesting that twentieth century political philosophy — from neither the original eight thinkers in the special issue nor the additional arguments found in the expanded volume — resolves the problem of political philosophy that Strauss dedicated much of his intellectual career to. This articulation will be drawn out further in later chapters, but *Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* is meant to oppose some of the *other* versions of the death of political philosophy. For starters, Zuckert points out that the eighteen thinkers presented in the volume are hardly the totality of twentieth century political philosophy — so there are certainly no grounds to suggest that nobody is writing philosophically about political things. Further, unlike Michael Lessnoff’s skepticism about the quality of some of the thinkers he presents in *Political Philosophers of the Twentieth Century*, each chapter of Zuckert’s volume is “written by a scholar not only knowledgeable about but also sympathetic to the approach taken by the author in question”.⁸⁴ While this does not necessarily indicate the authors are seen to rise to the level of the greatest minds of the Western canon, there is a deliberate and rigorous attempt to respect their importance within that tradition as political philosophers —

⁸³ Flynn, xv; xxi.

⁸⁴ Catherine H. Zuckert, “Introduction: Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century,” in *Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: Authors and Arguments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 14.

even those who rejected that label for themselves. Nor are all the authors wedded to the same set of philosophical notions or political ideas: the volume opens by placing John Dewey, Carl Schmitt, and Antonio Gramsci as foils against each other; and although there is a general bent towards liberal democracy throughout the broader catalogue of thinkers, there is an entire section dedicated to critiques of liberalism. In this way, Zuckert's use of the death of political philosophy is helpful for framing her collection of thinkers, but it does not engage with the notion itself in any meaningful way.

In contrast to Zuckert's cataloguing approach, Michael Lessnoff sought to define the "particular form[] or slant" to political philosophy that had emerged between World War I and the end of the Cold War.⁸⁵ Lessnoff goes on to suggest that twentieth century political philosophy was, in part, driven by "the need to grapple with the implications of the great shaping events — and, one must say, catastrophes — of the century: two world wars, revolutions, and the threat to human values posed by totalitarianism in its various forms".⁸⁶ While his title would suggest that he is not merely focused on political philosophy that happens to take place *in* the twentieth century but is truly *of* the twentieth century, Lessnoff admits that he is not interested in "giv[ing] a fully adequate account of the ideas of the most significant and illuminating political philosophers" or what he calls "the best twentieth-century political philosophers".⁸⁷ Only the exclusion of Carl Schmitt is explicitly due to Lessnoff's lack of knowledge: Foucault, Derrida, and MacIntyre — among "[l]egions of neo-Marxists, existentialists, phenomenologists, post-structuralists,

⁸⁵ Michael H. Lessnoff, *Political Philosophers of the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 1.

⁸⁶ Lessnoff, 2.

⁸⁷ Lessnoff, 4.

post-modernists and deconstructionists” — are all omitted due to their supposed lack of originality, significance, or coherence.⁸⁸ Not only are these specific thinkers undeniably products of the twentieth century, so too are these schools of thought. Lessnoff’s appeals to originality and coherence would seem to have more to do with his definition of political philosophy than anything else — although Lessnoff’s ‘political philosophy’ need not be wholly systematic, as we see with his inclusion of Robert Nozick whose *Anarchy, State and Utopia* was deemed to be “incomplete”.⁸⁹

This is an entirely valid approach to canon construction against the backdrop of the death of political philosophy, however it differs significantly from the approaches of Beiner or Zuckert: where Beiner suggests that his version of looking backward is but one narrative about post-WWII political philosophy among many and Zuckert’s individual examples together have sufficient mass to stand against the idea of disciplinary decline, Lessnoff claims to have a definitive canon of thinkers that speak to the twentieth century zeitgeist. Lessnoff has defined both the twentieth century *and* political philosophy such that he has made room only for minor points of disagreement, not an altogether different set of thinkers. Thus, he arrives at a list not simply of twentieth century political philosophers, but rather *the* political philosophers of the twentieth century. What is perhaps most interesting about Lessnoff’s construction is not the list itself, but instead the complete lack of appeals to the tradition prior to the twentieth century. While all of his thinkers are engaged in a dialogue with the historical Western canon, that does not seem to be the point most worthy of consideration for inclusion: Lessnoff claims that “we cannot under-

⁸⁸ Lessnoff, 4.

⁸⁹ Lessnoff, 253.

stand the political philosophy of the twentieth century without an understanding of the twentieth century itself” and his primary focus is placing thinkers in their political contexts, rather than their philosophical ones.⁹⁰ History matters for setting the conditions of the present, but political philosophy *of* an era is shaped by the political climate in which it occurs.

It should be noted that Lessnoff’s canon is not simply thinkers with whom he altogether agrees: Herbert Marcuse is included despite being “an unreliable guide to action and to policy”; C.B. Macpherson’s “solutions are utopian and unhelpful ... both his strengths and his weaknesses are typically Marxian”; Friedrich Hayek is “not without his blind spots”; and Robert Nozick’s libertarianism is ultimately “unpalatable [but is still a] significant contribution of political philosophy”.⁹¹ In this way, Lessnoff recalls Strauss’ point about the history of political philosophy falling into “a survey of more or less brilliant errors” rather than being the pursuit of political truths.⁹² Lessnoff positions his canon as highlighting how flawed this thinking is: “ideals of liberty and equality are at least partly in conflict with each other: to embody both therefore requires compromise, and numerous alternative compromises are possible”.⁹³ Exploring those concessions is one of the stories he tells about twentieth century political philosophy, alongside critiques of consumer capitalism and the defense of liberalism that occurred during the Cold War.

By connecting political philosophy to politics of the era, Lessnoff’s additions to the canon speak primarily to present considerations at the end of the twentieth century

⁹⁰ Lessnoff, 6.

⁹¹ Lessnoff, 57; 108; 171; 266.

⁹² Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (1964; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 8.

⁹³ Lessnoff, *Political Philosophers of the Twentieth Century*, 298.

and, in doing so, are made historians of the moment.⁹⁴ In this way, Lessnoff's assessment of the state of political philosophy is directly linked to the political crisis of the era: focusing on those who think philosophically about the pressing political matters of the twentieth century implicitly disproves the supposed decline of the discipline — and, accordingly, there is little need to attend to it explicitly. Yet to simply dismiss the death of political philosophy in this manner does not provide any meaningful understanding of the historical conditions in which such arguments were coherent nor does it enhance our philosophical understanding of those arguments. This is not a problem for Lessnoff's project nor those who similarly approach the death thesis⁹⁵, but, taken altogether, the general tendency to casually reject this significant moment in the history of the discipline is a

⁹⁴ He does acknowledge Rawls' popularity and impact, but he treats him as one thinker amidst many — albeit one who “revive[s] a very ancient and for centuries very popular style of political argument, but one which, before he wrote, had fallen into desuetude and was generally thought to belong in the philosophical museum”: that of the social contract (Lessnoff 1999, 231). As will be seen in Chapter Three, this was a somewhat common refrain around *A Theory of Justice*, but is a far cry from wholesale disciplinary revival. In fact, Lessnoff's canon includes a number of thinkers who wrote extensively between the supposed death of political philosophy and *A Theory of Justice* — specifically identifying both Hannah Arendt and Michael Oakeshott as “fascinating and distinctive thinkers to have turned [their] mind[s] to the problems of political philosophy in the twentieth century (Lessnoff 1999, 113). Further, Lessnoff suggests that Arendt is uniquely qualified: “no political thinker of [the twentieth] century is it more obviously true that the thinker's biography is crucial to an understanding of the thought; and the life of no political thinker has been more emblematic of the political thought of the century (Lessnoff 1999, 60). Her fixation on the crisis of thoughtlessness in modern politics is tied to the decline of political philosophy, but neither can be adequately understood without acknowledging that she directly experienced the political consequences of the intellectual collapse of modernity.

Given all this, it is somewhat surprising that Lessnoff was among the earliest to have identified Rawls' work as “perhaps the most convincing evidence that the discipline is after all not dead”, especially because he makes that claim *prior* to the publication of *A Theory of Justice* (Lessnoff 1971, 63). “John Rawls' Theory of Justice” is based on various articles that Rawls would eventually work into *A Theory of Justice*.

⁹⁵ See: Fred Dallmayr, *Polis and Praxis: Exercises in Contemporary Political Theory* (Boston: MIT Press, 1987); Arnold Brecht, *Political Theory: The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 190.

mistake that has significant implications for both the discipline and practice of political philosophy today.

1.5 Neither Death nor Revival

There are, however, some thinkers who have examined this point in the political philosophy literature, looking to the death thesis as a phenomenon that needs to be explained and understood.

David Miller casually pokes a hole in the death thesis, pointing to “Berlin’s ‘Two concepts of liberty’ (1958), Hart’s *The Concept of Law* (1961), Oakeshott’s *Rationalism in Politics* (1962) and Barry’s *Political Argument* (1965); from further afield Arendt’s *The Human Condition* (1958) and Hayek’s *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960)” as examples of works have rightly since been recognized as important disciplinary texts.⁹⁶ While he recognizes that the intellectual mood of the era may have been “a mixture of anxiety and defensiveness”, Miller is interested in neither assessing the overall legitimacy of that mood nor exploring its nuances.⁹⁷ Instead, he is focused on the ways that the discipline

has changed over this period, with the aim ultimately of suggesting fruitful lines of research for the future. For there has certainly been change in the way that political theory is done. In particular, much sharper divisions have emerged between different branches of the subject, with the result that most work is now done within one or other subfield and it is increasingly difficult for practitioners to move confidently across the boundaries.⁹⁸

The use of ‘theory’ versus ‘philosophy’ helps indicate what Miller is aimed towards: the academic discipline that lives within political science departments, rather than the practice of political philosophy. Whether political philosophy was revived in 1971 is not his

⁹⁶ Miller, “The Resurgence of Political Theory,” 421.

⁹⁷ Miller, 421.

⁹⁸ Miller, 422.

concern: the three branches of political theory — critical historical studies, conceptual analysis of political terms, and institutional theory — changed and transformed, giving us the titular ‘resurgence’ of political theory. The result of these transformations was “the splitting of the field into compartments between which communication has been very restricted”, but at least those compartments could not be said to be empty.⁹⁹

In an offhand manner, Miller suggests that two key pieces to the revival of political theory were

a combination of a more sympathetic intellectual climate in which theoretical exploration was no longer frowned upon as contrary to the canons of good academic enquiry, and a sharp rise in the level of ideological contestation in western societies, sparked off especially by the emergence of the New Left and the controversies surrounding the Vietnam war.¹⁰⁰

While he fails to further develop either point, what is striking is that Miller offers a justification for revival that is based largely on *politics*, both in the academy and the global stage. Rawls undeniably plays a part in the former as Miller argues that “[m]any of the major texts in the years that followed [*A Theory of Justice*] are best seen as attempts to develop systematic alternatives to Rawls’s theory”, but the latter — the political climate of the 70s and 80s — cannot possibly be attributed to him.¹⁰¹ In this, Miller presents a conception of the discipline that can become untenable due to outside forces, but it must be noted that we are then talking about whether a practice is viable in the academy rather than altogether possible for the human being — a lack of efficacy or value in publishing versus the death of political philosophy.

⁹⁹ Miller, 424.

¹⁰⁰ Miller, 422.

¹⁰¹ Miller, 428.

Mark Reiff similarly points to Rawls as providing “the most recent burst of advancement in political theory” and explicitly rejects notion that he is returning the death of political philosophy thesis, instead he is suggesting that “[t]he discipline has reached a point of intellectual stagnation ... [and that] the profession has been making itself inconsequential and irrelevant for quite some time”.¹⁰² He connects these changes to the professionalization of political philosophy where “[n]ew and important work is appearing less and less frequently”, even as more and more is being written and published.¹⁰³ In this way, despite claiming otherwise, he actually remains deeply committed to the death of political philosophy: Reiff admits that the *discipline* is thriving, in precisely the ways that David Miller indicates with his ‘resurgence’, but:¹⁰⁴

A. he concludes that most of that work is what Terrence Ball calls “second-order theorizing [which] consists largely, though by no means exclusively, of the activity of studying, teaching, and commenting on the 'classics' of political thought”,¹⁰⁵ which is a clear statement about the quality of the work being done by so-called political philosophers — which he makes more explicit with his conclusion that the greatest minds of the twentieth century (he lists Rawls, Dworkin, and Nozick, among others) “cast as much shadow as they do light”

¹⁰² Mark R Reiff, “Twenty-One Statements About Political Philosophy: An Introduction and Commentary on the State of the Profession,” *Teaching Philosophy* 41, no. 1 (2018): XX; XX.

¹⁰³ Reiff, XX.

¹⁰⁴ Each of these points has linkages to the various deaths of political philosophy as outlined in Chapter Two — although it should be noted that the discussion around the role of academic neutrality is a new angle on the possibility of a relationship between political philosophy and politics.

¹⁰⁵ Ball, *Reappraising Political Theory*, 44.

and we mistakenly treat the edges of those shadows as the boundaries of contemporary political thought;¹⁰⁶

- B. “political philosophers have now ceded much of the area of economic justice to economists, who for the most part expressly reject the idea that morality has anything to tell us about the economy or how to manage it”, which we see are a direct echo of Leo Strauss’ claims about the discipline;¹⁰⁷
- C. claims of liberal bias among intellectuals and the “misapplication of the principle of neutrality” have made it difficult for those who engage in politics to listen to — let alone take seriously — the work of political philosophers;¹⁰⁸
- D. and that the current political climate is a “time of great political upheaval” in which political philosophers have ignored their obligation to help “ensure that things do not get any further out of hand”, which is another way of saying that nobody is writing philosophically about political things.¹⁰⁹

Reiff is clear that his conception of political philosophy is solely an academic pursuit: “if those in the academy do not do it, it is not going to be done”.¹¹⁰ This is yet another facet of the logic of the death of political philosophy: the belief that the academy, with its universities and peer-reviewed publications, is a necessary condition for political philosophy. Although it is possible to imagine a version of the academy that does not include political philosophy programs, this is an understanding that the formal discipline of

¹⁰⁶ Reiff, “Twenty-One Statements About Political Philosophy: An Introduction and Commentary on the State of the Profession,” XX.

¹⁰⁷ Reiff, XX.

¹⁰⁸ Reiff, XX.

¹⁰⁹ Reiff, 65; xx.

¹¹⁰ Reiff, XX.

political philosophy cannot exist independent from these institutions because it *is* these institutions. What Reiff calls political philosophy gains legitimacy and indeed exists entirely within university presses and in conference presentations.

Glen Newey's claim that "the remit of political philosophising, as currently practiced, is unduly narrow" begins by drawing attention to the Rawls-as-reanimator narrative, even as he is critical of the "post-political" nature of post-Rawls political philosophy.¹¹¹ He distinguishes between the thriving production within the academic discipline and the content of what is being produced, suggesting that the success of the discipline obscures the fact that "[r]eal political phenomena — such as the pervasiveness of political conflict — are ignored, or transmuted into material which is more amenable to theory".¹¹² The death thesis only comes up as an initial frame, rather than as a thorough exploration of the concept, before moving on to his disciplinary critique. While nothing about this choice undermines Newey's argument, had he more broadly understood the death of political philosophy, he would have found himself with perhaps unlikely intellectual allies.

Similarly, Fred Dallmayr has framed his call for a disciplinary "turn to comparative political theory" around Strauss' articulation of decline.¹¹³ By beginning from this narrow conception, Dallmayr avoids the reduction of the death of political philosophy to a single claim — which is particularly important, given that he explicitly argues for this in regards to the discipline itself by citing Raimundo Panikkar's defense of comparative

¹¹¹ Newey, *After Politics: The Rejection of Politics in Contemporary Liberal Philosophy*, 2;160.

¹¹² Newey, 4.

¹¹³ Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory," *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 2 (June 2004): 249.

philosophy: “[c]omparative philosophy cannot accept a method that reduces all visions to the view of one single philosophy”.¹¹⁴ Yet, even as Dallmayr shows care in this manner, his understanding of the death of political philosophy is coloured by the broader debates: he ultimately suggests that comparative political theory could help political science become “a valuable participant in the effort to build a just global peace”.¹¹⁵ While this is an entirely reasonable justification for overcoming the disciplinary reliance upon the Western tradition, as we will see in the following chapter, this project differs somewhat from what Catherine and Michael Zuckert call Strauss’ “public-spirited activity intended to revive belief in human freedom and rationality”.¹¹⁶ Insofar as Strauss was supportive of modern liberal democracy, Dallmayr might find an ally in him, but there is little to suggest that the crisis of thinking fits neatly in the project of “global democratic cooperation” that is the explicit basis of Dallmayr’s work.¹¹⁷

Ernest Gellner, in recognizing the coherence of the death of political philosophy only as a rhetorical position on the part of some academic thinkers, articulates this as an unwillingness of academics to get their hands dirty with engage in political affairs: “in practice political philosophy would never interfere with anything much. It might ask you to cool it, so to speak”.¹¹⁸ This fits with a range of thinkers casually referencing the death of political philosophy as part of their call for philosophers to focus on pressing political

¹¹⁴ cited in Dallmayr, 251.

¹¹⁵ Dallmayr, 254.

¹¹⁶ Michael P. Zuckert and Catherine H. Zuckert, *Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 339.

¹¹⁷ Zuckert and Zuckert, 254.

¹¹⁸ Ernest Gellner, “Sauce for the Liberal Goose,” *Prospect*, November 29, 1995, <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/saucefortheoliberalgoose-isaiah-berlin>.

matters¹¹⁹ — or what Bernard Williams formulates as the suggestion that “living political philosophy arises only in a context of political urgency”.¹²⁰

Writing against the possibility of a value-free discipline, L.S. Rathmore suggests “[t]here is thus little purpose in labouring the point that political theory in the English-speaking world has ‘revived’”.¹²¹ At the same time, Rathmore’s defense cautions against the possibility of a future decline: “Were [value-free analysis] to become widespread, political theory would destroy itself: it would lose its interest to the lay man and much of its claim to educational usefulness”.¹²² Yet, over a decade later, he has moved from caution to outright concern, suggesting that “values ought to be at the centre of political inquiry, instead of being pushed to the periphery” and points to various interlocutors in the decline debates as evidence of concern.¹²³ Rathore rejects the death thesis immediately following *A Theory of Justice*, although Rawls is simply listed as one of a great many exemplars, rather than as *the* reasons for the health of the discipline. However, during the period in which almost nobody is using the language of the death of political philosophy, he returns to it to support the notion of the discipline that aimed “towards the building of

¹¹⁹ See: Jhulka, “Empirical Political Theory an Appraisal.”; Robert Booth Fowler, “Does Political Theory Have A Future?,” in *What Should Political Theory Be Now?*, ed. John S. Nelson (SUNY Press, 1984), 549–80; Daniel R. Sabia, “Political Education and the History of Political Thought,” *American Journal of Political Science* 78, no. 4 (December 1984): 985–99; Jeffrey C. Isaac, “The Strange Silence of Political Theory,” *Political Theory* 23, no. 4 (1995): 636–52; Dallmayr, “Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory.”; Leela Ram Gurjar, “Trends of Contemporary Political Theory,” *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 58, no. 4 (December 2007): 827–34; Alan Haworth, “Political Philosophy,” in *The Encyclopedia of British Philosophy*, ed. A.C. Grayling, Naomi Goulder, and Andrew Pyle (Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2006), 2537–43.

¹²⁰ Bernard Williams, *Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 155.

¹²¹ Rathore, “In Defence of Political Theory,” 342.

¹²² Rathore, 343.

¹²³ L.S. Rathore, “The Centre-Periphery Controversy in Political Theory,” *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 1 (March 1987): 13.

a sane society”.¹²⁴ Yet, because he does not clearly articulate the death of political philosophy, his appeals to its key interlocutors do not serve to bolster his argument and instead has the uneasy feeling of a vague appeal to authority.

Edmund Neill conflates the end of ideology and the death of political philosophy, without citing any of the end of ideologists and collapses Laslett, Strauss, and Shklar’s conceptions of the death of political philosophy, before ultimately concluding that “that the idea that positivism simply and uniformly killed off normative political theory in Western Europe in the immediate post-war period is a highly misleading one ... post-war Western European political theory is a rich and under-explored field. It is arguably ripe for further exploration”.¹²⁵ The broadness of this point may, in fact, be legitimate, but only if the conflation of Laslett, Strauss, and Shklar is as well — which is an argument that would require far more space than Neill provides.

Robert Adcock and Mark Bevir suggest that understanding the decline debates as speaking to a singular set of concerns is to “mistakenly assimilate all of political theory to the specific philosophical activity to which Berlin and Laslett [and Strauss, Wolin, and others] referred”.¹²⁶ They show that flattening the death of political philosophy misses important regional and methodological differences which, when properly pulled apart, reveals a remade discipline marked rather by its manyness than unity. Antonio Masala similarly shows “the diffusion of this [decline] thesis” through its various interlocutors

¹²⁴ Rathore, 29.

¹²⁵ Edmund Neill, “Varieties of Positivism in Western European Political Thought, c. 1945–1970: An Introduction,” *History of European Ideas* 39, no. 1 (May 23, 2012): 17–18.

¹²⁶ Robert Adcock and Mark Bevir, “The Remaking of Political Theory,” in *Modern Political Science: Anglo-American Exchanges since 1880*, ed. Robert Adcock, Mark Bevir, and Shannon C. Stimson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 210.

and then looks to the implications of that debate — and the Rawlsian revival — on specifically liberal political philosophy.¹²⁷ In this way, he implies that there are other approaches that could be taken, but does not attend to them because they are outside the scope of his argument.

Navid Hassanzadeh’s exploration of W.E.B. Du Bois’ contributions to political philosophy¹²⁸ does not explicitly relate to the death thesis, but that is due to Hassanzadeh’s elsewhere commitment to taking care with the manner by which the disciplinary canon is (re)constructed in the turn towards comparative political philosophy:

While possessing a different history and set of theoretical contributions, post-structuralism, critical theory and liberalism all contain conceptual apparatuses and normative frameworks which can pose problems when applied cross-culturally ... the argument made here is not to question whether or not these schools of thought ought to be employed, but to caution against an assumption of uncomplicated theoretical conversion when moving from one cultural setting to another.¹²⁹

Hassanzadeh explicitly points out that Strauss and Wolin have differing conceptions of decline and, thus, their understandings of the canon likewise differ. Nor do these two ‘visions’ of decline represent fullness of the debate¹³⁰ and, accordingly, “scholars of comparative theory ought to be cognizant of such pitfalls”.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Antonio Masala, “The Moral Order of Classical Liberalism,” in *Re-Inventing Western Civilisation: Transnational Reconstructions of Liberalism in Europe in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Niklas Olsen and Hagen Schulz-Forberg (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 75.

¹²⁸ Navid Hassanzadeh, “Race, Internationalism, and Comparative Political Theory,” *Polity* 50, no. 4 (October 2018): 519–46.

¹²⁹ Navid Hassanzadeh, “The Canon and Comparative Political Thought,” *Journal of International Political Theory* 11, no. 2 (2015): 198.

¹³⁰ Hassanzadeh’s focus is on a somewhat more specific notion of disciplinary decline and suggests he could have attended to other “narrators of the canon ... such as George Sabine, Hannah Arendt, or Eric Voegelin” (Hassanzadeh 2015, 197).

¹³¹ Hassanzadeh, 186.

1.6 Sheldon Wolin

Sheldon Wolin's *Politics and Vision* presents an interesting case: first published in 1960, it provided a history of political thought that culminated in a decline of political philosophy that had begun with the rise of Lockean liberalism:

[R]ecent theory has failed to produce a body of political ideas dealing with a general order ... Moreover, the divorce between what is political and what is general has repeatedly led recent writers into paths of futility. I mean by this that they have tried to pose political problems in what are essentially non-political settings; the result has been a series of dead ends.¹³²

This bears more than a passing resemblance to Strauss' waves of modernity, however Wolin declined to address the final wave that Nietzsche represented¹³³ — and one should be careful associating them too closely, because Wolin's relationship to the death thesis proves to be a troubled one.

In his review of Judith Shklar's *After Utopia*, he located her disciplinary concerns among the broader debates about the death of political philosophy such as those of Peter Laslett and Leo Strauss:¹³⁴ "Like Christopher Robin, political philosophy has been attended of late by 'all sorts and conditions of famous physicians.' The bulletins all agree that the patient's condition is serious, and not a matter of sneezles and wheezles".¹³⁵ Wolin's snarkiness, however, is somewhat tempered by the concluding lines of the same review: "all sense of what is uniquely political is in danger of being lost or obscured. The

¹³² Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, Expanded (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 388.

¹³³ Or disagreed with the assessment at the time only to, as we will see shortly, change his mind.

¹³⁴ Shklar rejected such comparisons, arguing that Strauss "was being comparatively optimistic ... [a]t least he thought something remained." qtd. in Katrina Forrester, "Hope and Memory in the Thought of Judith Shklar," *Modern Intellectual History* 8, no. 3 (2011): 596.

¹³⁵ Sheldon Wolin, "Review: After Utopia. The Decline of Political Faith. By Judith N. Shklar," *Natural Law Forum* 5, no. 1 (1960): 165.

task, therefore, is not to revive political theory but to rescue it”.¹³⁶ Indeed this would prove to be the concluding theme of the first edition of *Politics and Vision*, in which Wolin argues that “[t]he chopping-up of political man is but part of a broader process which has been at work in political and social theory. During the past two centuries the vision of political theory has been a disintegrating one”.¹³⁷ That Wolin refused to identify with decline theorists like Strauss might have had more to do with ideological differences than radical conceptual disagreement,¹³⁸ but his call to ‘rescue’ the discipline is not so different from those who sought to ‘revive’ it: “political theory has not died; it has been absorbed”.¹³⁹ As will be seen in the following chapter, this sort of approach to the death of political philosophy is best understood as a variation on the theme.

Regardless, Wolin seems to independently echo a set of concerns about the discipline and he was clearly worried about how to “re-assert the political in an age of fragmentation”.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, the 1960 edition of *Politics and Vision* saw Wolin concerned about the connection between bureaucracy and totalitarianism that, rather than enhancing political life and the possibility of political philosophy, instead appeared to have led to the opposite: “By reducing citizenship to a cheap commodity, democracy has seemingly contributed to the dilution of politics”.¹⁴¹ Again there is a closeness to Strauss’ own concerns here, but also those of Hannah Arendt and the blurring of “the old borderline be-

¹³⁶ Wolin, 177.

¹³⁷ Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 386.

¹³⁸ See Wiley, “Sheldon Wolin on Theory and the Political.” and Benjamin Barber, “The Politics of Political Science: ‘Value-Free’ Theory and the Wolin-Strauss Dust-Up of 1963,” *The American Political Science Review* 100, no. 4 (2006): 543.

¹³⁹ Wolin, “Review: After Utopia. The Decline of Political Faith. By Judith N. Shklar,” 172.

¹⁴⁰ Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 389.

¹⁴¹ Wolin, 315.

tween private and public” that transformed all matters into politics — thereby demeaning political life.¹⁴²

What makes *Politics and Vision* so interesting is that Wolin would significantly expand upon it almost fifty years later, adding seven chapters to his disciplinary and intellectual history to trace “the journey from liberalism to democracy”.¹⁴³ In this expanded edition, he dedicates chapters to what would have been little more than curious absences in the initial publication but are now glaring half a century later: even if one disagreed with the significance (or value) of Marx or Nietzsche, any history of political thought would be incomplete without giving them serious consideration. Marx (and Marxism) is assessed somewhat in the original publication; Nietzsche, however, merits little more than a few sporadic mentions towards the end. Both are given much fuller treatments in the expanded edition. Beyond these additions, he, perhaps predictably, turns towards *A Theory of Justice*, but instead of immediately identifying it as a reanimator of political philosophy, Wolin considers Rawls (and Karl Popper) “as liberal—rather than democratic—theorists who *play out* a liberal moment, magisterially working it out theoretically, without engaging liberalism in working through modernity’s historical travails”.¹⁴⁴ It is not until *A Theory of Justice* is connected to the later *Political Liberalism* that Rawls’ place in the history of political thought is made coherent — and Wolin gives no other late-twentieth century thinker as much consideration in the updated edition. This is not so much because he does not believe anyone else in the twentieth century to be noteworthy,

¹⁴² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 38.

¹⁴³ Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, xv.

¹⁴⁴ Wolin, 495.

but rather that the “new chapters are centered instead on power¹⁴⁵ as the defining political fact of the past one hundred and fifty years, and upon the ways in which some major theorists responded to, contributed to, or evaded discussion of it”.¹⁴⁶ The core theme of these new chapters is not one of disciplinary optimism, but instead meant to “encourage younger generations of political theorists to engage in the endless task of redefining the political and reinvigorating the politics of democracy”.¹⁴⁷

This proves to be a complicated thread, because Wolin seems to ultimately accept Rawls’ position in the revival of political philosophy, suggesting that he “composed the magistral statement of liberal democracy, of that hybrid which, along with totalitarianism, represented the twentieth century’s principal contribution to the typology of political forms”.¹⁴⁸ If we read this in a straightforward manner, Wolin appears to accept both the initial idea and the Rawlsian moment, but he also precedes his treatment of Rawls by drawing attention to John Dewey as “perhaps the most outstanding American example of the public intellectual and indisputably the dominant voice in political theory during the inter-war years”.¹⁴⁹ It is strange to suggest that Rawls revived political philosophy while simultaneously suggesting that political philosophy was alive precisely in its alleged period of decline.

¹⁴⁵ In the new Nietzsche chapter, Wolin suggests that “Nietzsche is rarely treated as a full-fledged political theorist, notwithstanding that few theorists have been so persistently preoccupied with power ... The underestimation of Nietzsche as a political thinker and his subsequent iconization are explained by the same fact that makes his obsession with power so singular” (Wolin 2004, 460).

¹⁴⁶ Wolin, xix.

¹⁴⁷ Wolin, xxi.

¹⁴⁸ Wolin, 529.

¹⁴⁹ Wolin, 503.

Wolin makes no obvious effort to reconcile these seeming contradictions and they sit uncontested: Dewey engages in political philosophy in precisely the period of decline (as does Popper, for that matter); and Rawls, through *A Theory of Justice* and *Political Liberalism*, revives political philosophy shortly thereafter.¹⁵⁰ Part of this is because, while Wolin accepts the *reception* of Rawls, he thinks that “[t]he dynamics of modern power escaped his analysis” and, accordingly, Dewey and Popper serve as counterpoint and rejoinder.¹⁵¹ In an earlier review of *Political Liberalism*, Wolin describes Rawls’ project as “a construction that claims merely to be that of a free-standing society but is, in actuality, a utopia in the pejorative sense, an ideological project whose author is unaware that he has fashioned a disguise instead of a solution”.¹⁵² Although Rawls may have the appearance of engaging in political philosophy, Wolin presents him as missing the mark: “philosophy does not become ‘political’ simply because it treats political topics in a philosophical way; it becomes political when it gives evidence of grasping what is happening to the political world”.¹⁵³

This helps us make sense of Wolin’s concluding remarks on Rawls in *Politics and Vision*: “[t]he near-universal praise for Rawls’s contribution to liberal theory obscured the fact that the actual course of American liberalism, and its re-invention as neo-liberalism, were far different from the prescriptions of Rawlsian justice”.¹⁵⁴ Wolin is one of the few thinkers who looks back on the death of political philosophy and finds it to be

¹⁵⁰ However flawed these thinkers may be in Wolin’s eyes.

¹⁵¹ Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, xx.

¹⁵² Sheldon Wolin, “Review: The Liberal/Democratic Divide. On Rawl’s Political Liberalism,” *Political Theory* 24, no. 1 (February 1996): 119.

¹⁵³ Wolin, 117.

¹⁵⁴ Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 551.

unresolved by *A Theory of Justice* (and the broader discipline thereafter), because the Rawlsian project is absent a meaningful worldly engagement. While there are exemplary thinkers whose work Wolin elsewhere valorizes — most notably Hannah Arendt¹⁵⁵ — the expanded edition of *Politics and Vision* should be understood as a continuation of Wolin’s version of the death thesis: contemporary political philosophy is too sterile, scientific, and removed from the realities of contemporary politics. Looking to his praise of Arendt is instructive here:

The briefest epitaph for Hannah Arendt would be: She lived the theoretical life, the *bios theoretikos*. While brief, the epitaph is not simple. To live the theoretical life is not just to pursue the truth but to tell it. The authentic theorist is, as she put it, a “truth-teller.” Telling the truth about politics, not for partisan purposes or for self-dramatization, can be dangerous, as she learned when she wrote *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.¹⁵⁶

Insofar as the discipline avoids dangerous truths, it will remain absent the ‘political’ and no amount of philosophical rigour can change that. The widespread failure of political philosophers to recognize the value of and adopt Arendt’s approach is indicative of the sorry state of the discipline.

Conclusion

In the field of international relations, there is a growing body of literature¹⁵⁷ that troubles 1648 and 1919 as “the formative moments comprising, as it were, the ‘big

¹⁵⁵ See: Sheldon Wolin, “Hannah Arendt and the Ordinance of Time,” *Social Research* 44, no. 1 (1977): 91–105; Sheldon Wolin, “Hannah Arendt: Democracy and The Political,” *Salmagundi* 60 (Spring-Summer 1983): 3–19.

¹⁵⁶ Wolin, “Hannah Arendt and the Ordinance of Time,” 91–92.

¹⁵⁷ See: John M. Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Barry Buzan and George Lawson, “Rethinking Benchmark Dates in International Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations* 20, no. 2 (2012): 437–62; Barry Buzan and George Lawson, “The Global Transformation: The Nineteenth Century and the Making of Modern International Relations,”

bangs’ of the discipline”.¹⁵⁸ It is around this latter year that a key piece of “disciplinary lore” emerged in which “[t]he disciplinary debate between realists and those who became known as ‘idealists’ formed the bedrock of the contemporary discipline [of IR]”.¹⁵⁹ Brian Schmidt suggests that this conception of international relations has had — and continues to have — profound implications on the discipline as “a dominant part of the self-image of the field” and, accordingly, justifies a critical re-examination of this first great debate.¹⁶⁰ This kind of returning to key moments of disciplinary history is important because “[d]isciplinary dialogue can only work if we no longer accept short hands from students and colleagues that are often relayed through textbooks and lecture notes”¹⁶¹ ‘Myth-busting’¹⁶², then, shows how international relations scholarship and training — to

International Studies Quarterly 57, no. 3 (2013): 620–34; Atshushi Shibasaki, “Myths in a Discipline: IR and ‘the Peace of Westphalia,’” *Journal of Global Media Studies* 14, no. 1 (2013): 41–52; Brian C. Schmidt, ed., *International Relations and the First Great Debate* (London: Routledge, 2012); Brian C. Schmidt, “On the History and Historiography of International Relations,” in *Handbooks of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, 2nd ed. (2002; repr., London: Sage, 2013), 3–28; Pinar Bilgin, *The International in Security, Security in the International* (London: Routledge, 2016); Zeynep Gulsah Capan, “Decolonising International Relations?,” *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2017): 1–15; Thierry Balzacq and Stéphane J. Baele, “The Third Debate and Postpositivism,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies* (2014; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹⁵⁸ Benjamin de Carvalho, Halvard Leira, and John M. Hobson, “The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths That Your Teachers Still Tell You about 1648 and 1919,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 3 (2011): 736.

¹⁵⁹ Cameron G. Thies, “Myth, Half-Truth, Reality, or Strategy?: Managing Disciplinary Identity and the Origins of the First Great Debate,” in *International Relations and the First Great Debate*, ed. Brian C. Schmidt (London: Routledge, 2012), 119.

¹⁶⁰ Brian C. Schmidt, “Introduction,” in *International Relations and the First Great Debate*, ed. Brian C. Schmidt (London: Routledge, 2012), 1.

¹⁶¹ de Carvalho, Leira, and Hobson, “The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths That Your Teachers Still Tell You about 1648 and 1919,” 757.

¹⁶² To borrow a term from Miwa Hirono and Shogo Suzuki, “Why Do We Need ‘Myth-Busting’ in the Study of Sino–African Relations?,” *New Perspectives on China’s Foreign Relations* 23, no. 87 (2014): 443–61.

say nothing of the discipline's contributions to worldly affairs — is impoverished by reliance on this particular short hand.

The death of political philosophy is a similarly formative moment in the discipline, but understanding its significance is complicated by how widely contested it is. Bhikku Parekh suggests that the death debates were rooted in the fact that political philosophy “lacks a consensus on its nature and aims”, but takes it further to outline the way that disunity continued to play out with both the Rawlsian moment and the discipline thereafter.¹⁶³ Although only a few brief paragraphs, Parekh accurately portrays the lack of homogeneity in the death of political philosophy, showing that it was both a nuanced and sweeping set of debates. Parekh goes on to point out that these disagreements tended towards two broad ‘solutions’ that altogether miss the broader point:

Essentialism and eclecticism, monist rigidity and unregulated pluralism, premature closure and infinite openness, then, are incoherent responses to the search for a consensus on the nature and task of political theory. There is no one correct way of doing political theory, but nor is every way of doing it as good or illuminating as another.¹⁶⁴

While Parekh is writing towards an alternative approach, which he calls “a multiculturally constructed political philosophy”, the death of political philosophy is not simply a rhetorical frame for his approach which he flattens out to make his point.¹⁶⁵ Rather, the complexity of those debates remains intact and essential to his account of a multicultural perspective for the discipline.

¹⁶³ Bhikku Parekh, “Theorizing Political Theory,” in *Political Theory in Transition*, ed. Noël O’Sullivan (London: Routledge, 2000), 242.

¹⁶⁴ Parekh, 242.

¹⁶⁵ Parekh, 256.

Parekh, as we have seen, is the exception, rather than the rule. Even those who contest that political philosophy was in need of Rawls to revive it, tend to implicitly do so within the logic of the death of political philosophy. That is to say, they accept that political philosophy could die *and* equate the contemporary academic discipline with political philosophy itself. This limits the boundaries of the discipline to scholarly texts — or at least those that can be understood through the lens of scholarly texts — and, accordingly, delegitimizes non-academic practices of political philosophy. Understanding and recognizing those limits, however, requires a thorough assessment of the death of political philosophy itself rather than relying on the version that has “become a cliché in political theory”.¹⁶⁶ To do that, we need to return to reject the convenience of the myth of the death of political philosophy and interrogate what is meant by such a short hand. Accordingly, we need to return to the debates around which the death of political philosophy first emerged.

¹⁶⁶ Koikkalainen, “Peter Laslett and the Contested Concept of Political Philosophy,” 336.

CHAPTER TWO: The Many Deaths of Political Philosophy

And truly it little matters what I say, this or that or any other thing. Saying is inventing. Wrong, very rightly wrong. You invent nothing, you think you are inventing, you think you are escaping, and all you do is stammer out your lesson, the remnants of a pensum one day got by heart and long forgotten, life without tears, as it is wept.

- Samuel Beckett, *Nohow On*¹

2.1 Peter Laslett

When Peter Laslett declared that, “for the moment anyway, political philosophy is dead,” it was a sentiment equally echoed and challenged — the mourning of which led to an abundance of scholarly introspection as a variety of thinkers provided answers, explanations, and new avenues for political philosophy to pursue.² Yet, while a great deal of excellent philosophical scholarship arose out of these debates, even now it remains a question as to what evidence there existed at the time to support the death-knell. That scholarship often rested upon intuitions and personal anecdotes about the discipline instead of empirical and verifiable claims. It is an entirely appropriate form of argument to make, but it becomes significantly weaker when interlocutors stake out categorical positions and make absolute claims on such a basis. How many commanding works must be identified before the force of their absence is undermined? How many philosophical investigations must be found before we can suggest that Leo Strauss is indeed exaggerating when he says that “today political philosophy does not exist anymore, except as matter

¹ Samuel Beckett, *Nohow On* (1989; repr., New York: Grove Press, 1996): 31-2.

² Peter Laslett, “Introduction,” in *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Philosophy, Politics and Society 1 (Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1956), vii.

for burial”?³ It may be that deeper truths endure, obscured by the rubble of other arguments.

It is not altogether clear from where the death of political philosophy initially emerged as a concept in the discipline,⁴ but once it did, “[w]ith appalling swiftness, the judgment that political theory [was] on the verge of extinction ha[d] spread through the political science profession”.⁵ Although distinct from them, these debates would coincide with questions about the relationship of political theory to political science,⁶ Laslett is one of the key figures in the mythology⁷ that arose around these debates, but his offering did not come until 1956, a few years after Strauss had given his first public lectures about the dire state of political philosophy, and both David Easton and Alfred Cobban had already published articles on the decline of political theory.⁸ Even prior to that, in 1939, George Sabine seemed to make oblique reference to a similar disciplinary problem in “What Is a Political Theory” where he admitted to a “nostalgia for clear and distinct ideas

³ Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy?,” 12–13.

⁴ It appears to have *some* roots in twentieth century social contract theory — or the lack thereof — although even that was seemingly in on the ascent by 1941: “so far from having died with the controversies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the ‘contract theory’ is now being revived” (MacDonald 1941, 93). See also: H.D. Lewis, “Is There a Social Contract? I,” *Philosophy* 15, no. 57 (January 1940): 64–79.

⁵ Dante Germino, “The Revival of Political Theory,” *The Journal of Politics* 25, no. 3 (1963): 437.

⁶ See, for example, Roland Pennock: “Unless political philosophers have some familiarity with the ‘empirical propositions of political science’ and unless political scientists who choose the more ‘practical’ branches of the subject for their special domain have some understanding of, and appreciation for, the study of the value schemes they so cheerfully assume, there will be little chance for fruitful work for either. Until such changes occur, the commonplaces of political philosophy will seem esoteric to their ‘practical’ colleagues, and political science will lack the unity without which its claim to be a ‘discipline’ is tenuous indeed” (Pennock 1951, 1085).

⁷ Matt Matravers refers to the “commonly told story about political philosophy that begins with Peter Laslett’s famous statement of 1956” (Matravers 2008, 883).

⁸ Leo Strauss, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays* (Wayne State University Press, 1989). ; Easton, “The Decline of Modern Political Theory.” ; Alfred Cobban, “The Decline of Political Theory,” *Political Science Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (1953): 321–37.

that was more typical of the seventeenth than of the nineteenth century”.⁹ While Sabine is neither as explicit as Laslett nor as dramatic, this is more than just an attempt to provide foundational definitions about political theory: he seems to be calling for a return to political philosophy as the product of social and political “stress and strain” — as something that lives within the time it is written.¹⁰ Robert Lynd’s *Knowledge For What?*, also published in 1939, opens with the notion of the social sciences (within which he includes political science and theory) being in crisis.¹¹ Lynd is explicitly writing in the wake of the Great Depression and the beginning of World War II, and questioning the value of social scientists in such circumstances — as well as the difficulties inherent to ‘progress’ and ‘democracy’ as watchwords of twentieth-century America.

Easton and Cobban certainly leave room within their own arguments for those of Sabine and Lynd from earlier: Easton says that, “[c]ontemporary political thought lives parasitically on ideas a century old and, what is more discouraging, we see little prospect of the development of new political syntheses ... [and] this poverty of political theory can be attributed in large part to the kind of research in the field, during the last fifty years at least”; and Cobban goes further back in his claim that “there has been rather a long interval since there was last any original political thinking. It is necessary to go back to the eighteenth century to find it”.¹² What distinguishes those writing after WWII from earlier warnings about the state of the art is that there appears to be less of a tendency towards

⁹ George H. Sabine, “What Is a Political Theory?,” *The Journal of Politics* 1, no. 1 (February 1, 1939): 16.

¹⁰ Sabine, 3.

¹¹ Robert Lynd, *Knowledge For What?*, 1939, 1.

¹² Easton, “The Decline of Modern Political Theory,” 36; Cobban, “The Decline of Political Theory,” 325.

equivocation, as if there was no longer cause for hopeful optimism about the rationality of human beings amidst the rise of liberal democracy and in the wake of totalitarianism. It is not, however, merely a despair that arises from political events of the time period: the political climate helped reveal a problem within the academic and intellectual discipline itself. Thus, the rise of totalitarian politics and the inability of existing institutions to effectively navigate it is a different sort of problem than what will be called the death of political philosophy.

When Laslett offered his now-famous proclamation, it was rooted in neither statecraft nor the practice of writing but rather in an assessment of the formal discipline of political philosophy *as represented by the contents of academic journals* — and these journals should have contained writing (but did not) from “men whom we think of as political philosophers”.¹³ He does not, it seems, feel obligated to suggest how ‘we’ would identify these ‘men’. More specifically, however, his complaint is directly connected to the task of putting together an edited volume of political philosophy essays.¹⁴ In the follow-up volume to the first edition of *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Laslett (and W.G. Runciman) would soften that initial assertion: “It would be very satisfactory if we were able to proclaim the resurrection, unreservedly and with enthusiasm. We cannot quite; but

¹³ Laslett, “Introduction,” vii.

¹⁴ Petri Koikkalainen suggests that there is more to it than this: that there is a “positive or programmatic side of Laslett’s theorizing” and that understanding it allows for “a more profound understanding of Laslett’s proposed solutions to the crisis of political philosophy” (Koikkalainen 2009, 337). While Koikkalainen’s analysis is compelling, there is a revisionist sense to it: he wants to recover a version of Laslett’s claim that is distinct from how it was commonly understood — and, in doing so, Koikkalainen also helps place Laslett into the methodological debates that followed. This, however, is somewhat different from the way that Laslett’s initial claim was taken up in the broader discipline and, as such, is set aside for the purposes of this study.

the mood is very different and much more favourable than it was six years ago”.¹⁵ It is unclear what they meant with this vague distinction, other than perhaps saving face for the absolute and categorical nature of the initial claim. The academic climate had suddenly changed in some ill-defined way to make the prognosis more hopeful than it had been.

In a context where meaningful disciplinary movement can take centuries, half a decade hardly seems a sufficient time period for such a radical change to occur. Yet Laslett is not the only thinker to make such a suggestion: as Dante Germino would put it in 1963, “political theory today is rising from the ashes of its own destruction. Instead of acceding to the wishes of those who would schedule its funeral, we should instead be joyously commemorating its rebirth”.¹⁶ Brian Barry’s “The Strange Death of Political Philosophy” would serve a similar role, albeit retrospective rather than contemporaneous, of the discipline’s change from 1961 to 1980. He echoes the notion of the dire state of affairs:

You really could turn over whole volumes of the philosophic journals and find nothing about political philosophy ... not merely the paucity of material but the lack of any dialogue between the different contributions, such as they were.¹⁷

During the doctoral project that would eventually become *Political Argument*, Barry found that there was a distinct lack of “a ‘literature’ to which one could relate one’s work. There was nothing for it but make the stuff up as one went along”.¹⁸ Yet Barry too saw there to be something of a revival after Rawls: “If anything, the problem today is the opposite of the one I diagnosed back in 1961. I occasionally have a nightmarish feeling

¹⁵ Laslett and Runciman, “Introduction,” 1962, vii.

¹⁶ Germino, “The Revival of Political Theory,” 459.

¹⁷ Barry, “The Strange Death of Political Philosophy,” 283.

¹⁸ Barry, 280.

that ‘the literature’ has taken off on an independent life and now carries on like the broomsticks bewitched by the sorcerer’s apprentice”.¹⁹ By this Barry is pointing to what he had perceived as a disciplinary tendency, in the decades following *A Theory of Justice*, to avoid novel, difficult, and professionally dangerous work in favor of reliable topics and arguments. If the sheer number of journal submissions was a testament to disciplinary health, they rarely took the kind of risks that allowed great scholarship to emerge. This complicates the revival narrative somewhat, even if it was “perfectly understandable” for academics to prefer low-hanging fruit.²⁰ Still, Barry concludes that there has been “enormous change [and] rapid growth” in a number of fields that either make up of or are adjacent to political philosophy — and “on just about every topic discussed in *Political Argument* there is an elaborate article literature of assertion, rebuttal, modified assertion, synthesis and so on”.²¹ That there is further still to go does not change that sentiment.

Despite, however, the suggestion that, prior to 1971, there was a prolonged absence in periodicals of philosophical investigations on political subjects, Laslett’s own examination of the field proves that not to be the case:

A survey of our philosophical periodicals for the purposes of his collection gives the impression that their editors have often included articles on political subjects merely out of a sense of their conventional duty. Their contributors, too, sometimes give the feeling that they have turned their attention to political subjects only because the curriculum of their university requires it.²²

¹⁹ Barry, 283.

²⁰ Barry, 284.

²¹ Barry, 288; 283.

²² Laslett, “Introduction,” xi.

It is not that there were no political philosophy articles; some remained, but were of poor quality with respect to political philosophy concerns.²³ To suggest that political philosophy of the period is *bad* is an altogether different claim than that it is *dead* — though ultimately Laslett substantiates neither the quantitative nor the qualitative versions of his argument. The absence to which Barry points is explicitly about the quantity of scholarship, but he points out that the narrowness of this initial claim was around his own work and that there were other areas in which the situation did not appear so stark.

Isaiah Berlin, although he argues in favour of the health of political philosophy beyond the auspices of the titular discipline, is suggesting that *something* resembling political philosophy has died: “The principal symptom which seems to support this belief is that no commanding work of political philosophy has appeared in the twentieth century. By a commanding work in the field of general ideas I mean at the very least one that has in a large area converted paradoxes into platitudes or vice versa”.²⁴ Leaving aside the ambiguity of this definition, Berlin’s point is that there is a dearth of truly high-quality work within the field. While this is not the same as Laslett’s narrowing to only English-language works, it *is* a narrowing. Although Berlin is writing to suggest that political philosophy is not dead but has been transformed in novel and unpredictable ways,²⁵ his

²³. There is also a curiosity to the notion that there was a curricular duty or philosophical imperative to publish on politics. It is unclear that political philosophy was at all considered worthy of deferential treatment, let alone in the widespread manner that Laslett seems to imply.

²⁴ Berlin, “Does Political Theory Still Exist,” 59.

²⁵ Ernest Gellner articulates Berlin’s response to Laslett somewhat differently and in a more negative light: “It was Berlin who found a much more acceptable way out of this little difficulty. Political theorising was rendered *salonfähig* [acceptable in polite society] after all. Political philosophy was not to be exactly dead, but not too embarrassingly alive either. It ceased to be unassimilable to the then philosophical paradigm. Political theory would be the study of the

‘commanding works’ comment sheds light on a particular version of the death of political philosophy thesis.

Both Laslett and Berlin’s quantitative claims should be an easily settled empirical matter: define what is considered a political philosophy article, then count the number of them in each periodical and, for good measure, compare that with periods when political philosophy was said to be thriving — or, in the case of Berlin, do a similar survey of published texts. As Barry explains, such a study is not altogether unheard of: “*Political Theory* published a bibliography in its November 1977 issue which gives an indication in rough quantitative terms of the scale of the [Rawls] phenomenon”.²⁶ More than simply being an interesting historical detail, such an approach is helpful in understanding both the impact of Rawls upon the discipline and the speed with which it occurred: in nearly the same amount of time it took Laslett to revise his initial thesis about the state of the discipline, Rawls made his transition from a minor (if respected) thinker whose work was thought-provoking to a key figure in contemporary political thought such that the discipline was irrevocably changed. Of course, Rawls is not the only noteworthy contemporary thinker nor is his work the sole motivator for the outpouring of political philosophy that occurs in this period, but a quantitative examination allowed for a confirmation of a popular sentiment. The merits of Rawls’ significance or his value in relation to other thinkers could now be debated upon established foundations.

Laslett’s death of political philosophy claim was without similar footing. As P.H. Partridge wrote, “those who have been announcing the decay or death of classical politi-

history of ideas, and the ideas under investigation would not be doomed a priori to insulation and a merely local validity, each in its own cultural cocoon” (Gellner 2018, 6).

²⁶ Barry, “The Strange Death of Political Philosophy,” 284.

cal theory have as a rule taken less trouble to establish the fact of death or decay than to assert its causes".²⁷ It is difficult to speak to the veracity of either side from this vantage point in time. Perhaps there truly was a strong *feeling* that the discipline was in a poor state, but by simply asserting it these scholars' claims were ultimately unsatisfying to all but those who already agreed with them. There is validity to writing in this manner, but one of the drawbacks is that it makes the normative component of the project much more difficult. If the discipline is well and truly dead, then perhaps there is nothing to be done but mourn its passing. However, if there is even a spark of life within it, a clear articulation of the symptoms is far more valuable than a vague one, if only because we have to treat the disease as it appears in front of us, given the impossibility of returning to the first infection. Nor can any single thinker revitalize political philosophy by their effort alone: even Rawls would have been unworthy of the task if no one had responded to *A Theory of Justice*.²⁸

Such a mournful tone might be forgiven in introductory remarks to an edited volume, but the way that those prefatory thoughts were perpetuated, in both agreement and discord, meant that Laslett's quote became emblematic of the debates. This may not be an entirely fair result given that it was never his aim to provide a full and nuanced argument

²⁷ P.H. Partridge, "Politics, Philosophy, Ideology," *Political Studies* 9, no. 3 (October 1961): 217.

²⁸ If a political philosopher writes a book in the forest but no one reads it can we really count it as a work of political philosophy? Probably so, as long as it gets reviewed in a sufficiently reputable journal. After all, it is not the *reading* that matters, but the *responding*. Consider the way that Leo Strauss' *Persecution and the Art of Writing* has been taken to mean absurd methodological extremes that bear no resemblance to the arguments of the text itself. Would the boogiemans of esoteric reading have endured for so long had Strauss' critics actually read the text? It seems unlikely. As Daniel Bell wrote in response to twenty-five years of misreadings of *The End of Ideology*: "There are some books that are better known for their titles than their contents" (Bell 1988 [1960], 409).

about political philosophy writ large — Laslett’s remarks suggest that the tradition of *English* political philosophy “from Hobbes to Bosanquet ... has been broken” — but such is the force of history.²⁹ Cobban and Easton’s clearer theses of decline would be subsumed by what appeared to be articulations of the same argument that were more final and funereal. It is hard to feel too badly about Laslett’s transformation into a symbol for the death of political philosophy, given that his tradition excludes thinkers such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Hegel, all of whom are taken seriously as philosophers within the essays of *Philosophy, Politics and Society* itself — including his own contribution (if only in rebuttal, but taken seriously nonetheless). That Laslett has his own understanding of what counts as political philosophy is not itself a problem, but that he so casually seems to exclude fruitful avenues of thought only further highlights his failure to meaningfully support his argument with evidence. There is an inherent difficulty in proving an absence “as might be expected when the task has been to draw a circle round a hole”, but it is not an impossible task to come up with sufficient evidence to satisfy most observers.³⁰ Laslett does not even try and insists we take his word for it.

Laslett is clear that he begins with an “arbitrary definition of political philosophy”, although in merely acknowledging it he does nothing to make it less so.³¹ He even goes on to suggest notable omissions: Margaret MacDonald, Herbert Hart, and Karl Popper — who are all absent not because he considers them to be off poor quality, but because their publications were already found in other collections. He similarly suggests that one could make a “plausible case ... that there is abroad in the world a movement

²⁹ Laslett, “Introduction,” vii.

³⁰ Laslett, xi.

³¹ Laslett, xii.

growing every day more powerful for the restoration of a philosophy of all humanity ... which represents not the extinction of political philosophy but its metamorphosis”.³² Such efforts and examples, however, are insufficient for tempering his initial point about the discipline, because “it is a statement of vulgar prejudice, where vulgar means on the part of people at large, and prejudice a persistent belief in the existence of something, whether or not there is evidence for it”.³³ It would not be unfair to claim that Laslett has stated his belief and we are free to disagree, either in content or definition, but such disagreement will do nothing to assuage his strongly held sentiment.

We could perhaps try to rescue Laslett by suggesting that exemplary French and German thinkers are, in fact, part of the English tradition. Even if one were to ignore that such an appropriation would be questionable at best, those national and linguistic boundaries can be broken down easily enough by instead appealing to the entire Western tradition, but Laslett appears to have had little interest in doing so — at least in 1956. He wants to draw firm lines between political philosophy and aphilosophical disciplines of anthropology, psychology, and sociology — to say nothing of Marxists, linguistic philosophers, and the “new philosophical attitude” of analytic theories.³⁴

Yet, in the introduction to the second volume of *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Laslett’s point *does* become generalized to speak more broadly to the entire tradition of Western political thought and by then there is little need for him to explain his initial exclusions or more clearly define his terms. The term has become so common that what is meant by the death of political philosophy is simply understood at this point. In this sec-

³² Laslett, xii.

³³ Laslett, xii.

³⁴ Laslett, x.

ond volume, Laslett abandons the prior edition's "limitation to writers in [English]", clarifying both the purpose of *Philosophy, Politics and Society* as well as what was meant by the death of political philosophy.³⁵ Simultaneous with expanding the scope of inquiry, Laslett finds that "there are signs throughout this book of a new interest in political theory", although he does not suggest a causal relationship between his perceptions of disciplinary revival and broadening his gaze as to what counts as political philosophy.

Rawls' "Justice as Fairness" appears in the volume, albeit with nothing resembling the reverence with which he would come to be treated after writing *A Theory of Justice*. Laslett offers Rawls as noteworthy in that he comes closest to prescriptive political philosophy, but does not suggest that he rises to the level of "the forthright recommendations of traditional political theorists".³⁶ However, where in 1956 Laslett wrote about the *possibility* of political philosophy's revival, by 1962 he has become entirely optimistic about the prospect: "if and when a third series called *Philosophy, Politics and Society* appears in England it will record an attitude to political philosophy which has indeed been completely transformed, and that the transformation must be along the lines implied by the contents of the present volume".³⁷ This recalls his hope for the first volume as reviving, if only in some small measure, "a genuine political philosophy of the traditional sort".³⁸ It is not that Laslett sees the *Political, Philosophy and Society* series as itself an example of this renewed political philosophy, but that its offerings should be understood as street lamps that illuminate both the dead ends of the tradition and the paths

³⁵ Laslett and Runciman, "Introduction," 1962, vii.

³⁶ Laslett and Runciman, ix.

³⁷ Laslett and Runciman, x.

³⁸ Laslett, "Introduction," xiv.

that remain safe to tread. “Justice as Fairness” fits into this latter category, especially in hindsight as it will lead to *A Theory of Justice*, but Laslett deserves credit for recognizing the potential in Rawls’ early work to assuage his qualms about the discipline.

In 1961, James Holton suggested that “political philosophy today exists as little more than a shadow of its former self. It survives on the academic scene primarily in the form of courses devoted, appropriately enough, to the history of political philosophy”.³⁹ This is a much more clear articulation of the death thesis than Laslett’s — and it is a diagnosis that seems as appropriate today as it was half a century ago, given that university programs remain firmly dedicated to the historical approach: the subfield is not itself dedicated to the cultivation of political philosophers, but rather of historians of political philosophy — and at times this is expressed as a story about how we arrived at the modern liberal democratic state. Robert Dahl is likewise more precise in how he approaches the problem: “[i]n the English-speaking world, where so many of the interesting political problems have been solved (at least superficially), political theory is dead. In the Communist countries it is imprisoned. Elsewhere it is moribund”.⁴⁰

Holton and Dahl are something of a mirror to Cobban’s earlier “The Decline of Political Theory” which marks that decline as directly connected to the rise in democracy around the world which is itself a concept that “has ceased to be a living political idea ... [or] discussed seriously and in relation to the concrete problems of practical politics”.⁴¹ His essay is filled with unproven assertions that we are assured are true (or likely so), but

³⁹ James Holton, “Is Political Philosophy Dead?,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1961): 75.

⁴⁰ Robert A. Dahl, review of *Political Theory: Truth and Consequences*, by Bertrand de Jouvenel, *World Politics* 11, no. 1 (1958): 89.

⁴¹ Cobban, “The Decline of Political Theory,” 325.

“would require considerable space to attempt to justify” and “deserve[] a more elaborate discussion than can be given [in the paper]”.⁴² While Cobban’s argument might ultimately be on firm ground despite appearing to be sweeping generalization, rather than supporting his ultimate claim that political theory has declined, it comes across something like Fermat's Last Theorem.⁴³ Although Cobban may be said to equivocate somewhat by couching parts of his argument in conditional statements about what is to follow, “*if* political theory has become generally disengaged from practice... [emphasis added]”, his conclusions lose all pretense of being non-committal: “now that we have seen what politics devoid of a contemporary moral and political theory means, it is possible that something may be done about it”.⁴⁴

Political theory, so understood, has long been on the decline, and political life is in a dire state because of it. Indeed these various arguments can be read as a sort of origin story for the troubling political environment of the twentieth century: it is not that the grand task of political philosophy is complete and that this is a cause for celebration, but rather that political affairs are ill-served without contributions from those that “concern themselves with political and social relationships at the widest possible level of generality”.⁴⁵ That this is happening must be taken on the word of Cobban, Laslett, Dahl, and Holton (among others). As with many imagined state of nature thought experiments, it is not so much a matter of whether the death of political philosophy is factually true, but

⁴² Cobban, 325; 331.

⁴³ As marginalia in his copy of Diophantus’ *Arithmetica*, Pierre de Fermat wrote, “I have discovered a truly marvelous proof of this, which this margin is too narrow to contain” (qtd. in Panchishkin and Manin 2007, 341). It would go unsolved for three hundred fifty years.

⁴⁴ Cobban, “The Decline of Political Theory,” 332; 337.

⁴⁵ Laslett, “Introduction,” vii.

instead it is a question of the value of making such an argument: what theories, both pedagogical and practical, emerge (or are able to emerge) as a result of narratives of disciplinary decline?

2.2 *Leo Strauss*

It is at this point that the work of Leo Strauss comes most directly into focus. He too can be firmly placed within the camp of thinkers prone to making sweeping claims about the state of the discipline based on personal intuitions rather than empirical understandings:

Political philosophy is in a state of decay and perhaps of putrefaction, if it has not vanished altogether. Not only is there complete disagreement regarding its subject matter, its methods, and its function; its very possibility in any form has become questionable ... Furthermore, large segments of what formerly belonged to political philosophy or political science have become emancipated under the names of economics, sociology, and social psychology.⁴⁶

The decay of political philosophy into ideology reveals itself most obviously in the fact that in both research and teaching, political philosophy has been replaced by the history of political philosophy. This substitution can be excused as a well-meaning attempt to prevent, or at least to delay, the burial of a great tradition. In fact it is not merely a half measure but an absurdity: to replace political philosophy by the history of political philosophy means to replace a doctrine which claims to be true by a survey of more or less brilliant errors.⁴⁷

Yet even before he takes on an explicitly funereal tone with regards to political philosophy Strauss is writing about “the politicization of philosophy” which has resulted in the use of philosophy as “a weapon, and hence an instrument”.⁴⁸ The (relatively) recent political crises of the twentieth-century have helped to reveal a much deeper rot stretching back to *all* modern political philosophers. Over the next two decades, Strauss would hone

⁴⁶ Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy?,” 12.

⁴⁷ Strauss, *The City and Man*, 8.

⁴⁸ Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (1953; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 34.

and refine these arguments, arriving at the articulation that, “[t]he crisis of modernity is then primarily the crisis of modern political philosophy” which begins with “Hobbes’s radical break with the tradition of political philosophy [which] only continues, if in a very original manner, what had been done in the first place by Machiavelli”.⁴⁹ This, however, is only a refinement of his earlier suggestion that “[i]t was Machiavelli, that greater Columbus, who had discovered the continent on which Hobbes could erect his structure” — in much the same way that he would transform his two crises of modernity into three separate waves of the same crisis.⁵⁰ Even then, the initial arguments of *Natural Right and History* in 1953 were a continuation and expansion of his 1949 lectures for the University of Chicago, positioning him as one of the earliest *public* thinkers on the topic.⁵¹

Further still, although his 1945 essay, “On Classical Political Philosophy” largely avoids a direct engagement with what he will later call the crisis of modern political philosophy, the outlines of his future criticism can be inferred both by its introductory remarks and the overall argument. He intends the essay to “discuss especially those characteristic features of classical political philosophy which are in particular danger of being overlooked or insufficiently stressed by the schools that are most influential in our time”.⁵² This is a far cry from the much more decisive language that Strauss will take on only a few years later and it is unclear whether there is a defining moment that causes him to take on a more unequivocal position. Throughout the 1940s, while at the New

⁴⁹ Leo Strauss, “Three Waves of Modernity,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Hilail Gildin (1975; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 82; 84.

⁵⁰ Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 177.

⁵¹ Strauss, vii.

⁵² Leo Strauss, “On Classical Political Philosophy,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Hilail Gildin (1945; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 59.

School, Strauss was an adjunct lecturer at a number of colleges in the American northwest, and his more definitive stance may have been an evolution arising out of his experiences at these institutions — or it may be that his permanent appointment in 1949 to the University of Chicago was itself the impetus.⁵³

Regardless, what started as a dissatisfaction with the political philosophy tradition's lack of attention to who he believed were significant medieval thinkers developed into a general malaise towards Western political thought — and, more specifically, to the way that American thought had succumbed to German political philosophy: “It would not be the first time that a nation, defeated on the battlefield and, as it were, annihilated as a political being, has deprived its conquerors of the most sublime fruit of victory by imposing on them the yoke of its own thought”.⁵⁴ Thus, instead of being rejected in defeat, the logic that allowed for the conditions of World War II endured in American social sciences and, given the manner by which the United States was becoming the philosophical centre of the West, it all but ensured that the centre would not hold. The problem is not that this logic will lead America to a similar crisis as that of Weimar Germany, but rather that it a form of willful blindness to the difficult realities of *any* political situation: “one may say of [political philosophy] that it fiddles while Rome burns. It is excused by two facts: it does not know that it fiddles, and it does not know that Rome burns”.⁵⁵ *This* is Strauss' crisis of modern political philosophy.

⁵³ Eugene R. Sheppard, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of Exile: The Making of a Political Philosopher* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2006), 90, 116.

⁵⁴ Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 9.

⁵⁵ Leo Strauss, “An Epilogue,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Hilail Gildin (1962; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 155.

However, Strauss' crisis (or death) of political philosophy is actually rooted in two separate, but related claims: first, that the practice of political philosophy has reached a dead-end — and the modern turn(s) away from natural rights is the culprit; second, that the academic discipline of political philosophy is neither political nor philosophical, but rather has been infiltrated by, at best, ideologues, and, at worst, historians and scientists.

On the first point, it would be more precise to say that Strauss understands contemporary political philosophy as living entirely within a *series* of dead-ends: first, that which was arrived at by Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke; then, after retreading from where they left us, Rousseau begins “the second wave of modernity” which is then taken up by Kant and Hegel; and then Nietzsche, finding political philosophy at yet another impasse marked by “trying to preserve biblical morality while abandoning biblical faith”, attempts to revive it by appealing to the will to power.⁵⁶ According to Strauss, eschewing natural rights has gotten progressively worse with each of these waves, but the “disastrous consequences” of the contemporary version of such a turn are the inevitable result of the initial rejection.⁵⁷ That Machiavelli would “give advice with equal competence and alacrity to tyrants as well as to free peoples” is to be understood as being as nihilistic as the modern fascism that arises out of Nietzsche and Heidegger.⁵⁸ The failure in modern political philosophy to admit the existence of Truth — or to outright reject the possibility thereof — is to be taken as evidence that political philosophy is dead, because Truth is a

⁵⁶ Leo Strauss, “Progress or Return? The Contemporary Crisis in Western Civilization,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Hilail Gildin (1981; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 265.

⁵⁷ Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 3.

⁵⁸ Strauss, 4.

necessary condition for the very possibility of Strauss's conception of political philosophy.

Rejecting Truth as a philosophical position only becomes a *political* problem insofar as it becomes widespread. Individual nihilists may be inconvenient, but nihilism as a cultural or political stance is capable of shaking the very foundations of a society. This is what Strauss means by the crisis of modernity: we find ourselves in an era that has replaced truth claims with scientific knowledge, without regard for the fact that "scientific knowledge cannot validate value judgments; it is limited to factual judgments".⁵⁹ Reason alone is not enough and relying solely upon it silences the human being from the small, still voice of revelation — an experience that is fundamentally irrational, whether it be divine, moral, or even aesthetic. According to Strauss, "there is a variety of values which are the same rank, whose demands conflict with one another, and whose conflict cannot be solved by human reason".⁶⁰ If this is the case then crisis is inevitable when we liberate ourselves from the responsibility to act in accordance with the full measure of our abilities; and to be irrational, to have faith in that which is true but ultimately unprovable, is as necessary to the human being as rationality itself.

Strauss is not alone in these considerations: Hannah Arendt is another thinker concerned with the decline of political philosophy on the grounds of its intellectual collapse, but where Strauss identifies this as rooted in the philosophical turn towards modernity (as marked by Machiavelli and Hobbes), Arendt presents historical phenomena as having fundamentally altered the human condition such that particular modes of philoso-

⁵⁹ Strauss, "Three Waves of Modernity," 82.

⁶⁰ Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 42.

phy are no longer possible. Yet both are rooted in scientific understandings of the world: for Strauss, it is the science of politics; and for Arendt, it is “the scientific revolution [which] amounted to the conviction that true knowledge is to be derived, not from contemplation, but from the work of men’s hands ... [or] the rise of modern experimental science”.⁶¹

They may differ on the root cause, but each identifies the 17th-century — home to both Thomas Hobbes and Galileo Galilei — as the important in the development of the crisis of modern life in which value judgements are either made to be entirely contingent on circumstance or no longer politically permitted:

Who, then, is the first political philosopher who explicitly rejected all earlier political philosophy as fundamentally insufficient and even unsound? There is no difficulty regarding the answer: the man in question was Hobbes.⁶²

[T]he pivot of Hobbes’s political teaching is power. Power is infinitely more businesslike than glory. Far from being the goal of a lofty or demonic longing, it is required by, or the expression of, a cold objective necessity. Power is morally neutral. Or, what is the same thing, it is ambiguous if of concealed ambiguity. Power, and the concern with power, lack the direct human appeal of glory and the concern with glory. It emerges through an estrangement from man’s primary motivation.⁶³

The modern astrophysical world view, which began with Galileo, and its challenge to the adequacy of the senses to reveal reality, have left us a universe of whose qualities we know no more than the way they affect our measuring instruments ... Instead of objective qualities, in other words, we find instruments, and instead of nature or the universe—in the worse of Heisenberg—man encounters only himself.⁶⁴

Strauss’ solution is a difficult point to untangle in his thought: while he has a certain degree of nostalgia for classical thinkers, there is also considerable respect for thinkers

⁶¹ Lessnoff, *Political Philosophers of the Twentieth Century*, 75.

⁶² Strauss, “Three Waves of Modernity,” 83-4.

⁶³ Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy?,” 50.

⁶⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 261.

within the turn towards modernity. Hilail Gildin suggests that Strauss sought to “revive political philosophy as it was practiced by thinkers like Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Montesquieu”.⁶⁵ As Rafael Major points out, this reading of Strauss was fairly common amidst the death of political philosophy debates —and beyond:

The reviews [of *What Is Political Philosophy?*] are clearly unified in the conclusion that Strauss desires a return to the practical teaching of classical philosophers like Plato and Aristotle ... Further, both negative and positive reviewers stand in agreement that Strauss fails to prove his thesis as they understand it. The book appears to them as unsystematic in its approach, because it fails to deliver what it apparently advocates.⁶⁶

[Stanley] Rothman assumes that Strauss’s criticism of modern social science, combined with his apparent appeal to the superiority of classical thought, amounts to a claim to know some transcendent good. Again, we are confronted with the assertion that Strauss seeks to articulate grounds for a prescriptive return to classical political life.⁶⁷

As Major suggests, “it is difficult to establish evidence from Strauss’s text to support [these] conclusions”.⁶⁸ Gildin, Rothman, and the early critics fail to meaningfully engage with two key ideas that would trouble their readings: the first, that Strauss’ turn towards Jewish and Islamic political thought appears to present something of a contradiction; and, second, that Strauss himself is clear that we cannot simply erase the lessons of those who followed them and return to other modes of philosophizing:

The theory of liberal democracy, as well as of communism, originated in the first and second waves of modernity; the political implication of the third wave proved to be fascism. Yet this undeniable fact does not permit us to return to the earlier

⁶⁵ Leo Strauss, “Introduction,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Hilail Gildin (1945; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), vii.

⁶⁶ Rafael Major, “Thinking Through Strauss’s Legacy,” in *Leo Strauss’s Defense of the Philosophic Life: Reading “What Is Political Philosophy?”*, ed. Rafael Major (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 5.

⁶⁷ Major, 10.

⁶⁸ Major, 1.

forms of modern thought: the critique of modern rationalism or of the modern belief in reason by Nietzsche cannot be dismissed or forgotten.⁶⁹

Living now, as we do, in a world in which modern political philosophy has occurred, *we cannot go back* — nor, at least according to Zuckert and Zuckert, would Strauss want to, even if we could: “By reraising the questions or irreconcilable tensions, Strauss explicitly admitted that none of the previously given answers or solutions was adequate ... [and n]ew circumstances called for new responses”.⁷⁰ To better appreciate just how difficult this point is to understanding Strauss’ thought, *Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy* and *Leo Strauss’ Defense of the Philosophic Life* provide, if not answers, at least the right questions. Those questions suggest that it is a misnomer to call anything political philosophy that is written in the twentieth century that fails to engage meaningfully with the new circumstances of the twentieth century.⁷¹

The second death can then be seen to follow from the first, even if it is of considerably less concern to Strauss. The academic pursuit of facts in political philosophy is a problem in that it is contradictory to the task at hand, but “the majority of the great political philosophers were not university professors”.⁷² It may be true that the discipline of political philosophy has left aside all semblance of truth, but *that* is hardly to be blamed for the crisis of modernity: despite what its opponents (and occasionally its practitioners) would believe, such a bold claim far exaggerates the reach and grasp of the discipline.

⁶⁹ Strauss, “Three Waves of Modernity,” 124.

⁷⁰ Zuckert and Zuckert, *Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy*, XX.

⁷¹ Arendt’s attempts to resolve this are considerably more straightforward: by returning to classical thinkers, she inverts their hierarchy in which the contemplative life sits over and above the political one: “Arendt turns to politics because it alone can save us from the crippling process of modern subjectivism” (Beiner 1990, 240).

⁷² Strauss, “Three Waves of Modernity,” 82.

Instead it has left the noble pursuit behind in favour of a series of intellectual debates about authorial intent, factual details, or historical context, none of which are themselves actually philosophical inquiries. Such things can serve as a prelude to philosophy, but, absent a meaningful engagement with truth, this scientific approach is, at best, merely an entertaining diversion. Yet even if this “new science of politics”, as Strauss calls it, is not the cause of the modern crisis, it shares blame enough for the states of things today, because those once best suited to acknowledging the immensity of the problem facing us have instead turned away from it.⁷³

This helps to distinguish the ‘death of political philosophy’ from the ‘crisis of liberal democracy’ that Strauss writes about, and then, as we will see later in this chapter, separate both from the ‘end of ideology’ theses. It may be the case that these are all identical phenomena — or, at least, different faces of the same die — but mere chronological proximity and the tendency of academics to lump these ideas together is insufficient to substantiate their homogeneity. If they are indeed the same concepts, insufficient work has been done to prove that. It is my contention that better understanding the death of political philosophy can help academics *and* political philosophers navigate their place within the various notions of political crisis or decline. By simply consolidating all of these claims into the same idea, we risk mistaking symptoms for the disease; it may well be that the state of the discipline, rather than being the same as the state of liberal democracy, is actually the result of it.

⁷³ Leo Strauss, “An Epilogue,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Hilail Gildin (1962; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 125–55.

2.3 Alfred Cobban

Alfred Cobban is a helpful interlocutor for understanding this point — and Dante Germino, writing in the decade following, offers him⁷⁴ as “[h]eading the professional mourners ... who has done as much as anyone to establish the allegation that political theory is in lamentable decline as a virtually unchallenged cliché”.⁷⁵ Cobban’s “The Decline of Political Theory”⁷⁶ articulates a vision of political philosophy as iterative, if not progressive — that is to say, “[t]he conditions of social life alter ... and as they alter, the words we use, and ideas they convey, lose old meanings and acquire new ones”.⁷⁷ It may be the case that there are timeless truths that endure through all ages, but the human being is not itself perennial; to believe that any of our theories of politics, even the grandest or most coherent, are anything more than particular utterances of eternal ideas is what Cobban calls “sophism of the ephemeral”.⁷⁸ It may be that there are grand thinkers whose ideas endure far beyond their own works and lives, but they do not become abstractions that can be accessed independently of context. Rather, they become rooted in our new contexts from which we access, translate, and understand them. While efforts can be made to return, so to speak, to the past in which the ideas emerged, that process is always embedded elsewhere.

The decline to which Cobban refers is not merely a problem of philosophy, but of political life in general. As if in an attempt to avoid ever returning to the horrors of the

⁷⁴ Although it should be noted that he says this without particularly substantiating Cobban as *the* head.

⁷⁵ Germino, “The Revival of Political Theory,” 437.

⁷⁶ Which would later become an important frame for his book *In Search of Humanity: The Role of the Enlightenment in Modern History*.

⁷⁷ Cobban, “The Decline of Political Theory,” 321.

⁷⁸ Cobban, 322.

twentieth century, democracy has become *the* theory of politics. It is not merely dominant, but absolute:

[D]emocracy, for lack of thought, has ceased to be a living political idea. It has become a shibboleth, and not even serviceable as such. A password is no good when all the hostile camps use it indiscriminately. For the most part it has ceased to be discussed seriously and in relation to the concrete problems of practical politics. It has largely become a meaningless formula.⁷⁹

Humanity is caught in a cul-de-sac.⁸⁰

In the wake of fascism and totalitarianism, politicians, philosophers, and citizens alike have turned away from anything resembling politics. What once went by that name is either, in existing democracies, mere administration or, amidst the masses in undemocratic nations, “a state of mystic faith” in an almost wholly unexperienced idea.⁸¹ One could even go so far as to suggest that most citizens living within democracies are without practical experience of democracy, but that has not stopped them from passing on the notion like a modern day Epistle to the Hebrews; for those without even that nominal contact with popular government, democracy has taken on “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”.⁸² Everywhere, then, the human being as a political animal is facing extinction.

While political life for democratic citizens is certainly in dire straits, according to Cobban’s formulation, much of the blame is to be laid at the feet of theorists and philosophers: “The politician who merely repeats platitudes is no worse than his own experts; he is not to be singled out for criticism. And how can he be held responsible for failing to

⁷⁹ Cobban, 325.

⁸⁰ Cobban, 327.

⁸¹ Cobban, 325.

⁸² Heb 1:1 New King James Version.

translate political theory into practice if there is no theory to be translated?”⁸³ The situation in which Cobban finds himself is the direct result of philosophies devoid of practice: “[i]t has become instead an academic discipline, written in various esoteric jargons almost as though for the purpose of preventing it from being understood by those who, if they did understand it, might try to put it into practice”.⁸⁴ In doing so, political philosophy is inaccessible to those who engage in politics. Even if one wishes to be generous and grant that the ‘jargon’ of political philosophy is not an attempt at building walls against the masses, but rather an accident arising out of a desire for neutrality and impartiality, the result is same: a discipline that was once rooted in practical wisdom and life amidst others has become isolated and apolitical. Put another way, Cobban’s great philosophers were not *merely* philosophers, instead they were *also* philosophers, in addition to their unquestionably practical — that is to say, *political* — lives: “Political theory in the past, I suggest, was essentially practical. The political theorist, in his way, was a party man, and party men themselves used not to be afraid to season their practice with the salt of theory”.⁸⁵ An impoverished political philosophy is bad enough, but Cobban is suggesting that it has also had a corrupting influence on the human being as a political animal.

Like Strauss, Cobban sees the state of political philosophy as the direct result of the intrusion (or corruption) of two forces: history and science. The historian attempts to avoid value judgements about their topic of study and, in doing so, prevent themselves from “thinking about the problems of political theory at all”.⁸⁶ That they inadvertently

⁸³ Cobban, “The Decline of Political Theory,” 328.

⁸⁴ Cobban, 331.

⁸⁵ Cobban, 330.

⁸⁶ Cobban, 333.

bring in their own moral and ethical perspectives can only ever result in an accidental political philosophy rather than a clear and conscious effort to distinguish the good from the bad, or even merely other competing lesser goods. Cobban seems to suggest that such a thing as *accidental* political philosophy is possible, as historians “take their political ideals from some other source and carry them into their history. This is, fortunately, almost unavoidable, though it might be a good thing if they were a little more conscious of the ideals they are in fact applying and inculcating through their histories”.⁸⁷ This is a notion which appears wholly contrary to Strauss’ conception of the discipline, but where Strauss would label such work as not political philosophy at all, Cobban seems satisfied in simply labeling it of poor quality.

The scientific political philosopher, however, is a contradiction of terms. That “science has influenced political thinking practically from the beginning” is undeniable, but Cobban wants to clearly distinguish between political science and political philosophy.⁸⁸ Whereas Cobban’s historian can be said to incidentally engage in political philosophy, there is no such possibility for the scientist because “it is not the function of science to pass ethical judgments. That statement can hardly be questioned”.⁸⁹ Insofar as a scientific thinker is interested in the moral or ethical quandaries of their work, *they cease to be scientists*. Cobban pushes this one step further to suggest that “what is called political science ... seems to [him] a device, invented by university teachers, for avoiding that dangerous subject politics, without achieving science”.⁹⁰ The political scientist, then, of-

⁸⁷ Cobban, 333.

⁸⁸ Cobban, 334.

⁸⁹ Cobban, 335.

⁹⁰ Cobban, 335.

fers little more than training in bureaucracy and administration of government, far removed from the from the fraught waters of value judgments. Cobban offers a compelling metaphor:

The state appears as a ship in the sea of politics, with no port of embarkation or destination inscribed on its papers, manned by a pressed crew, whose whole endeavor is devoted to the task of keeping the vessel afloat in uncharted waters, with little to help them save their own traditional seamanship, and the records of earlier captains and crews who have for all time been tossed on the seas in the same endless, meaningless motion.⁹¹

While Cobban admits that “we need not take the picture too seriously: it is only an analogy, and analogies are the camouflage of loose thinking”, he does think it a helpful lens for understanding the trouble of the situation.⁹² The decline of political theory does not truly mean that politics is without aim. Politics requires a conception of the good and, absent coherent, rational, and measured approaches, irrationality has been left as the only guide through troubled waters. What the political scientist does is to proclaim that the ship of state is safest in harbor, but just as that is not what ships are built for, neither is that what the state is for — and, worse still, we have already long been at sea.

Ultimately, Cobban is not wholly opposed to those who attempt to delve into the problems of administration and bureaucracy that come along with politics nor does he entirely reject a science of politics, but neither should be considered sufficient value judgments for the grounding of politics itself. Neither faith nor science nor history can provide coherent foundations upon which politics can occur; and, given that all political action requires some basis, political actors will satisfy themselves with incoherent foundations.

⁹¹ Cobban, 336.

⁹² Cobban, 336.

Andrew Hacker only alludes to the death of political philosophy in the introductory chapter of *Political Theory: Philosophy, Ideology, Science*, but the journal article on which that chapter is based⁹³ is explicitly connected to the death thesis. Beginning from the flaws in David Easton's version, Hacker aims towards his own critical understanding that bears some resemblance to Cobban's.⁹⁴ Hacker is suggesting that there is a widespread absence of and a lack of respect for "political conscience" in the discipline.⁹⁵ There are likely twentieth century thinkers who display this virtue, but he is not interested in identifying them:

It is probably wise to err on the side of conservatism and to suggest that it usually takes a full century to discovery whether a book and author have the stature which makes for intellectual survival. There is no doubt that there are currently in our midst writers who will one day have the standing of Hobbes, Locke, and Hegel. But it would be premature to pick out any of these theorists now and mark them for eternity; the responsibility for deciding who is to be added to the role of immortals had better wait until the next generation.⁹⁶

1961 is too soon, by this measure, to confidently speak about the next Great Mind after Mill. Instead, Hacker's call is methodological: "Political theory must catch up with the rest of the social sciences. And this will only be done if much of the excess historical, biographical, and logical baggage which surrounds the 'Great Books' is ruthlessly thrown overboard".⁹⁷ The absence of the death thesis in the later book does not seem to be because Hacker has changed his mind in the intervening seven years, but rather is because

⁹³ Andrew Hacker, "Capital and Carbuncles: The 'Great Books' Reappraised," *American Political Science Review* 48, no. 3 (September 1954): 775–86.

⁹⁴ In fact, Hacker cites Cobban's "The Decline of Political Theory", albeit not directly in reference to the death thesis itself.

⁹⁵ Andrew Hacker, *Political Theory: Philosophy, Ideology, Science* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), 19.

⁹⁶ Hacker, ix.

⁹⁷ Hacker, "Capital and Carbuncles: The 'Great Books' Reappraised," 786.

the latter version is no longer a call to action: Hacker has attempted to present the traditional canon of political philosophy⁹⁸ in precisely the manner that he had previously called for.

The emphasis on the rise of democracy puts Cobban and Hacker in the company of Daniel Bell and Edward Shils, although there is a clear distinction to be made between Cobban's lamentations and the full range of 'end of ideology' theorists. The concept of the end of ideology shares a name with the ideas of Georg Hegel, Karl Marx, and Karl Mannheim, but rather than being a continuation of those notions,⁹⁹ the end of ideology thesis of the 1950s emerges anew first with Raymond Aron's *The Opium of the Intellectuals* and Edward Shils' "The End of Ideology?" and "Ideology and Civility": "While Aron provides the blueprint for the end of ideology, Shils gives the thesis its distinctly 'celebrationist' tone".¹⁰⁰ However, it would be from Daniel Bell and Seymour Lipset that this new conception of "the end of ideology received its sharpest phrasing", elevating the thesis to widespread controversy and it was "attacked almost as soon as it was articulated [by Bell]".¹⁰¹ This notion of ideological decline became synonymous with Daniel Bell similar to how Laslett's claim "became the text most cited from [*Philosophy, Politics and*

⁹⁸ Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Bentham, Hegel, de Tocqueville, Marx and Engels, and Mill.

⁹⁹ See: Seymour Lipset's "Ideology and no End" and "The End of Ideology and the Ideology of the Intellectuals", Howard Brick's *Daniel Bell and the Decline of Intellectual Radicalism*, Nathan Liebowitz's *Daniel Bell and the Agony of Modern Liberalism*, and David Morrice's *Philosophy, Science and Ideology in Political Thought*.

¹⁰⁰ Nathan Liebowitz, *Daniel Bell and the Agony of Modern Liberalism* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), 21.

¹⁰¹ Liebowitz, *Daniel Bell and the Agony of Modern Liberalism*; Morrice, *Philosophy, Science and Ideology in Political Thought*, 17.

Society”.¹⁰² Yet it is a mistake to think of the death of political philosophy as “one part of the end of ideology” as Melvin Richter does nor should we think of Laslett as a “British variant of the ‘end of ideology’ thesis”, as Kari Palonen attributes to Quentin Skinner, if only because of the fact that they began from very different sets of claims.¹⁰³ Gabriel Almond even goes so far as to offer the end of ideology as an example of the “[m]arketlike metaphors [that] were in quite general use in the analysis of democratic and American politics”.¹⁰⁴

It is Shils who seems to coin the modern ‘end of ideology’ usage with the title of his response paper to the 1955 Milan Conference filled — perhaps overfilled, given the depth of his account — with serious and rigorous engagements with political philosophy. He admits that a consensus, of sorts, arose around understanding the “end of ideological enthusiasm”.¹⁰⁵ While Shils avoids explicitly defining this notion, he references *The Opium of the Intellectuals* as setting this theme for the conference:

Aron pointed out that the underpinnings of the great ideological conflicts of the first part of the century had largely been pulled out. The once unequivocal distinction between ‘right’ and ‘left’ has been damaged by the knowledge that combinations once alleged by extremist doctrines to be impossible—combinations like collective ownership and tyranny, progressive social policies and full employment under capitalisation, large-scale governmental controls with public liberties—are actually possible.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Laslett and Runciman, “Introduction,” 1962, vii.

¹⁰³ Melvin Richter, *Political Theory and Political Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 7; Kari Palonen, *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 12.

¹⁰⁴ Gabriel A. Almond, *A Discipline Divided: Schools and Sects in Political Science* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990), 117.

¹⁰⁵ Edward Shils, “The End of Ideology?,” *Encounter* 5, no. 5 (1955): 53.

¹⁰⁶ Shils, 53.

Bell would articulate this as an era in which, as the subtitle of his book claims, ideologies have been ‘exhausted’ — or, at least, those political ideas which guided the conflicts of the nineteenth and twentieth century have “lost their ‘truth’ and their power to persuade”.¹⁰⁷ It is certainly the case that these tired ideologies are still around, both in politics and academic life, but they have become wholly devoid of legitimacy, like old money from a long forgotten nation. There are those who still try to use them, but they are without backing, intellectual or otherwise. The end of ideology thesis is thus a celebration of the triumph of the liberal democratic welfare state over the radical philosophies rooted in Marxism, while simultaneously being a call to action — or, inaction, to be more precise:

If the end of ideology has any meaning, it is to ask for the end of rhetoric, and rhetoricians, of ‘revolution’ of the day when the young French anarchist Vaillant tossed a bomb into the Chamber of Deputies, and the literary critic Laurent Tailhade declared in his defense: “What do a few human lives matter; it was a *beau geste*.” (A *beau geste* that ended, one might say, in a mirthless jest: two years later, Tailhade lost an eye when a bomb was thrown into a restaurant.)¹⁰⁸

That Bell understands Tailhade as little more than an empty rhetorician is divorced from the reality that, even after becoming a victim of anarchist violence, “[he] did not change his mind or dampen his enthusiasm, and he remained a staunch supporter of anarchism”.¹⁰⁹ The declaration that “nineteenth century ideologies, particularly Marxism, as intellectual systems that could claim *truth* for their views of the world” is taken as granted, but without meaningfully engaging with the notion that its proponents fundamentally

¹⁰⁷ Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (1960; repr., Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1988), 402.

¹⁰⁸ Bell, 406.

¹⁰⁹ Pierre Aubery, “The Anarchism of the Literati of the Symbolist Period,” *The French Review* 42, no. 1 (October 1968): 43.

disagreed.¹¹⁰ Would the end of ideologists have been so quick in their proclamations had they began from the assumption that anti-democratic thought was more than simply rhetorical posturing?

These debates would continue through to Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History?" and beyond, but while they are related to and have intersections with the death of political philosophy, they ultimately differ from it fairly dramatically. Daniel Bell's 1988 revision to *The End of Ideology* would directly contest the "charade" that had emerged seemingly independent of the book's argument,¹¹¹ as exemplified by Quentin Skinner, that titular concept should be "equate[d] with the belief that political philosophy is finished".¹¹² The end of ideology theses were not rooted in questioning the efficacy of intellectual disciplines, but rather in identifying and explaining a perceived sociological phenomena: the success of the welfare state. As John T. Jost is helpful in understanding, the end of ideology is a more broad ranging thesis that "was extremely influential in the social and behavioral sciences, including psychology".¹¹³ Indeed the liveliness of conversations around ideology, which included some of the same thinkers and drew upon similar

¹¹⁰ Bell, 16.

¹¹¹ It this, Bell's 'end of ideology' actually shares something significant in common with the death of political philosophy: it likewise became a disciplinary shorthand that was emptied of its original meaning — insofar as the concept was wholly coherent to start with — and it was filled with whatever its critics wanted it to be. It is entirely possible that my usage here would be considered to have fallen into precisely that trap. While it is certainly reasonable for Bell to suggest that he has been misunderstood, it is difficult to be wholly sympathetic given that it takes him four-hundred pages to make this particular point. Furthermore, as Hannah Arendt reminds us, "[e]ach time you write something and you send it out into the world and it becomes public, obviously everybody is free to do with it what he pleases, and this is as it should be. I do not have any quarrel with this. You should not try to hold your hand now on whatever may happen to what you have been thinking for yourself. You should rather try to learn from what other people do with it". (qtd. in Arendt 1998 [1959], xx). Regardless, I leave unpacking the end of ideology to another doctoral candidate.

¹¹² Bell, 409n1

¹¹³ John T. Jost, "The End of the End of Ideology," *American Psychology* 61, no. 7 (2006): 651.

texts as the debates around the death of political philosophy, were influential in the rise of their accompanying disciplines.

Judith Shklar occupies a complex position amidst here, sometimes seen as an interlocutor in the end of ideology debates¹¹⁴ — writing that “a curious situation exists in which everyone talks about or around politics, but no one really cares - at least, no one is sufficiently concerned philosophically to be capable of renewing the traditional political theory” and the end of radicalism in politics — yet she identifies this as stretching back to “a decline of social optimism and radicalism [and] also the passing of political philosophy” that arose from the apolitical romanticism of the counter-Enlightenment.¹¹⁵ This differs from those, like Sheldon Wolin, who put her concerns alongside the disciplinary mourners. To position Shklar amongst the ideology debates, however, is not an entirely unfair decision as she was explicitly interested in the absence of ideological commitments in twentieth century philosophical thought:

How great a part does ideology play in political theory now? If we mean ideology in the strong old sense, as an explanation of social change, a setting of future goals, and a call to public organization and action, it is not much in evidence. Nor have there been any new ideologies for many years. We are not so creative in that respect as the nineteenth-century thinkers were.¹¹⁶

[T]he longing for utopia and nostalgia for antiquity are inseparable. And indeed the question, 'why is there no utopia?' expresses not only an urge to return to

¹¹⁴ See: Russell Jacoby, *The End Of Utopia: Politics And Culture In An Age Of Apathy* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 4; Fátima Vieira, “The Concept of Utopia,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, ed. Gregory Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 19n20; Forrester, “Hope and Memory in the Thought of Judith Shklar,” 599n41; Marc Stears, *Demanding Democracy: American Radicals in Search of a New Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 122n14.

¹¹⁵ Judith Shklar, *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith* (1957; repr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 269; 25.

¹¹⁶ Judith Shklar, “Injustice, Injury, and Inequality: An Introduction,” in *Justice and Equality Here and Now*, ed. Frank S. Lucash (New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), 15.

antiquity, but also, and far more importantly, a sense of frustration at our inability to think as creatively as the ancients apparently did ... Long after Platonic metaphysics and the critical-contemplative mode of thought had been abandoned, classical imagery and values retained their hold on the political imagination, and classical methods of description and argument continued to mold the expression of political ideas in a social context in which classicism had ceased to be relevant. In this respect, all the ideologies served to retard political thinking. Their decline now left political theory without any clear orientation and so with a sense of uneasiness. It is not that political theory is dead, as has often been claimed, but that so much of it consists of an incantation of clichés which seem to have no relation to social experiences whose character is more sensed than expressed.¹¹⁷

As Katrina Forrest suggests, “Shklar may not have observed a crisis of modernity, but nor did she see in 1950s America the glorious triumph of modernization or democracy”.¹¹⁸

When Shklar claims that “[t]he grand tradition of political theory that began with Plato is, then, in abeyance” after the decline of philosophical radicalism, we can see her as occupying a middle ground of sorts between the dour pessimism of Strauss and groundless optimism in democracy of the end of ideologists.¹¹⁹ It remains a live question as to whether this is uniquely a problem for political philosophy or, as Wendell Berry suggests:

[t]he predicament of literature within the university is not fundamentally different from the predicament of any other discipline, which is not fundamentally different from the predicament of language. That is, the various disciplines have ceased to speak to each other; they have become too specialized, and this overspecialization, this separation, of the disciplines has been enabled and enforced by the specialization of their languages.¹²⁰

Conclusion

While the above thinkers do not amount to the sum total of theorists writing about the death of political philosophy nor do they represent all the subtle nuances of such posi-

¹¹⁷ Judith Shklar, “The Political Theory of Utopia: From Melancholy to Nostalgia,” *Daedalus* 94, no. 2 (Spring 1965): 378–79.

¹¹⁸ Forrester, “Hope and Memory in the Thought of Judith Shklar,” 599.

¹¹⁹ Shklar, *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith*, 272.

¹²⁰ Wendell Berry, *The Loss of the University* (1987; repr., Trinity Forum Readings, 2013), 1.

tions, they are a sufficiently representative sample that the various frames of decline can be articulated. Take for example, the lack of in depth attention to David Easton and the rise of behaviouralism or Quentin Skinner and the methodological questions from the Cambridge School: Easton is undeniably an influential figure in the history of the discipline and his complaints about a lack of attention to “empirically-oriented theory” would appear, at first glance, to be a worthwhile consideration in relation to my own arguments about emphatic, disciplinary claims without sufficient evidence; and the Cambridge School pushed philosophers to attend to questions of method over of the last quarter of the 20th century.¹²¹ Yet as important as they may have been, with regards to the death of political philosophy, both thinkers can be seen as variations on the categories below rather than wholly new approaches. So, when speaking pessimistically¹²² of the death of political philosophy a thinker could be taken to mean that:

- A. Nobody is writing philosophically about political things,¹²³
- B. The quality of work that *is* being done fails to rise to the level of the great minds of the Western canon;
- C. Writing in the political philosophy mode has become almost wholly unintelligible to those who engage in politics¹²⁴ — and thus the discipline has siloed itself off from those who could most directly benefit from the work;

¹²¹ Easton, “The Decline of Modern Political Theory,” 51.

¹²² It is important to distinguish those who were lamenting the death of political philosophy from those who spoke approvingly of its end, in the sense of means and ends — the end of political philosophy as the achievement of its final purpose, whatever a thinker may purport it to be.

¹²³ Or what James Wiley calls the politicization of theory by ideologies “because they aim at practical action and use theory to advance political objectives. ‘Truth’ [a]s shaped for political purposes ... Ideological political theories thus politicize theory at the same time that they make politics ‘theoretical’” (Wiley 2016, 190).

- D. Subjects once considered the purview of political philosophy have been absconded by (or abandoned to) other disciplines¹²⁵ and that something significant has been lost when relying solely on these new methods;
- E. Practitioners who call themselves political philosophers are actually interlopers from other disciplines and have replaced the methods of political philosophy with those of other disciplines;
- F. Particular philosophical notions or political ideas have become so dominant as to have undermined the validity of all opposition positions;¹²⁶
- G. The tradition of political philosophy has reached an endpoint, not by the arrival of a political utopia, but by the intellectual collapse of its prior foundational ideals.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ As Herbert Reid articulates it, “Some American students of politics may not be happy with this preliminary formulation of the fundamental problem. Several reasons for their uneasiness may be given. They suspect, perhaps, that political philosophy *is* in a moribund state if not completely irrelevant to our problems” (Reid 1972, 342). It should be noted that Reid was writing during the Rawlsian moment in which *A Theory of Justice* emerged speaking directly to the kinds of problems raised by American students of politics.

¹²⁵ As Samuel A. Chambers suggests, “[n]umerous political theorists today can be found toiling in fields that ostensibly belong to other disciplines: cultural studies (English), legal theory (Law), gender politics (Women’s Studies), international politics (IR), ‘neuropolitics’ (Neuroscience), queer theory (Queer Studies)” (Chambers 2005, 619). Unlike calls for a return to a pure form of political philosophy, Chambers appeals to “fugitive theory” that is comfortable being ‘homeless’, so to speak — rooted simultaneously in Judith Butler’s suggest that “theory can work in implicit and fugitive ways” and Wendy Brown’s call for “interdisciplinary traveling” (Chambers 2006, 9-32; Butler 1997, 40; Brown 2002, 572).

¹²⁶ In this I would include claims such as Glenn Tinder’s that, “What seems to be the case is that political thinkers, while far from extinct, are harassed by doubt as they have not been in most periods of the past. Skepticism, positivism, and existentialism—not to speak of the ‘historicism’ emphasized by Professor Cumming—have extracted a heavy toll in philosophical self-confidence. It is very difficult now for a sensitive and reflective person to feel calm assurance concerning political truth. Hence, while it is probably premature to announce the death of political philosophy, it is not out of place to fear for its life” (Tinder 1970, 273).

¹²⁷ In this we can include T.D. Weldon’s *Vocabulary of Politics* which, rather than attending to the *death* of political philosophy, was “a book about the impossibility of political philosophy” (Barry

The distinctions between these decline theses are not necessarily absolute and there are thinkers who fit tidily into some while explicitly rejecting others, but what this helps clarify is the fuzziness of the concept itself — and the difficulty of referring to its various interlocutors as in debate with each other. That these different frames can be made to contradict each other adds further problems for those who coax out a cohesive theory of decline in the time period. It also makes difficult any attempts to disprove or simply weaken those arguments, because it is not always apparent which argument is being made. Consider Berlin’s point about the absence of commanding works in political philosophy is made alongside a rejection of the possibility of value-free stances:

To suppose, then, that there have been or could be ages without political philosophy is like supposing that, as there are ages of faith, so there are or could be ages of total disbelief. But this is an absurd notion: there is no human activity without some kind of general outlook. Scepticism, cynicism, refusal to dabble in abstract issues or to question values, hard-boiled opportunism, contempt for theorising, all the varieties of nihilism are, of course, themselves metaphysical and ethical positions, committal attitudes. Whatever else the existentialists have taught us, they have made this plain.¹²⁸

Thus, Berlin can be seen to acknowledge one strand of the death of political philosophy while simultaneously (and wholly) rejecting another. This highlights the complications inherent to seeing these debates as rooted in a unified set of concerns.

These strands may use similar terminology at times and make reference to the same philosophical traditions, and that has served to give them the mythology of coher-

1980, 280). Where there are significant nuances to Weldon’s argument that distinguish him from Strauss — and are significant disagreements between the two thinkers about the merits of classical political philosophy. Yet, as Vincent Geoghegan points out, “[t]here may have been the promise of a constructive turn, but Weldon never really got beyond the moment of destruction” (Geoghegan 2007, 71). In this way, both Weldon and Strauss can be placed under the broad umbrella of thinkers who question the very possibility of political philosophy.

¹²⁸ Berlin, “Does Political Theory Still Exist,” 74.

ence,¹²⁹ but this may be nothing more than a convenient shorthand: one that allowed its interlocutors the possibility of declaring victory while only engaging with the weakest versions of the opposing arguments. Some of this might safely be attributed to a philosophical hesitance to partake in empirical studies, but it may also be an example of J.G.A. Pocock's first law of interdisciplinary communication: "nearly all methodological debate is useless, because nearly all methodological debate is reducible to the formula: You should not be doing your job; you should be doing mine".¹³⁰ Political philosophy is still a fundamentally contested discipline with its practitioners (and students) often at odds with each other on methodological and pedagogical grounds, and exploring the nuances of the death of political philosophy reveals precisely the extent to which that was the case in the post-war academic environment. Insofar as there was a singular concern at play in these debates, it was definitional, albeit rarely with an open acknowledgement that this was the case.

Yet despite these cleavages, there is an extent to which the death of political philosophy has long been a settled matter: Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* is often pointed to as a key text in either the revival or the outright rejection of the death thesis, but even prior to its publication, many of the various mourners of political philosophy had either made significant equivocations to their initial claims or had retreated from the debate altogether. It was an unpopular position for scholars to hold as there were those who point-

¹²⁹ See: James Tully, ed., "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (1969; repr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 29–67.

¹³⁰ J.G.A. Pocock, "Political Ideas as Historical Events: Political Philosophers as Historical Actors," in *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (1980; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 51.

ed to the existence of the debate itself as evidence that political philosophy was alive and thriving. Yet if the foundations of the decline theses had been declared suspect in the decades following it was nothing compared to the force with which *A Theory of Justice* seemingly undermined them altogether. After 1971 it seems unlikely that anyone would seriously consider such disciplinary anxiety worth attending to at all, let alone refuting. In any event, it remains a live question as to why there would be any need to return to the birth of the death of political philosophy, even if it is as scattered a concept as I suggest, given its lack of relevance over the last fifty years.

As we saw in the prior chapter, versions of the death thesis have seen something of a resurgence since the Rawlsian revival as a frame to help reconsider various texts and thinkers in the post-WWII era: Ronald Beiner's *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters* explicitly makes reference to Laslett and other decline theorists to help define the "central purpose of [the] book" which is to "draw up a balance sheet for twentieth-century political philosophy"; and Catherine H. Zuckert's *Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* is similarly motivated to "illustrate the variety and depth of philosophical analyses of politics in the face of the purported demise of political philosophy".¹³¹ Beyond that though there still lurks the suggestion that perhaps the discipline is not so healthy as to be believed: as David Miller suggests, "there is still concern that something about the subject matter, politics itself, as a human practice, renders it recalcitrant to philosophical investigation".¹³² He frames it as a broader problem of disciplinary identi-

¹³¹ Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*, xi, xxvii; Zuckert, "Introduction: Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century," 1.

¹³² David Miller, "In What Sense Must Political Philosophy Be Political?," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 33, no. 1–2 (2016): 156.

ty, “although political philosophy is no longer ‘dead,’ the form in which it has been revived has turned it into a subordinate branch of moral philosophy — and this is a mistake”.¹³³ Robert Taylor’s critical reimagining of Rawls echoes Laslett’s initial claim, by suggesting that political liberalism carries with it the possibility of “a role change for philosophy [that] would mean the death of political philosophy as we have known it”.¹³⁴

One of the most striking pieces to arise out of these last two chapters is how poorly understood the death of political philosophy was (and continues to be), and how it was so quickly dismissed on the grounds of being absurd. Pointing to exemplary works prior to *A Theory of Justice* does not automatically serve to counter most versions of the death of political philosophy unless those works came prior to whatever is agreed upon as the true time of death — whether it be 1953 (Cobban), 1956 (Laslett), or 1962 (Berlin). This instead simply rewrites the revival narrative with a new saviour which, even when scholars made claims to the contrary, implicitly endorsed the idea that political philosophy could die. Nor is the problem resolved simply by valorizing works written within the period in which the discipline was said to be dead (or in decline) — to list a few examples, John Dewey’s *Individualism Old and New* (1930), Karl Popper’s *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), or Hannah Arendt’s *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) — because it also must be explained why the various mourners themselves failed to consider the merits of those texts. To do that requires a thorough understanding of which death of political philosophy is being rebuffed and, as will be seen in Chapter Three, this is not as straightforward as is often assumed in the literature.

¹³³ Miller, 173.

¹³⁴ Robert S. Taylor, *Reconstructing Rawls: The Kantian Foundations of Justice as Fairness* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 298.

Beyond simply clarifying contemporary attempts to reframe the death of political philosophy, the other reason to return to the debates is that, unless Rawls resolved all of its aspects, the definitional problem still remains: If understanding Plato's myth of the cave can shed light on the fact of our intellectual and social bondage, perhaps understanding the myth of the death of political philosophy (and its revival) can help shed light on the fact that, despite all those who would have us celebrate the values of democratic and liberal education, we are now spelunkers in the many caves of political philosophy. Or, at the very least, something that is called political philosophy. In this way, we return to the death of political philosophy because we still remain in its long shadow, and unless we acknowledge that it is likely that it is there that we will stay.

CHAPTER THREE: A Curious Revival

*How lonely sits the city / that once was full of people! / How like a widow
she has become, / she that was great among the nations / She that was a
princess among the provinces / has become a vassal*
- *Book of Lamentations*¹

The canon of Western political philosophy was, for a significant portion of the twentieth century, a fairly settled matter: it began in Ancient Greece with Plato and Aristotle; and worked its way through Medieval Christian thought of Augustine and Aquinas; to the European Renaissance with Machiavelli and Hobbes; and the Enlightenment with Locke, Rousseau, and Mill; to German idealism of Kant and Hegel; and ending either with Marx's structural materialism or Nietzsche's metaphysical turn. Other figures may have made appearances from time to time — Cicero and Montesquieu are two examples who, as of late, sit just at the edge of the canon — and the addition of Nietzsche was once considered a much more complicated matter, but these thirteen thinkers were widely understood to be the pinnacle of political philosophy. Until 1971, there was considerable — if contested, as the last two chapters have shown — concern about whether the tradition would (or could) even continue, whether Nietzsche (or Marx) had been the last great political philosopher and, if so, what that meant for political philosophy itself: would the remaining inertia of the canon guide human beings through the twenty-first century and beyond? Or was the pursuit of wisdom at such an end that all that remained was the final, hopeless exhalation of breath from its last knights errant?

Yet the publication of John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* put all such disciplinary concerns away — not itself concerned with answering them, but it was instead taken to

¹ Lam 1:1 New Revised Standard Version

be the answer: political philosophy had been made great again. At a public lecture in 1997, Burton Dreben articulated the conventional wisdom of the time: “[e]veryone² knows that in 1971 John Rawls published *A Theory of Justice*, which is very widely considered the most important work in political philosophy and perhaps even in moral philosophy since the end of World War II, and many think the most important work in political philosophy since the writings of John Stuart Mill”.³ In 1999, even President Bill Clinton spoke to its significance: “[a]lmost singlehandedly, John Rawls revived the disciplines of political and ethical philosophy”.⁴ Clinton was not treading new ground with this statement, but rather simply rearticulating a common point that had become solidified only a few years after *A Theory of Justice* had arrived.⁵

Iris Marion Young referred to the two decades from 1959 to 1979 with “the first nearly barren and the second producing bumper crops ... [and] *A Theory of Justice* as the turning point”.⁶ Alan Haworth suggests that “political philosophy [in the twenty-first century] is alive and kicking. If Rawls is to be congratulated upon anything, it is just that”.⁷

² It is illustrative that Dreben was comfortable suggesting that ‘everyone’ knew the author of *any* academic work.

³ Burton Dreben, “On Rawls and Political Liberalism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 314.

⁴ Bill Clinton, “Remarks By The President” (September 29, 1999), <https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/html/19990929.html>.

⁵ When Robert Nozick was writing of Rawls in *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, his preference was to not use the post-apostrophe ‘S’ when referring to Rawls in the possessive. On 12 November, 1973, Nozick received a note from Margot Cutter saying that it such a stylistic preference was “according to the Chicago Manual of Style an honor due only to Moses and Jesus, but with us aesthetic considerations won out” (qtd. in Kelleher 2020). While the choice not to use a post-apostrophe ‘S’ is, aesthetically, the correct choice, placing Rawls in a category that had, thus far, been reserved exclusively for Jesus and Moses has a certain poignance to it.

⁶ Iris Marion Young, “On the Politization of The Social in Recent Western Political Theory,” *Filozofski Vestnik* XVIII, no. 2 (1997): 155.

⁷ Alan Haworth, “In Theory’s Wake,” in *Understanding the Political Philosophers*, Second (2004; repr., London: Routledge, 2012), 285.

Paul Weithman offers that “[Rawls] is unarguably the greatest political philosopher of the second half of the twentieth century and is arguably the greatest of the whole of it”.^{8,9} Thomas Nagel takes it further and labels him as “the greatest political philosopher of the twentieth century, and he was responsible for the revival of serious philosophical thought about concrete social issues over the past 40 years”.¹⁰ Claude J. Galipeau refers to *A Theory of Justice* as instrumental in “encourag[ing] serious study of political and moral problems in the Anglo-American academic world”, not merely in the quality of the scholarship, but also in how well it was received.¹¹ Philip Abbott articulated the sentiment around *A Theory of Justice* with a particularly poetic turn:

Numbed reviewers greeted the publication of John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice* with quiet and often begrudging praise. Then hungry critics moved in. The majority of notices can now be described as careful and methodical but mercilessly critical. No doubt part of this calculated fury can be traced to the sheer scope of *A Theory of Justice*. For some time now political philosophers have had to content themselves with demolishing long dead giants who answer through surrogates at other universities. It is a tantalizing experience to sink one’s teeth into a product whose creator is alive and well at Harvard.¹²

⁸ Paul Weithman, “John Rawls: A Remembrance,” *The Review of Politics* 65, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 5–6.

⁹ He does suggest that there has been some degree of hyperbole around Rawls: “It would not, however, be impossible to overstate Rawls’s importance. Some people have overstated it, saying that political philosophy began in 1971 with the publication of Rawls’s magisterial *A Theory of Justice*. In fact, as those who know the history of this journal need no reminding, political theorizing was not dead in the English-speaking world at the middle of the twentieth century. But the horror of two world wars had chastened the hopes of many constructive political theorists in the west, particularly those on the left ... While the publication of *Theory of Justice* did not mark the renaissance of a moribund discipline, it did bring a change that was bracing, powerful, and impossible to ignore ... Its obvious connection to social contract tradition did much to revive philosophers’ interest in the history of liberal thought” (Weithman 2003, 5-6). While Weithman may not find acceptable the language of disciplinary revival, this bears more than a passing resemblance to some of various conceptions articulated in the prior chapter.

¹⁰ Thomas Nagel, “John Rawls and Affirmative Action,” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 39 (Spring 2003): 82.

¹¹ Claude J. Galipeau, *Isaiah Berlin’s Liberalism* (Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press, 1992), vii.

¹² Philip Abbott, “With Equality & Virtue for All: John Rawls & the Liberal Tradition,” *Polity* 8, no. 3 (Spring 1976): 339–40.

Such was the stature of the work that, in 1979, Barry Cooper felt comfortable referring to “Rawls’ renowned book”, without the need to explicitly mention the title.¹³ The implication here seemingly that it would be unheard of for readers of *Polity* to not at least be aware of *A Theory of Justice*, in fact if not in detail.

That is not an unreasonable assumption, given the praise that it accumulated shortly after its publication:

If Rawls on the subject of justice has hardly said the last word, it is equally clear he has uttered words that will last.¹⁴

[Rawls] also makes clear how wrong it was to claim, as so many were claiming only a few years back, that systematic moral and political philosophy are dead.¹⁵

... making the book of a kind with the great treatises of politico-moral philosophy. It is therefore likely that *A Theory of Justice* will be regarded as the mid-twentieth century counterpart to the theoretical disquisitions of Hobbes, Locke, Kant or Mill.¹⁶

The clear importance of Rawls’ magisterial volume will ensure its examination in many disciplines and from many standpoints. It is no less important to those in our discipline who fall outside as inside the domain of traditional political philosophy, and that significance extends both to its function as a paradigm of work and as an argument-in-its-own-right.¹⁷

A Theory of Justice ... has caused economists, along with other social scientists and philosophers, to devote more attention to 'justice' in the first half-decade of the 1970s than in perhaps all of the preceding decades of this century combined.

¹³ Barry Cooper, “Reason & Interpretation in Contemporary Political Theory,” *Polity* 11, no. 3 (Spring 1979): 399.

¹⁴ Samuel Krislov, “Justice as Formal Theory,” *Polity* 6, no. 4 (Summer 1974): 578.

¹⁵ Michael Cohen, “The Social Contract Explained and Defended,” *New York Times*, July 16, 1972, BR1.

¹⁶ Max Rheinstein, “A Theory of Justice,” *Columbia Law Review* 73, no. 7 (November 1973): 1515.

¹⁷ Krislov, “Justice as Formal Theory,” 574.

This discussion has been hailed as the return of political and social philosophy to its former status of intellectual interest and respectability.¹⁸

These few examples should be seen as neither the sum total nor most effusive, but rather as a few drops of water in the vast ocean of reviews that followed its publication. A comprehensive account of the commendations would be a vast undertaking and serve little purpose,¹⁹ but it is helpful to note that even his critics wrote highly about it: in their review, Russell Keat and David Miller “do not believe that Rawls succeeds in the tasks which he has set for himself, although in the attempt he has made a contribution of permanent value to political philosophy”; as Michael Walzer articulates, even while he writes in opposition, “[n]o one writing about justice these days can fail to recognize and admire the achievement of John Rawls”; and Robert Nozick, similarly in disagreement, takes the sentiment even further: “*A Theory of Justice* is a powerful, deep, subtle, wide-ranging, systematic work in political and moral philosophy which has not seen its like since the writings of John Stuart Mill, if then. It is a fountain of illuminating ideas, integrated together into a lovely whole. Political philosophers now must either work

¹⁸ James Buchanan, “The Justice of Natural Liberty,” *The Journal of Legal Studies* 5, no. 1 (January 1976): 1.

¹⁹ This is not to denigrate those that attempted representative surveys of the literature on Rawls. Norman Daniels’ 1975 edited collection *Reading Rawls* was meant to be a “working guide to the ongoing critical assessment of fundamental issues in Rawls’ work” (Daniels 1989 [1975], xviii). Similarly Henry Richardson and Paul Weithman’s five volume series *The Philosophy of Rawls* attempts to provide “a wide-ranging selection of the most influential and insightful articles on Rawls” in the secondary literature (Richardson and Weithman 1999, vii). These works take seriously the debates that arose around *A Theory of Justice* (and, in Richardson and Weithman’s later volumes, *Political Liberalism*), and try to present enough of the voices involved without being so exhaustive as to be paralyzing. These collections are of immeasurable value in becoming familiar with not only Rawls but the Rawlsian tradition — and only become more so the further removed from context in which he was initially writing.

within Rawls' theory or explain why not".²⁰ That Nozick has chosen the latter path elevates his already lofty praise. As Martha Nussbaum articulates it, "[e]ven in moving away from Rawls, we are fully engaged with him".²¹ In his 1997 history of the discipline, Rogers M. Smith suggests that, "[p]olitical theory was further rejuvenated in these years via the philosopher John Rawls's 1971 publication of the first real candidate for a 'great' work of constructive political philosophy in decades".²²

While there were those who conveyed these sentiments through the lens of liberalism or the liberal tradition²³ as an independent entity of sorts or those who focused on Rawls' contributions to moral philosophy²⁴, the general attitude towards his work was that it belonged in the pantheon of great texts of political philosophy — as Amy Gutmann puts it, "grand theory is once again alive in the academy ... [and] these changes are attributed to the influence of *A Theory of Justice*" and, further still, she identifies Rawls as "the most modest, and in this respect wisest, of the grand philosophers [such as Plato,

²⁰ Russell Keat and David Miller, "Understanding Justice," *Political Theory* 2, no. 1 (February 1974): 3; Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality* (1984; repr., New York: Basic Books, 2010), xviii; Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974; repr., Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1999), 183.

²¹ Martha Nussbaum, "The Enduring Significance of John Rawls," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 47, no. 45 (2001): B7.

²² Rogers M. Smith, "Still Blowing in the Wind: The American Quest for a Democratic, Scientific Political Science," *Daedalus* 126, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 261.

²³ See: Steven Lukes, "An Archimedean Point," *Observer Review*, June 4, 1972, 32; Abbott, "With Equality & Virtue for All: John Rawls & the Liberal Tradition," 340, 357; John W. Chapman, "Rawls's Theory of Justice," *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): 593; Avital Simhony and David Weinstein, eds., *The New Liberalism: Reconciling Liberty and Community* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 2.

²⁴ See: Cohen, "The Social Contract Explained and Defended," BR1; Maurice Mandelbaum, "A Theory of Justice," *History and Theory* 12, no. 2 (1973): 240; Chapman, "Rawls's Theory of Justice," 593; Charles Fried, "Distributive Justice," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1983): 45.

Hobbes, and Mill]” — and was so important that it could be identified as reinvigorating the moribund discipline (or giving the lie to all those who claimed it had died).²⁵

3.1 Re-Viewing Responses to *A Theory of Justice*

Before returning to the key figures identified in the prior chapter, I wish to provide a brief sketch of the early responses to *A Theory of Justice*. While the importance of the Rawlsian moment is a widely held belief, even by those who are critical of his project, the further removed we are from the original context, the less likely we are to understand the sheer weight of that importance at the time. To be introduced to *A Theory of Justice* half a century after its publication likely means that we are unable to accept the work solely on its merits, but are rather forced into a set of preconceptions based on its status as a Significant Work. Being told that text is considered significant, however, does not provide one with the same sense as having witnessed its rise. This is, of course, a general problem with any canon, but the phenomenon of the revival of political philosophy cannot be properly grasped without a proper appreciation for its reception at the time.

The earliest academic and popular reviews of *A Theory of Justice* in academic journals were all seemingly preceded by Stuart Hampshire’s February 1972 piece in the *New York Review of Books*, which was filled with effusive praise:

I think that this book is the most substantial and interesting contribution to moral philosophy since the war, at least if one thinks only of works written in English.²⁶

[T]he book is a permanent refutation of the reproach that analytical philosophy cannot contribute to substantial moral and political thought. The substance of a critical and liberal political philosophy is here argued with an assurance and

²⁵ Amy Gutmann, “The Central Role of Rawls’s Theory,” *Dissent* 36 (1989): 338; 342.

²⁶ Stuart Hampshire, “A Special Supplement: A New Philosophy of the Just Society,” *The New York Review of Books*, February 24, 1972, 6.

breadth of mind that put the book in the tradition of Adam Smith and Mill and Sidgwick: in the best tradition of British moralists, revived now at Harvard.²⁷

To put Rawls in this tradition, however, is not necessarily a statement on the quality of the work, but rather an acceptance of the figures which Rawls himself explicitly admits to be writing against — similarly to how Joel Feinberg points out that Rawls' social contract theory puts him in dialogue with “the tradition of Rousseau and Kant”.²⁸ Further, by using World War II as the point of reference, Hampshire does not seem to be placing himself in conversation with Laslett's conception of the death of political philosophy which certainly goes back further. Yet Hampshire offering it as “the most substantial and interesting contribution” does go on to be quoted in many early reviews.²⁹ Charles Fried would echo this sentiment in June 1972:

This book in my view is the most important work in moral and social philosophy published since World War II. It is magisterial in its purpose ... Most of all it is an original work because of the completeness of the synthesis and the richness of the elaboration impress the Kantian starting point with a personal and powerful stamp that justify henceforth speaking of 'Rawls' theory' and 'Rawls' concepts.'³⁰

Similarly to the rise of the narrative of Rawls as reanimator, ‘magisterial’ would become a common descriptor for *A Theory of Justice*.³¹

²⁷ Hampshire, 7.

²⁸ Joel Feinberg, “Justice, Fairness and Rationality,” *Yale Law Journal* 81, no. 4 (April 1972): 1004.

²⁹ See: William L. McBride, “Social Theory Sub Specie Aeternitatis: A New Perspective,” *Yale Law Journal* 81, no. 4 (April 1972): 980; Robert Paul Mohan, “Moral Values Rationally Affirmed,” *The Washington Post*, September 3, 1972, sec. Book World; M.T. Dalgarno, “A Theory of Justice,” *Analytical Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (January 1973): 26; Antony Flew, “A Theory of Justice,” *Journal of Social Policy* 2, no. 4 (October 1973): 357; Joe Feldman, “Some Features of Justice and ‘A Theory of Justice,’” *California Law Review* 61, no. 6 (December 1973): 1463.

³⁰ Charles Fried, “Reviewed Work: A Theory of Justice by John Rawls,” *Harvard Law Review* 85, no. 8 (June 1972): 1691.

³¹ See: Cohen, “The Social Contract Explained and Defended,” BR1; Fried, “Reviewed Work: A Theory of Justice by John Rawls,” 1691; Wolfgang G. Friedmann, “A Theory of Justice: A Lawyer's Critique,” *The Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* 11, no. 3 (October 1972): 369;

While its full measure may not have been foreseen, it is important to remember that Rawls' work did not appear *ex nihilo*, as *A Theory of Justice*:

... has been long awaited and lavishly praised.³²

... needs no recommendation to professional philosophers, who have been waiting for it for some time.³³

... is one of those relatively rare books that are 'known' to be Very Important far in advance of their actual appearance. It has at last burst upon an altogether suspecting public consisting primarily of professional philosophers and secondarily of many others in a variety of fields who take an interest in social, political, legal, and moral theory.³⁴

Indeed there were numerous articles both in the leadup to and immediately following the publication of *A Theory of Justice* that instead engaged with the earlier essays that prefigured it.³⁵ Further, Rawls was not hiding his arguments: "a draft of at least the first two parts of *A Theory of Justice* were circulating as early as 1961"; and "[m]uch of the manuscript for *A Theory of Justice* had been widely circulated during the 1960s".³⁶

William McBride, while writing approvingly of the work overall, advocates for "a certain skepticism concerning the ultimately validity and value of the book's project", whereas Steven Lukes and Peter Caws are much less restrained: the former says that prior "generous praise is not surprising ... [and that] Rawls's book is truly impressive in its

Ernest Van Den Haag, "Tortured Search for the Cause of Inequality," *National Review*, February 16, 1973, 203; Krislov, "Justice as Formal Theory," 574; Benjamin Barber, "Justifying Justice: Problems of Psychology, Measurement, and Politics in Rawls," *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): 663; Arthur A. Leff, "Unspeakable Ethics, Unnatural Law," *Duke Law Journal* 1979, no. 6 (December 1979): 1237.

³² Lukes, "An Archimedean Point," 32.

³³ Peter Caws, "Changing Our Habits," *New Republic*, May 13, 1972, 24.

³⁴ McBride, "Social Theory Sub Specie Aeternitatis: A New Perspective," 980.

³⁵ For a fuller list see: Robert K. Fullinwider, "A Chronological Bibliography of Works on John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*," *Political Theory* 5, no. 4 (1977): 561–70.

³⁶ Matravers, "Twentieth-Century Political Philosophy," 888; Ian Shapiro, *Political Criticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 5n7.

boldness and its scope”; and the latter is even more exuberant now that “American statesmen have—for the first time perhaps at this level of scope and analysis—a philosopher of their own to read”.³⁷ The difference in tone between the three highlights another interest point: of the early reviews in of 1972, some of the most effusive come from outside of explicitly academic literature: *New York Review of Books*, *New Republic*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Observer Review*, *The Spectator*, *New York Times* and *The Washington Post and Times-Herald*. This is not meant to be a statement on the value of those reviews, but rather it is interesting to note the treatment that Rawls received in more popular media before there was time for academic periodicals to catch up.³⁸ Only law journals³⁹ had published on *A Theory of Justice* until James Buchanan’s review in the September 1972 issue of *Public Choice*: he had similarly been awaiting the “publication of Rawls’ long-promised treatise”.⁴⁰ What makes him something of an oddity among early reviewers is his dissatisfaction with the result: “Now that the book has appeared, I find myself less sympathetic with Rawls than I might have anticipated from my early reading of his basic papers ... On closer examination, Rawls does not seem to say what I thought he was saying. His approach now appears quite different from that which I shared in 1960”.⁴¹ Quite unlike the praise that would eventually be showered on the book, he sug-

³⁷ McBride, “Social Theory Sub Specie Aeternitatis: A New Perspective,” 1003; Lukes, “An Archimedean Point,” 32; Caws, “Changing Our Habits,” 26.

³⁸ This is an obvious result of the differing publication schedules of academia and journalism.

³⁹ See: Feinberg, “Justice, Fairness and Rationality.”; Alasdair MacIntyre, “Justice: A New Theory and Some Old Questions,” *Boston University Law Review* 52, no. 4 (April 1972): 330–34; McBride, “Social Theory Sub Specie Aeternitatis: A New Perspective.”; Fried, “Reviewed Work: A Theory of Justice by John Rawls.”.

⁴⁰ James Buchanan, “Rawls on Justice as Fairness,” *Public Choice* 13, no. 1 (September 1972): 123.

⁴¹ Buchanan, 123.

gests that there is a possible reading of the ‘justice as fairness’ concept that would mean, “Rawls’ book deserves to gather dust on the idealist bookshelf”.⁴²

It appears that the earliest juxtaposition of Rawls with the death of political philosophy comes from the May 1972 edition of the *Times Literary Supplement*: “[*A Theory of Justice*] is a convincing refutation, if one is needed, of any lingering suspicions that the tradition of English-speaking political philosophy might be dead”.⁴³ It should be noted, however, that the *Time Literary Supplement*, thirteen years prior, had declared *Two Concepts of Liberty* to have marked Isaiah Berlin as taking up the tradition of John Stuart Mill, so it remains a live question as to how seriously the death of political philosophy was treated in the *Times*.⁴⁴ This sentiment on Berlin certainly would not become widespread: Marshall Cohen, who would later pen the *New York Times*’ review of *A Theory of Justice*, rejects the vaulted placement of Berlin, labelling *Liberty* as: “academic, inflated and obscure ... leav[ing] the reader with a sense of being curiously [politically] irrelevant”.⁴⁵ Why Berlin is described in this manner and Rawls is not remains a rather curious footnote to the history of the discipline.

In November 1972, Hans Oberdiek makes reference to the fact that “[t]hroughout the nineteen forties and fifties, substantive moral and political philosophy was virtually dead”, but does not explicitly credit Rawls as having revived it — although he does label

⁴² Buchanan, 127.

⁴³ “The Good of Justice as Fairness,” *Times Literary Supplement*, May 5, 1972, 505.

⁴⁴ Richard Arthur Wollheim, “A Hundred Years After,” *Times Literary Supplement*, February 20, 1959.

⁴⁵ Marshall Cohen, “Berlin and the Liberal Tradition,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 10, no. 40 (July 1960): 216.

it as “an outstanding contribution to moral, social and political thought.”⁴⁶ It would be Cohen’s *New York Times* thorough review from a few months earlier, however, that stated the point most directly: “[Rawls] also makes clear how wrong it was to claim, as so many were claiming only a few years back, that systematic moral and political philosophy are dead”.⁴⁷ Not only did Cohen’s review find purchase in various pieces of scholarship,⁴⁸ but the prior quote — and the same sentiment from the *Times Literary Supplement* — are among the reviews used by Harvard University Press has attached to the latest edition of *A Theory of Justice*.⁴⁹

In 1973, David Schaefer seems to be one of the first to critically *and* explicitly engage with Rawls’ relationship to disciplinary death:

Far from constituting a revival of political philosophy, *A Theory of Justice* is nothing more than an elaborate catalogue of political prejudices ... No regeneration of political philosophy can be built upon the foundations laid by

⁴⁶ Hans Oberdiek, “A Theory of Justice by John Rawls,” *New York University Law Review* 47, no. 5 (November 1972): note 1, 1012; 1027-8.

⁴⁷ Michael Cohen, “The Social Contract Explained and Defended,” *New York Times*, July 16, 1972.

⁴⁸ Onora Nell, Kenneth E. Boulding, and Stephen T. Worland, “Review: Three Reviews of John Rawls: ‘A Theory of Justice,’” *Journal of Economic Issues* 7, no. 4 (December 1973): 665–77; Stephen G. Salkever, “Virtue, Obligation and Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 68, no. 1 (March 1974): 78–92; K.S. Shrader-Frechette, “Ecological Justice and Low-Level Radiation: Public Policy and Nuclear Technology,” *Journal of American Culture* 3, no. 3 (1980): 501–13; Elmo Schwab, “The Quest for the Reasonable Man,” *Texas Bar Journal* 45 (February 1982): 178; Norman Daniels, ed., *Reading Rawls: Critical Studies on Rawls’ A Theory of Justice* (1975; repr., Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), xxxiii; Cyrus R.K. Patell, *Negative Liberties: Morrison, Pynchon, and the Problem of Liberal Ideology* (Duke University Press, 2001), 60; Andrea Pozas-Loyo, “The Veil of Particular Ignorance and General Omniscience An Epistemic Critique to Rawls’ Theory of Justice,” in *Annual Meeting* (The Midwest Political Science Association, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, Illinois, 2005), http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p85664_index.html.

⁴⁹ “A Theory of Justice — John Rawls | Harvard University Press,” accessed July 2, 2018, <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674000780&content=reviews>.

Rawls. In fact, for all of its defects, even the old 'logical positivism' was more akin to philosophy than is Rawls's 'moral theory'.⁵⁰

[M]y critique will also aim to suggest some of the weaknesses of that ideology, and hence to inspire some political scientists to question it more than they have done. Perhaps in this way, the study of *A Theory of Justice* may lead men towards a revival of political philosophy, after all.⁵¹

It is astonishing that political scientists who consider themselves “toughminded” should render honor to *A Theory of Justice*, overlooking its vagueness, formalism, and inconsistency, while dismissing a work with the substantive richness and precision of Aristotle’s *Politics* as “unscientific”. Such standards indicate how far we have travelled from an awareness of the true meaning of political philosophy, and from a consciousness of what is politically important.⁵²

In examining the periodicals and literature of the period, it is not entirely clear to whom Schaefer is responding: while the Rawlsian moment has certainly already occurred at this point, aside from an offhand remark in the *Times Literary Supplement* review, there seem to be few direct connections made between *A Theory of Justice* and the death of political philosophy — especially in comparison those found from our contemporary vantage. Where, precisely, can we find arguments for replacing Aristotle with Rawls? Schaefer claims that *A Theory of Justice* “is as if the *Republic* had been written, not by Plato, but by Cephalus” to highlight how far from the classics of political philosophy that the text is.⁵³ Yet the vast majority of comparisons to the canon would appear to mark Rawls as among the social contract theorists and, specifically, the British Idealists, rather than the Ancient Greeks.

⁵⁰ David Lewis Schaefer, “The ‘Sense’ and Non-Sense of Justice: An Examination of John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice*,” *The Political Science Reviewer* 3 (Fall 1973): 3.

⁵¹ Schaefer, 4.

⁵² Schaefer, 41.

⁵³ Schaefer, 37.

Granted, Schaefer makes reference to an American Political Science Association conference that focused more attention on Rawls than he felt was justified, and the symposium journal issue on *A Theory of Justice* that eventually arose out of that conference had seven different reviews of the work, albeit with different degrees of celebration: John Harsanyi calls it “an important book ... [and] a significant contribution to the ongoing debate on the nature of rational morality” before going on to deem it unsuccessful in its intended goal; James Fishkin thinks that it can be a foundation upon which social contract theory could develop anew and, if this occurs, then “his book will justly deserve the acclaim which it has received”; Douglas Rae calls it “perhaps the bravest work of political theory written in this country since the times of Madison and Calhoun”; Benjamin Barber calls it “a work of such magisterial grandeur”; and John Chapman begins with the claim that, “Rawls's theory has both the simplicity and the complexity of a Gothic cathedral” before going on to proclaim that “[t]hese reflections are meant to testify to the originality and solidity of Rawls's achievement. He has in fact consolidated and elaborated, and by doing so, has greatly strengthened, the case for liberalism as the moral and political philosophy agreeable to all mankind. Once again a ‘Legislator’ has appeared in our midst”.⁵⁴

In surveying these earliest responses, only Allan Bloom provides what could be considered a wholly negative review that, while acknowledging the popularity of the text, thoroughly disagrees not only with the argument but also, as seen below, with its very

⁵⁴ John C. Harsanyi, “Can the Maximin Principle Serve as a Basis for Morality? A Critique of John Rawls’s Theory,” *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): 594; James Fishkin, “Justice and Rationality: Some Objections to the Central Argument in Rawls’s Theory,” *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): p.629; Douglas Rae, “Review: Maximin Justice and an Alternative Principle of General Advantage,” *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): 630; Barber, “Justifying Justice: Problems of Psychology, Measurement, and Politics in Rawls,” 663; Chapman, “Rawls’s Theory of Justice,” 588; 593.

significance as a philosophical text. Bloom concludes with a scathing thought that "Nietzsche—abused by Rawls, although not culpably because ignorantly—might provide a more appropriate title for this book: *A First Philosophy for the Last Man*".⁵⁵ If we are to take Bloom's presence in this issue of the *American Political Science Review* to be indicative of the how few people were critically engaging with not just the ideas but Rawls' placement in the canon, then Schaefer's criticism makes more sense: the elocutionary force of *A Theory of Justice* in the years following its publication was so strong as to almost eliminate the possibility of dissent, at least where the death of political philosophy was concerned. Without a serious engagement on the issue, Rawls' work became such an obvious — if mistaken — counter to the dire state of the discipline.

In the years that followed, this point was reinforced in different ways. Fishkin offered that there had been "a modest revival" of the discipline in the 1960s, but by 1979 he thought that "it should be evident that political philosophy in the English-speaking world has undergone an enormous resurgence. Further, this resurgence has been sparked by a direct engagement with the moral issues of the day".⁵⁶ Rawls is given consideration as a factor in this revival — perhaps unsurprisingly given Fishkin's role as an editor for *Philosophy, Politics and Society* with Laslett — but not *the* refutation that is claimed by the *Times Literary Supplement*. Robert Amdur, reviewing Brian Barry's *The Liberal Theory of Justice* and Norman Daniels' *Reading Rawls*, returns to the death of political philosophy to frame his reflection: "In the past several years, substantive political philosophy has undergone a revival; it is no longer fashionable to ask whether the subject still exists.

⁵⁵ Allan Bloom, "Justice: John Rawls Vs. The Tradition of Political Philosophy," *American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): 662.

⁵⁶ James Fishkin, "Moral Principles and Public Policy," *Daedalus* 108, no. 4 (Fall 1979): 70.

There are undoubtedly many reasons for this revival; but clearly, part of the explanation lies in the appearance of one commanding work: *A Theory of Justice*.⁵⁷

Yet if there are a range of conceptions of the death of political philosophy — as the criticisms presented by Schaefer and Bloom (among others) help highlight — it is inadequate to simply look at how Rawls was received: we must instead look to how he was received according to those different conceptions and, specifically, to the key thinkers of those perspectives, because the initial enthusiastic reviews were rarely made as careful and nuanced insertions into debates about the death of political philosophy. They instead were a flourish to put a button on engagements with the principles of Rawlsian justice. Without getting into the value of those engagements themselves, I want to critically interrogate the underlying suggestion that *A Theory of Justice* was itself a resurrection of political philosophy. There is a certain amount of absurdity to such claims against the backdrop of the typical canon of Western political philosophy's grandest thinkers that moves from Aristotle to Augustine to Aquinas (periods of approximately six hundred and eight hundred years respectively) which makes the meagre fifteen years from Laslett's *Philosophy, Politics, and Society* to Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* is but moments in comparison. If one were to be generous and stretch further back to works by Popper, Lukacs, Dewey, or even Nietzsche, it nevertheless remains a rather short timeframe with which to judge that the possibilities for political philosophy were at an end. We will put this point aside for now to wrestle with the death of political philosophy on the terms of some of the key interlocutors in that debate as identified in Chapter 2 and their assessment of John Rawls—Reanimator.

⁵⁷ Amdur, "Review: Rawls' Theory of Justice: Domestic and International Perspectives," 438.

3.2 *End of Ideology-ists*

Before moving to theorists of political philosophy's decline, I wish to explain the significance (or lack thereof) of those who alleged that ideology had ended. Given that the various 'end of ideology' theorists — Daniel Bell, Edward Shils, Raymond Aron, and Seymour Martin Lipset⁵⁸ — were celebrating the 'decline' that they identified as occurring a quarter century before *A Theory of Justice*, their respective considerations of Rawls' work seem superfluous. Unless, of course, there is an argument to be made that Rawls revived ideology, but the notion that ideology could ever actually end had already been heavily contested before 1971.⁵⁹ However that the point was debated is not itself as significant as the fact that it was somewhat softened by Shils himself: "the potentiality for ideology seems to be a permanent part of the human constitution".⁶⁰ Lipset had always had a milder formulation of the thesis, writing about a tendency (or even a political "preference") towards a decline in ideology, rather than Bell's seemingly more categorical formulation.⁶¹ David Gauthier would later go on to suggest that *A Theory of Justice* was exceptional in its awareness of the ideological commitments underlying its philosophical

⁵⁸ Or, as Bill Martin calls the sociologists who favored this thesis, "the sunshine boys" (Martin 1996, 5).

⁵⁹ See: Joseph LaPalombara, "Decline of Ideology: A Dissent and an Interpretation," *The American Political Science Review* 60, no. 1 (1966): 5–16; Donald Clark Hodges, "The End of 'The End of Ideology,'" *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 26, no. 2 (1967): 135–46; Chaim Isaac Waxman, *The End of Ideology Debate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968); Robert D. Putnam, "Studying Elite Political Culture: The Case of 'Ideology,'" *The American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 651–81; Alasdair MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 1971.

⁶⁰ qtd. in Jost, "The End of the End of Ideology," 667.

⁶¹ Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Further Comments on 'The End of Ideology,'" *The American Political Science Review* 60, no. 1 (1966): 17–18.

claims, but his conception of ideology itself seems radically different than that of Bell and Shils.⁶²

Bell complicates the matter somewhat, given that, although he was one of the original ‘end of ideology’ theorists, by 1992 he seems to also concede something resembling the decline of political philosophy:

How many intellectuals are there, outside institutional attachments? ... We do not have intellectual inquiry or discussion but 'research,' 'policy analysis,' and, in literature, 'theory'. Increasingly, intellectual life is specialized, professionalized, jargonized, and often hermetic in its focus and language.⁶³

The easy objection is that Bell is referring to a broader problem than just the realm of political philosophy: “[T]here is no longer any intellectual center in the United States”.⁶⁴ Further credit to this argument is the notion that “[w]hile liberalism as public policy has been foundering, liberal political philosophy has exploded with great intellectual strength and excitement, reviving a field that had been moribund since mid-century”.⁶⁵ Here we see that Bell’s considerations of the ‘culture wars’ in the United States are distinct from the death of political philosophy, and yet in clarifying the point he helpfully shows himself to believe (or have believed) in the latter. The ‘paradox’ as he articulates it is that “while liberal political practices have thinned out, liberal political philosophy has ‘thickened”” and he points to Rawls, Richard Dworkin, Michael Walzer, and Amartya Sen⁶⁶ as

⁶² David Gauthier, “The Social Contract as Ideology,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 6, no. 2 (1977): 133.

⁶³ Daniel Bell, “The Cultural Wars: American Intellectual Life, 1965-1992,” *The Wilson Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1992): 74–75.

⁶⁴ Bell, 74.

⁶⁵ Bell, 87.

⁶⁶ Presumably Robert Nozick is excluded for being a libertarian and this is reason enough to consider him “off to one side” in the debate (Bell 1992, 95).

instrumental in establishing the grounds for that to occur.⁶⁷ That they — and their intellectual heirs — have been insufficient to overcome “the terrain in the West ... occupied by a cultural nihilism, a melioristic liberalism, and a conservative defense of traditional values” is disappointing, but does not seem to influence optimism about political philosophy itself.⁶⁸ Political philosophy, it seems, bears no responsibility for the American culture wars.

Here we can see that Bell’s version of the death of political philosophy is distinct from Cobban’s concerns about the inability to translate philosophical tenets into political practice: where Cobban would argue that is a responsibility of the political philosopher, Bell seems to be suggesting that the revival of political philosophy was itself the sole task of philosophers and that considerations of public policy (or the failure to do so) is another realm altogether — or, at least, he does not fault those who revived liberal philosophy. Regardless, while Bell includes other thinkers alongside Rawls, each of their works of “new analytic rigor” follow *A Theory of Justice* by anywhere from six to eighteen years.⁶⁹ So, insofar as Bell can be understood as focused on the death of political philosophy, he gives Rawls a space of particular prominence in overcoming it, but there is no direction connection made between the end of ideology and *A Theory of Justice*.

This change in Bell’s position helps further distinguish Judith Shklar from this aspect of the debate. Like Bell, she praises Rawls’ contributions to the discipline:

The publication of *A Theory of Justice* was a great event not only because of its intrinsic excellence but also because it freed many readers from a long, self-imposed philosophical silence. Anglo-American philosophers had taken a vow to

⁶⁷ Bell, 89.

⁶⁸ Bell, 107.

⁶⁹ Bell, 87.

say nothing substantive about morality or politics. They were determined not to compromise the rational purpose of conceptual clarification with expressions of purely personal feeling ... The instance achievement of *A Theory of Justice* was to show that questions of great ethical urgency, such as the proper balance between liberty and equality, could be discussed without the slightest loss of rational rigor or philosophical rectitude.⁷⁰

It is not simply the philosophical content of *A Theory of Justice* that elevates Rawls' above some of his contemporaries, but his willingness to write about politics in an era in which few others dared to do so — and, in doing so, seemingly gave permission for an entire generation of scholars to do likewise. Yet it is not Rawls alone who merits such commendation:

Political theory survived the decline of the great ideologies of the nineteenth century, not by returning to utopian models but by a revival of normative thought ... In fact, the best political theory of the Anglophone world has been neither historicist nor utopian but either skeptical, as in the case of Michael Oakeshott and Isaiah Berlin, or devoted to setting up normative models of the just state. Here I refer, naturally, to John Rawls's justly famous *Theory of Justice*.⁷¹

I am quite sure that along with John Rawls, Michael Walzer is by far the most important, the most original, and the most intelligent political theorist in America. And one of the many reasons for the distinction of Rawls and Walzer is that both write about concrete phenomena in a language that is clear and open to any careful reader.⁷²

This can be read as an echo of Bell's complaints about disciplinary jargon, but, unlike his framing, Shklar's concerns about ideology continue through to her praise of Rawls. Her greatest philosophical thinkers of the twentieth century are those who were unafraid of ideological commitments. Their greatness is not *solely* due to these commitments, but,

⁷⁰ Shklar, "Injustice, Injury, and Inequality: An Introduction," 13.

⁷¹ Judith Shklar, "What Is the Use of Utopia?," in *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, ed. Stanley Hoffman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 188–89.

⁷² Judith Shklar, "The Work of Michael Walzer," in *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, ed. Stanley Hoffman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 376.

given the state of the discipline in the twentieth century as Shklar saw, it cannot be ignored.

More significant, however, was Rawls' break from classical understandings of political philosophy and his willingness to be an unapologetically *American* thinker. Towards the end of her career, Shklar was emphatic that "American political theory ha[d] long been neglected" in the twentieth century, despite its diversity, depth, and novelty.⁷³ "Where Strauss's account implied that philosophical and political renewal were only possible through a return to the distant past, Shklar instead looked to the realities of the present and the future in her immediate, American, surroundings".⁷⁴ Although this is not an entirely fair assessment of Strauss' position, it does accurately emphasize the distinction between the two thinkers: where Strauss' death of political philosophy had to do with the corrupting influence of politics on philosophy, Shklar's death thesis was rooted in the lack of politics in philosophy. Given this, despite the appearance of similarities between their positions, it would likely be impossible to reconcile their views.

3.3 *Isaiah Berlin*

In many ways, Isaiah Berlin is something of an odd figure amidst the backdrop of the Rawlsian revival of liberal political philosophy. While his work continues uninterrupted through that period and beyond, it does so seemingly without regard for the most significant movements of the intellectual climate around him:

Berlin might be regarded as an important figure in a tradition of political theorizing that has been marginalized by the bifurcation of approaches to the

⁷³ Judith Shklar, "Redeeming American Political Theory," *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (March 1991): 3.

⁷⁴ Forrester, "Hope and Memory in the Thought of Judith Shklar," 597.

study of political ideas typical of the Anglo-American community of political thought.⁷⁵

Berlin also found himself ... a participant, but mostly a spectator, at key moments in the enlargement of modern intellectual life, including the development of analytical language philosophy, the revival of normative liberal political theory, and the recrudescence of academic Marxism, to name just three. In none of these epistemic communities was Berlin really a full insider. Here, his reserve was a matter of choice. He came to think analytical philosophy estimable but arid. He passed up the chance to teach with John Rawls. And Marxism, no matter how academic, he thought to be confused by determinism and a consequentialist ethics. Against the intellectual tide, he lodged his best-known work, apart from occasional interventions in public life in journals like *Foreign Affairs*, in the history of ideas, focusing on the opposition of Enlightenment and Counter-enlightenment, and on Russian humanism.⁷⁶

Though he is now recognized as an important interpreter of modern liberalism, his own philosophy stands apart from the dominant currents of our day. Berlin abstained, for the most part, from the debates that Rawls inspired in the early 1970s (and that remain so influential today). He also wrote in a different language—historical rather than analytical, literary rather than academic—and pursued the threads of his conviction in distant, unfamiliar places: in the dark reveries of Georg Hamann and the reactionary invective of Joseph de Maistre. He set aside many of the questions that preoccupied academic political theorists, and set out instead to understand the politics of the twentieth century through a collection of unlikely intellectual forbears—men who, in Berlin’s eyes, nevertheless hatched the ideas that now hold us fast.⁷⁷

This is what George Crowder refers to as Berlin’s “fragmentary achievement”, unlike what he identifies as Rawls’ “meticulous attention to detail and persistence in pursuing the issues raised by his arguments”.⁷⁸ What is particularly significant about Berlin’s turn away from the most popular strands of political philosophy of the late twentieth century

⁷⁵ Michael Kenny, “Isaiah Berlin’s Contribution to Modern Political Theory,” *Political Studies* 48 (2000): 1036.

⁷⁶ Ira Katznelson, “Isaiah Berlin’s Modernity,” *Social Research* 66, no. 4 (1999): 1086–87.

⁷⁷ Alex Zakaras, “Isaiah Berlin’s Cosmopolitan Ethics,” *Political Theory* 32, no. 4 (2003): 495–96.

⁷⁸ George Crowder, “Berlin and Rawls,” in *Australasian Political Studies Association Annual Conference 2011* (Australasian Political Studies Association Annual Conference 2011, Canberra: Australian National University., 2011), 2.

is that it was precisely the move he had celebrated in contrast to Laslett's initial declaration about the state of the discipline:

[P]hilosophy is like a radiant sun that, from time to time, throws off portions of itself; these masses, when they cool down, acquire a firm and recognisable structure of their own and acquire independent careers as tidy and regular planets; but the central sun continues on its path, and does not seem to diminish in mass or radiance.⁷⁹

Those who worry about the death of political philosophy have thus failed to look to the newly orbiting fields that may *appear* to have lost their way, but remain in the gravity from whence they came. The problem facing political philosophy, as Berlin saw it, was that it was unable to comprehend (let alone engage with) the “new and unpredictable” intellectual and political developments that had arisen in the twentieth century.⁸⁰ Seen in this light, Berlin's trajectory can be understood as one marked by a certain comfort in an outsider status when compared to others pursuing political philosophy in the era.

This is not to suggest, however, that Berlin had thrown up his hands in disgust and altogether ignored the various disciplinary waves of the twentieth century. In 1953, long before *A Theory of Justice*, Berlin was aware of Rawls and the quality of his thought writing that, “There is of course an American here [at Oxford] better than all these I should think, called Rawls, but I imagine he has been bespoken by Cornell, from whence he comes”.⁸¹ Later, when Berlin was awarded the inaugural Senator Giovanni Agnelli International Prize for the Ethical Dimension in Advanced Societies in 1983, he wrote to a friend, “I did my best to convey to them that I had never written an essay on moral phi-

⁷⁹ Berlin, “Does Political Theory Still Exist,” 62.

⁸⁰ Berlin, 90.

⁸¹ Isaiah Berlin, *Enlightening: Letters 1946 - 1960*, ed. Henry Hardy and Jennifer Holmes (Chatto & Windus, 2009).

losophy, as such, and that Rawls, e.g. Or even Hare, Hampshire, Williams etc. etc. would meet the case more obviously. But it was no use. I am to go to Turin”.⁸² Even if it was the case that Berlin focused his own efforts on other orbits, he appeared to recognize the value in Rawls’ approach — although he might have suggested that *A Theory of Justice* represented yet another of his proposed unpredictable developments, rather than a direct continuation of the political philosophy tradition given that it seemed to be rooted heavily in a uniquely American experience.

At the same time, Berlin saw justice as being incompatible with other fundamental values and that to rely solely upon it would miss essential components of the human experience; further, although related, he thought Rawls too deeply indebted to rationality in his theoretical framework and unable to account for “the irrational impulses of men”.⁸³ While not directly speaking to Rawls, this critique matches Berlin’s distrust of philosophical inquiry that is absent lived, practical wisdom: “Only barbarians are not curious about where they come from, how they came to be where they are, where they appear to be going, whether they wish to go there, and if so, why, and if not, why not”.⁸⁴ Those supposedly rational actors said to live behind the veil of ignorance cannot possibly, in this estimation, be human beings — although it may be a mistake to see them as barbarians, but rather that in the most optimistic situation they are instead something worse: calculating

⁸² Isaiah Berlin, *Affirming: Letters 1975-1997*, ed. Henry Hardy and Mark Pottle (Chatto & Windus, 2015).

⁸³ Steven Lukes and Isaiah Berlin, “Isaiah Berlin: In Conversation with Steven Lukes,” *Salmagundi* 120 (Fall 1998): 113.

⁸⁴ Isaiah Berlin, “The Pursuit of the Ideal,” in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, ed. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (1988; repr., London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), 2.

machines. To be human, either as civilizations or individuals, requires at least the possibility of a clash between different values:

Justice, rigorous justice, is for some people an absolute value, but it is not compatible with what may be no less ultimate values for them - mercy, compassion - as arises in concrete cases ... total liberty for wolves is death to the lambs, total liberty of the powerful, the gifted, is not compatible with the rights to a decent existence of the weak and the less gifted.⁸⁵

It may be feasible in theory for a single value to reign supreme, but the many ‘cases’ of human life force us to reconcile conflicting values both in the immediacy of any given moment and within our actual, not ideal, lives.

Yet it is not altogether clear just how rigorous we are to consider these critiques to be as the first are given in an almost offhand manner in a lengthy interview involving a variety of topics and the latter are not explicitly directed at Rawls himself — or even Rawlsians, as the target of “The Pursuit of the Ideal” would appear to be the progressive pretenses of the Western tradition itself: “[earthly paradise] has been at the centre of ethical thought from the Greeks to the Christian visionaries of the Middle Ages, from the Renaissance to progressive thought in the last century; and, indeed, is believed by many to this day”.⁸⁶ While Berlin is widely understood as objecting to the “monistic model [that] runs through the ethical tradition”, it is unclear whether Rawls is to be considered as continuing this tendency.⁸⁷ Crowder has taken up addressing exactly this concern, fleshing out the nuances to show that the “ideas and arguments of a Berlinian stripe may yet prove more resilient than those of Rawls (where they differ) in the long run”.⁸⁸ It is not that

⁸⁵ Berlin, 10.

⁸⁶ Berlin, 6.

⁸⁷ Galipeau, *Isaiah Berlin's Liberalism*, 67.

⁸⁸ Crowder, “Berlin and Rawls,” 25.

Rawls is truly a ‘moral monist’, but rather that Berlin’s value pluralism is a deeper engagement with a lived understanding of liberalism.

Despite this, it is likely that Berlin would have been comfortable admitting that Rawls had managed to achieve precisely the kind of ‘commanding work’ that he had lamented the absence of a decade prior, in that it had transformed some of the paradoxes of the welfare state and the institutions of liberal democracy into platitudes about the same, which had not yet been satisfactorily done.⁸⁹ While Machiavelli and Rawls are radically different thinkers, Berlin’s claims about the originality of the former can provide some insight into what he must have thought about the latter:

By breaking the original unity he helped to cause men to become aware of the necessity of having to make agonising choices between incompatible alternatives in public and private life ... Men had, no doubt, in practice often enough experience the conflict which Machiavelli made explicit. He converted its expression from a paradox into something approaching a commonplace.⁹⁰

If the greatest advances in thought occur when “concepts grow firm and clear and acquire universal acceptance [and] a new science, natural or formal, comes into being”, then the commentary around Rawls’ efforts would seem to imply exactly that — at least within the realm of liberal political philosophy.⁹¹ Rawls was able to take the complications and contradictions inherent to a political system was lived and already in practice, and provide an extensive theoretical account of it. Even if one takes the position, as R. Bruce Douglass does, that “the style of reasoning Rawls adopted — especially in his later work, when he tried to create a version of liberalism that was not just ‘another sectarian doc-

⁸⁹ Berlin, “Does Political Theory Still Exist,” 59.

⁹⁰ Isaiah Berlin, “The Originality of Machiavelli,” in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, ed. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (1953; repr., London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), 324.

⁹¹ Berlin, “Does Political Theory Still Exist,” 62.

trine' — it is unlikely to endure”, there is *was* a Rawlsian era.⁹² Further, it is not a certainty that Rawls will altogether disappear from the political philosophy landscape, even if his were to become one of the ‘lesser’ orbits.

Insofar as Berlin admitted to the death of political philosophy, as an absence of truly great works, it seems at least possible that Rawls work would represent something of a revival. There is a sense in which to be an essay was insufficient, in Berlin’s view, to vault a set of ideas into the canon of the greats: to achieve that, a comprehensive account of one’s philosophical position is required such that the ideas can develop into a tradition of their own. This might, in some sense, be understood as a continuation of his well-known division between hedgehogs, “who relate everything to a single central vision, one system, less or more coherent or articulate, in terms of which they understand, think and feel” and foxes, “who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some *de facto* way ... their thought is scattered or diffused, moving on many levels”: it is most likely the hedgehogs that will write truly commanding works.⁹³ This is not to be taken as a comment on the quality of the work done by foxes, as Berlin counts Aristotle, Shakespeare, and Goethe among their number, but instead is a statement about their approach to thinking itself and how difficult it is to see their work as a founding, of sorts. Michael Walzer suggests that Berlin himself was an exemplary fox who "never presented himself as a system maker or as a writer in possession of, or in the grip of, a master idea. He doesn't write expository treatises or even formal academic

⁹² Douglass, “John Rawls and the Revival of Political Philosophy: Where Does He Leave Us?,” 92.

⁹³ Isaiah Berlin, “The Hedgehog and the Fox,” in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, ed. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), 436.

articles; he is a wonderful essayist, perhaps the best we have”.⁹⁴ This might help explain why Berlin remained an outsider to the dominant trends of twentieth century political philosophy: the discipline was desperate to find a hedgehog and remained aloof to the disparate thoughts of foxes.⁹⁵

Thus, it makes sense that, almost immediately after publication, *A Theory of Justice* was recognized as a foundational text the likes of which would allow others to see further by standing upon Rawls’ shoulders: it was comprehensive, systematic, and rooted in a singular organizing principle. That Berlin held theoretical disagreements with him does not seem to have lessened his appreciation for Rawls’ contribution to political philosophy.

Yet other thinkers saw *A Theory of Justice* as an exemplary response to Berlin’s supposed absence of commanding texts:

Using Berlin’s categories, one might describe [*A Theory of Justice*] as an attempt to take the tensions and paradoxes revolving around liberalism and the twentieth-century welfare state and transfigure them into a set of platitudes about justice in contemporary societies.⁹⁶

It was essential that someone write the big book: the book which, exemplifying those developments — tackling ground-level issues of desirability and taking issues of feasibility also into account — would make an unquestioned advance on established roads of thought. Only a book of this kind would vindicate and boost

⁹⁴ Michael Walzer, “‘Are There Limits to Liberalism? Review of John Gray, Isaiah Berlin,’” *New York Times Review of Books*, October 1995.

⁹⁵ At the same time, as there has been an increased skepticism in recent years towards comprehensive theorizing — even from thinkers such as Rawls himself — there is an accompanying turn towards the thinking of foxes. As Peter Lassman suggests, “Berlin represents a historically sensitive way of writing political theory that owes nothing to the abstracted utopianism of much recent normative theorizing while, at the same time, in taking the central vision of thinkers seriously, avoids the reductionism and superficiality of much political science” (Lassman 2006, 360).

⁹⁶ Stephen K. White, “Pluralism, Platitudes, and Paradoxes: Fifty Years of Western Political Thought,” *Political Theory* 30, no. 4 (August 2002): 474.

the new developments, ensuring the resurgence of political theory ... As things happened, *A Theory of Justice* played the role required.⁹⁷

Even Rawls' more fervent critics were unable to deny the importance of his disciplinary contributions: for Ernest Van den Haag, "By publishing *A Theory of Justice* in 1971, John Rawls nearly single-handedly, put political philosophy back on the intellectual map. Although disagreeing with most of his views, I thought Rawls' performance admirable" and "Rawls' attempt to justify equality, however unconvincing, is the best I know of"; as Walzer articulates, while he writes in opposition to *A Theory of Justice*, "[n]o one writing about justice these days can fail to recognize and admire the achievement of John Rawls"; and Robert Nozick, similarly in disagreement, takes the sentiment even further: "*A Theory of Justice* is a powerful, deep, subtle, wide-ranging, systematic work in political and moral philosophy which has not seen its like since the writings of John Stuart Mill, if then. It is a fountain of illuminating ideas, integrated together into a lovely whole. Political philosophers now must either work within Rawls' theory or explain why not".⁹⁸ *A Theory of Justice*, whether the work of a hedgehog or not, whether correct or not, rose to the level of the great thinkers of the Western canon of political philosophy — and, in this way, stood in opposition to at least this one death of political philosophy that marked the twentieth century.

⁹⁷ Chandran Kukathas and Philip Pettit, *Rawls: A Theory of Justice and Its Critics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 6.

⁹⁸ Ernest Van Den Haag, "Is Liberalism Just?," *Public Interest*, no. 113 (1993): 122, 126; Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality*, xviii; Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, 183.

3.4 Strauss Revisited

While we can safely attribute to Berlin a deliberate silence about *A Theory of Justice*, it is not clear whether Leo Strauss' lack of attention was likewise intentional. Ultimately we do not know what Strauss would have thought of the consensus that *A Theory of Justice* had revitalized the discipline: it appears that from Rawls' publication in 1971 to Strauss' passing in 1973 was too brief an opening for there to be a meaningful response, let alone an opportunity for a dialogue between the two — if such a thing were even likely. There are then two routes available to eking out some small measure of understanding: one could delve into Strauss' other commentary and attempt to apply it to *A Theory of Justice*; or one could look to those that followed him and their responses to Rawls as perhaps indicative of what he may have thought. Beginning with this latter point, David Schaefer, Allan Bloom, and George Grant provide us with a reasonable enough foundation.⁹⁹ It should be noted that Allan Bloom himself reminds us that it is suspect to trust that a thinker's students have sufficiently grasped all the nuances of their mentor's thoughts: "It is the nature of derivative works to be on a lower level than those from which they stem. There is much in Strauss' interpretation that I have understood, but there is also surely much that I have not understood".¹⁰⁰ To that end, we must be

⁹⁹ With regards to Grant's intellectual connection to Strauss, see Grant Havers' "George Grant and Leo Strauss: Modernist and Postmodernist Conservatisms". While Havers is writing towards the points of divergence between the two thinkers and complicates what he calls the "scholarly consensus" on their compatibility, he helpfully offers a good overview of that agreement within the literature from scholars such as Barry Cooper, William Christian, Michael Allen Gillespie, and H.D. Forbes (Havers 2002, 92). Ultimately I remain somewhat unconvinced by Havers' argument, but am indebted to his attempt as it helped clarify some of my own thinking on the matter.

¹⁰⁰ Allan Bloom, "Response to Hall," *Political Theory* 5, no. 3 (1977): 315.

careful not to conflate Schaefer, Bloom, or Grant with Strauss, but instead try to see them as potential lenses with which to view his thought.

Bloom, contrary to popular sentiment in the era, suggested that it was not possible for *A Theory of Justice* to be read as a revitalization of political philosophy — at least not in the sense of atrophy that Strauss was referring to:

The greatest weakness of a *Theory of Justice* is not to be found in the principles it proposes, nor in the kind of society it envisages, nor in the political tendencies it encourages, but in the lack of education it reveals ... Rawls is the product of a school which thinks that it invented philosophy. Its adherents never approach an Aristotle or a Kant in search of the truth or open to the possibility that these old thinkers might have known more than they do; and since they have a virtual monopoly of the teaching of philosophy, there has been a disastrous, perhaps irreparable, loss of learning and extinguishing of the light when has flickered but endured across so many centuries. His book is a result of that loss of learning and contributes to it in turn.¹⁰¹

The core of this sentiment is hinted at in the title, “Justice: John Rawls Vs. The Tradition of Political Philosophy” and Bloom certainly views Rawls as writing not with, but *against* the long history of political thought — much of his response is dedicated to the myriad ways that *A Theory of Justice* either misunderstands or deliberately misuses canonical thinkers — but he also finds it insufficient for the task at which it seems to aimed: a practical defense of liberal democracy in the wake of the events of the twentieth century. Unfairly or not,¹⁰² Bloom elsewhere describes *A Theory of Justice* as arguing

that the physicist or the poet should not look down on the man who spends his life counting blades of grass or performing any other frivolous or corrupt activity.

¹⁰¹ Bloom, “Justice,” 662.

¹⁰² Disagreements with Rawls’ work abound, but most of them are much more grounded in careful, measured critique than this. As Bart Schultz put it in “John Rawls’s Last Word” (2009), “Since Bloom was wrong about so many things, it is scarcely surprising that he was wrong about Rawls” (107). While I have no interest in taking up either side of the particular battle, what remains significant is the substance of Bloom’s claims and how (and whether) they relate to Strauss’ thought.

Indeed, he should be esteemed, since esteem from others, as opposed to self-esteem, is a basic need of all men. So indiscriminateness is a moral imperative because its opposite is discrimination. This folly means that men are not permitted to seek for the natural human good and admire it when found, for such discovery is coeval with the discovery of bad and contempt for it. Instinct and intellect must be suppressed by education. The natural soul is replaced with an artificial one.¹⁰³

Bloom's Rawls is thus either "an ephemeral ideologist" or "a deluded myth maker".¹⁰⁴

What we are left with is an account of political society altogether absent the concerns of the philosophic or moral human being. Bloom's contempt for Rawls is made explicit once more in *The Closing of the American Mind*, in which *A Theory of Justice* is reduced to nothing more than an "instruction manual" for the distribution of esteem.¹⁰⁵

Beyond his early review of *A Theory of Justice*, Schaefer continued to criticize Rawls both on the content of the text but more significantly on how it was received by the discipline: it was "neither identical with, nor an adequate substitute for, political philosophy, as that enterprise was understood by its exponents from the Platonic Socrates to Nietzsche".¹⁰⁶ It may have the trappings of political philosophy, but the language of neutrality reveals it for what it truly is: the same scientific approach to politics that marks the rest of the discipline. While Schaefer largely avoids directly engaging with the language of 'political science' that Strauss was so critical of — instead attacking Rawls' preferred nomenclature of 'moral theory' — the underlying point remains the same when Schaefer claims that *A Theory of Justice* has "[t]he nonsubstantive character of British philosophy (including its contemporary American offshoot) [which] can be traced back through the

¹⁰³ Allan Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 30.

¹⁰⁴ Bloom, "Justice," 648.

¹⁰⁵ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 229.

¹⁰⁶ David Lewis Schaefer, "'Moral Theory' versus Political Philosophy: Two Approaches to Justice," *The Review of Politics* 39, no. 2 (April 1977): 192.

nineteenth century”.¹⁰⁷ As with those who praised Rawls but towards a very different end, Schaefer has connected this ‘moral theory’ to a tradition that includes figures such as John Stuart Mill and Henry Sidgwick. This point would be much later honed even more sharply to suggest that Rawls “represents an enormous falling away in terms of substantive richness, moral sensitivity, and openness to diverse, serious points of view from what one finds in the writings of such predecessors”.¹⁰⁸ Although directed at *Political Liberalism*, Schaefer ultimately concludes, with less outright scorn than Bloom (but perhaps more lasting), that “in his practice of what he calls political philosophizing, Rawls proves to be neither politic nor philosophical”.¹⁰⁹

When Bloom and Schaefer’s takes on Rawls are compared with that of George Grant, however, they seem downright charitable to *A Theory of Justice*. Unlike their contributions, which are dedicated solely to pursuing the value and perceived abuses of *A Theory of Justice*, Grant is writing in much more broad strokes. Rawls is emblematic of a wider-ranging problem in the English-speaking world, namely that,

[a]nalytical logistics plus historicist scholarship plus even rigorous science do not when added up equal philosophy. When added together they are not capable of producing that thought which is required if justice is to be taken out of the darkness which surrounds it in the technological era.¹¹⁰

It is not immediately clear, then, Grant has singled out Rawls alone. As he says, “[o]ne swallow does not make a summer; one academic book does not make an autumn of our

¹⁰⁷ Schaefer, 215.

¹⁰⁸ David Lewis Schaefer, *Illiberal Justice: John Rawls vs. the American Political Tradition* (University of Missouri Press, 2007), 13.

¹⁰⁹ Schaefer, 285.

¹¹⁰ George Grant, *English-Speaking Justice* (1974; repr., Toronto: Anansi, 1998), 89.

justice”.¹¹¹ Perhaps speaking to Laslett’s initial claims about the state of the English tradition of philosophy, Grant suggests that “[t]he centre of the English-speaking world has moved since 1914 to the great republic. It is therefore appropriate to listen to contemporary liberalism in an American garb”.¹¹² Attention must be paid to Rawls’ account of justice, given that it is wholly “typical of [American] liberalism”.¹¹³ The problem seems to be not so much that the logic of Rawlsian justice was fundamental impossible, but that the theoretical foundations of *A Theory of Justice* — contradictions and all — were already at play across the English-speaking world. What is so troubling to Grant is that this conception of justice comes to an inescapable conclusion: “we cannot know what is the highest good for human beings, or whether there is such”.¹¹⁴ Thus, for Grant, the twentieth century tradition of analytical thought thus far — and along with it the entire progressive, democratic project — altogether eschews the philosophical task, all the while pretending otherwise. He attends specifically to *A Theory of Justice* precisely because of the manner in which it claims to be a philosophical enterprise: “We swim in a particular bay whose contours we can come to know intimately, and we are never asked to swim out into the ocean the immensities of which can easily overwhelm us”.¹¹⁵ Rawls’ analytical philosophy is dangerous precisely because of how safe it is.

Read together, Schaefer, Bloom, and Grant present an understanding of Rawls as a particularly insidious continuation of the thought that marks the rest of the twentieth century: by freeing us of concerns about the good life, Rawls’ principles of justice within

¹¹¹ Grant, 47.

¹¹² Grant, 13.

¹¹³ Grant, 42.

¹¹⁴ Grant, 38.

¹¹⁵ Grant, 96.

liberal democracy reduce politics to a single mode of being together in the world. One can be a communist or a conservative in the privacy of the home, as long as it remains there and there alone. For them, *A Theory of Justice* “is a closing of the exit from the cave. There is no way out and no hiding place”.¹¹⁶ While it is entirely reasonable to question whether these thinkers give *A Theory of Justice* sufficient consideration — after all, they offer only brief responses to a six-hundred page treatise — the question at hand is whether their accounts make sense in relation to Strauss’ critique of modern political philosophy.

Strauss and Rawls are sometimes understood to represent — if not epitomize — different philosophical camps, sometimes understood neatly as Strauss’ preference to “engage in historical studies rather than constructive and original political philosophy as did, for example, John Rawls”.¹¹⁷ Such a tidy division, although perhaps rhetorically convenient, undermines the approaches of both thinkers as is shown by Bloom’s critique of Rawls and Strauss’ writings on persecution and esotericism. Catherine and Michael Zuckert’s *Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy* involves a careful unpacking of the precise nuances of Strauss’ method, troubling some of the shorthands that have arisen both in criticism and in praise, but ultimately they suggest that it is unfair to view Strauss less committed to truly original thought than thinkers like Rawls.¹¹⁸ One reason for that difficulty is that it is “difficult to separate his own thoughts from those of the phi-

¹¹⁶ Bloom, “Justice,” 662.

¹¹⁷ Zuckert and Zuckert, *Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy*, 35.

¹¹⁸ Leora Batnitzky’s *Leo Strauss and Emmanuel Levinas: Philosophy and the Politics of Revelation* similarly does so by treating Strauss and Emmanuel Levinas as foils that can be said to have a “shared intellectual horizon” (xviii).

losophers he is explicating”.¹¹⁹ Further, his approach is deliberately designed to be without the possibility of a casual abridgement: “[p]olitical philosophy ... is no straightforward thing”.¹²⁰ He invites his readers to think philosophically instead of simply presenting his own thought. Where they differ more dramatically is the method by which they arrive at their original thoughts.

While Strauss is leery of those who have given up philosophy in favor of becoming historians of philosophy, so too was he of those who altogether gave up history while still calling themselves philosophers: to debate endlessly what this or that thinker *meant* was no better than ideologues firmly held to their opinions. Or perhaps that goes too far, as Strauss seemed to see those dedicated solely to the history of ideas as mostly harmless, if disappointing, whereas historicism — the belief that all thought is, at its core, historically contingent and thus altogether removed from questions about categorical truth — is nothing less than “the serious antagonist of political philosophy”.¹²¹ It is so dangerous because it results in what Zuckert and Zuckert call a “kind of flaccid relativism that undercut[s] the will to stand up to dangers”.¹²² Rawls’ project then is an entrenchment of historicism and, accordingly, “Strauss would say that Rawls only digs himself yet deeper—perhaps constructing another cave beneath the first two”.¹²³ In this, the Rawlsian theory of politics is no greater — and no lesser — than all the other attempts at modern philosophy, which remain on the surface of political things — that is to say, the realm of opinion rather than truth. An analytic and logical approach, no matter how carefully it is

¹¹⁹ Zuckert and Zuckert, *Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy*, 285.

¹²⁰ Zuckert and Zuckert, 338.

¹²¹ Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy?,” 23.

¹²² Zuckert and Zuckert, *Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy*, 340.

¹²³ Zuckert and Zuckert, 4.

done, is far more indebted to science than the philosophy, and the very grounds of value neutrality that are required to successfully engage in science obscure rather than reveal truth. In this, Strauss might see Rawls as more closely related to the end of ideology theorists than the canonical thinkers of political philosophy: at best, he is betraying the fundamental requirements of his positivist method to understanding political ideas; and at worst, he is ignoring the implicit value judgments interlacing the entirety of his theory.

In the end, it is ultimately beside the point whether Schaefer, Bloom, or Grant's more extreme take on *A Theory of Justice* would have been matched by Strauss, or whether he would have understood it to be simply more of the same: with regards to Strauss' conception of the death of political philosophy, Rawls would be no phoenix rising from the ashes of the intellectual wasteland of the twentieth century. It certainly seems unlikely that Strauss would have expressed the open disdain for Rawls that Bloom and Grant seem compelled to include,¹²⁴ but beyond the matter of tone and into the realm of substance, it seems plausible that Strauss would be sympathetic. Up until the end of his career, Strauss remained critical of any sort of analytical approach, and continued to make assertions about the dire state of the discipline and practice of political philosophy: “[W]hoever is concerned with political philosophy must face the fact that in the last two generations political philosophy has lost its credibility”.¹²⁵ Further still, while his own work was written against that loss, Strauss did not believe that he had blunted the forces

¹²⁴ As Steven B. Smith reminds us in *Reading Leo Strauss: Politics, Philosophy, Judaism*, Strauss wrote “cautiously and reticently, especially with regard to the American regime” — even when intensely critical (2006, 9).

¹²⁵ Leo Strauss, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science and Political Philosophy,” *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 2, no. 1 (1971): 1.

of positivism and historicism in anything but himself.¹²⁶ Indeed he shied away from any sort connection that would tie him to the greatest minds which had dedicated himself to studying:

We must not be deceived by the fact that we meet many people who say that they are philosophers. For those people employ a loose expression which is perhaps necessitated by administrative convenience. Often they mean merely that they are members of philosophy departments. And it is as absurd to expect members of philosophy departments to be philosophers as it is to expect members of art departments to be artists. We cannot be philosophers, but we can love philosophy; we can try to philosophize.¹²⁷

Not only was Rawls insufficient to the task of salvaging political philosophy, so grave was the situation that it remained unresolved even up until (and likely beyond) Strauss' death. Nobody had yet arrived who was sufficient for the task of either providing new foundations for political philosophy or shoring up the old ones. If Strauss' death of political philosophy is to be taken seriously, there is little point in a further consideration of Rawls: the question that we are left to ask ourselves is whether anything since then has revived the discipline or whether it remains in the same sorry state that Strauss identified almost seventy years ago.

3.5 Cobban Revisited

The case of Alfred Cobban is similar to that of Strauss, in that his death in 1968 meant that he was unable to respond to the notion that *A Theory of Justice* had revived political thinking. More difficult still is that 'Cobbanism' failed to be carried into the end of the twentieth century in anything resembling the way that Strauss endured through his students' interpretations and revisions to his ideas. Cobban, however, provides helpful

¹²⁶ And, perhaps, in some of his students.

¹²⁷ Leo Strauss, "What Is Liberal Education?," in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Hilail Gildin (1961; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 317.

guideposts for those who wish to retrace his intellectual steps: for him, one must go back to the eighteenth century to discover when there last was “any original political thinking ... [and] [l]iberal democratic principles ceased to evolve in the nineteenth century”.¹²⁸ It may be the case that political practice and philosophy do not develop simultaneously, so a gap between the two can emerge. Yet Cobban takes this problem one step further: “The politician who merely repeats platitudes is no worse than his own experts; he is not to be singled out for criticism. And how can they be held responsible for failing to translate political theory into practice if there is no theory to be translated”.¹²⁹ The failure of political philosophy to meaningfully engage with the foundations of the modern liberal democratic project ceded those debates wholly to apolitical realms like the bureaucracy, which has both the appearance and uses the language of politics but is mere administration — and that this lead directly catastrophes of the twentieth century. More importantly, despite appearances, the ‘victors’ of those conflicts failed to learn the proper lessons from those they defeated: that is to say, those who truly should have known better, those who called themselves experts in the study of politics, failed to learn. And, in failing to learn, then failed again in their home institutions: “The political scientist, in so far as he wishes to remain a scientist, is limited to the study of techniques” and then, in the classroom, passes on the study of those techniques to their students absent altogether the value judgments (or moral interest) which Cobban believes are necessary for proper political thinking.¹³⁰

For there to be a reversal of this decline, Cobban argues for a return to the “connection between political theory and practical politics”, that is to say, those who call

¹²⁸ Cobban, “The Decline of Political Theory,” 325.

¹²⁹ Cobban, 328.

¹³⁰ Cobban, 335.

themselves philosophers must look not simply to theoretical scholarship but also to the real, lived world of politics.¹³¹ It is not so much that political philosophy requires that we all be politicians, but we do need to be more comfortable engaging with the “dangerous subject [of] politics”.¹³² That Cobban thinks so poorly of both Marxist thought and its accompanying active political life again makes clear what he means by philosophical linkage to ‘politics’: there needs to be theoretical grounding to the liberal, *democratic* state that was being solidified in the post-war environment. That this was still absent from political philosophy was one of the reasons for the state of affairs of the early twentieth century: “In the absence of a more or less rational theory to justify its sense of political obligation and the rightful powers of government, it will fall victim to an irrational one. If it cannot have, say, Locke on *Toleration*, it will have, say, Hitler on *Mein Kampf*”.¹³³ It is a particular kind of philosophizing that Cobban is looking for, not merely the pursuit of wisdom as broad conceptional project, but rather specifically a kind of philosophy that is quite unlike the way that the “nineteenth century failed to refashion and think out anew ... the ideas that it was living on”.¹³⁴ Instead of merely repeating the codes and conventions that arose out of social contract theory, Cobban’s call for a revival would involve bringing them into a twentieth century context in light of its many political lessons.

Rawls, it would seem, solves Cobban’s problem in two ways: first, *A Theory of Justice* is a thorough engagement with democratic principles as they are found in Western

¹³¹ Cobban, 331.

¹³² Cobban, 335.

¹³³ Cobban, 336–37.

¹³⁴ Cobban, 325.

liberal democracies; and second, the manner by which his work taken up in the political world far beyond academic political philosophy — in judicial, administrative, and legislative fields — would appear to indicate that either Rawls was able to engage with political facts in a way unlike nearly all of his contemporaries or political actors themselves chose to engage with *A Theory of Justice* despite whatever may have kept them from doing so with prior texts and thinkers. This latter point ultimately amounts to the same thing as it means that there was *something* within the text that such efforts worthwhile.

Jane S. Schacter looks to the majority decision in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003) and suggests that “Justice Kennedy’s opinion has something of a Rawlsian cast to it” and that it “has Rawlsian resonance beyond its emphasis on respect”.¹³⁵ Similarly, from Michael A. Lawrence, “The Warren Court’s practice of using its power of equity to achieve fair outcomes closely resembles, at its core, the ‘justice-as-fairness’ approach promoted by John Rawls”.¹³⁶ Lawrence goes so far as to conclude that “[a] justice-as-fairness approach would enable the judiciary ... to impartially address the social and political realities of twenty-first century—a substantial improvement in administering justice for an institution too-often tarnished by the taint of bias and privilege”, and that the courts themselves could be greatly improved by applying the lens of *A Theory of Justice*.¹³⁷

In his retrospective of the Supreme Court of the United States under the tenure of chief justices Earl Warren and Warren Burger, John E. Nowak recognizes some of the fundamental principles at play in *A Theory of Justice* in decisions of the Warren Court: “I

¹³⁵ Jane S. Schacter, “Lawrence v. Texas and the Fourteenth Amendment’s Democratic Aspirations,” *Temple Political & Civil Rights Law Review* 13 (2004): 748; 749.

¹³⁶ Michael A. Lawrence, “Justice-as-Fairness as Judicial Guiding Principle: Remembering John Rawls and the Warren Court,” *Brook Legislative Review* 81 (2016): 674.

¹³⁷ Lawrence, 731.

would suggest that the Warren Court’s liberalism was an attempt to employ a philosophy of rights and duties quite similar to that of John Rawls”.¹³⁸ This is not an argument that the judiciary was consulting Rawls’ theories while crafting decisions — as has been sometimes been attributed to Alan Ryan (among others) for suggesting that, “through the invisible medium of Supreme Court clerks and the more visible medium of the Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Chicago, etc. law reviews, Mr. Rawls' ideas have crept into the law of the land”.¹³⁹ Given that Warren stepped down as Chief Justice in 1969, Frank I. Michelman offers that the causal arrows might be better off reversed: “The Warren Court reached its apogee in years during which John Rawls was bringing *A Theory of Justice* toward publication. Might it possibly be that the Warren Court’s example crept into the heads of observant political philosophers?”.¹⁴⁰ Yet, according to David Lewis Schaefer, this is hardly a settled debate:

[Michelman] underestimates the extent to which the post-*Theory* court radicalized such notions, encouraged by Rawls's writings ... [a]nd by Michelman's own proposed test, whether the Court would reverse its position on the constitutionality of comprehensive legislative regulation of campaign finance expenditures in accordance with Rawls's mandates, it appears that ‘Rawls’s ideas — his *distinctive* ideas, his ideas where it counts — have indeed crept into the law of the land’.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ John E. Nowak, “Foreword: Evaluating the Work of the New Libertarian Supreme Court,” *Hastings Constitutional Law Quarterly* 7 (1980): 274–75.

¹³⁹ Ryan, 1993, as cited in Matthew Scherer, “Saint John: The Miracle of Secular Reason,” in *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 346.

¹⁴⁰ Frank I. Michelman, “Our Liberalism,” *Texas Law Review* 89 (2011): 1415.

¹⁴¹ Schaefer, *Illiberal Justice: John Rawls vs. the American Political Tradition*, note 27, at p. 182.

Regardless there were many thinkers who saw Rawls' work as a way to understand Supreme Court decisions and their relationship to the American¹⁴² liberal state.¹⁴³ This proved to be more than simply a theoretical position: by 1994, there were "many hundreds of [law review] articles citing *A Theory of Justice*", yet it has proven to be more than simply a valuable way of interpreting decisions after the fact. As Lawrence B. Solum has shown that "its frequent citation in the opinions of American courts [is] a phenomenon that is unduplicated by any other twentieth-century work of political philosophy" — and that "the only other work in the history of political philosophy to be cited at a comparable rate appears to be John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*".¹⁴⁴ Solum's brief survey is merely meant to be a representative sample and is covered in a single footnote, but it shows a substantial number of opinions in a range of different courts starting as early as 1973.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Although it should also be noted that Rawls' work is also often applied outside of the United States. See: Kyle Farmbry, "Justice as "Fairness" Reified: Lessons from the South African Constitutional Court," *Public Administration Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (2014): 521–43; Jay Makarenko, "Fair Opportunity to Participate: The Charter and the Regulation of Electoral Speech," *Canadian Political Science Review* 3, no. 2 (2009): 38–51.

¹⁴³ See: J.M. Donnelly, "A Theory of Justice, Judicial Methodology, and the Constitutionality of Capital Punishment: Rawls, Dworkin, and a Theory of Criminal Responsibility," *Syracuse Law Review* 29 (1978): 1109–74; Charles A. Kelbley, "Are There Limits to Constitutional Change? Rawls on Comprehensive Doctrines, Unconstitutional Amendments, and the Basis of Equality," *Fordham Law Review* 72, no. 5 (2004): 1487–1536.

¹⁴⁴ Lawrence B. Solum, "Situating Political Liberalism," *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 69 (1994): 550; Solum, 550–51; Solum, note 9, at 551; Solum, 550–51.

¹⁴⁵ Solum, "Situating Political Liberalism," note 8, at p. 550. That first opinion is a dissent which claims that "it is essentially a denial of justice to allow the white majority to have the power to preclude the non-whites from dealing directly with the employer on racial issues" and, aside of Rawls, also cites Berlin's "Two Concepts of Liberty" in support of the position (*Western Addition Community Organization v. N.L.R.B.*, No. 71–1656 (United States Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit June 29, 1973)).

Beyond judicial decisions, Rawls has proven influential in areas of policy debate outside of his initial scope such as health care¹⁴⁶ and environmental ethics¹⁴⁷ — and there have even been attempts to experimentally prove (or disprove)¹⁴⁸ the claims within *A Theory of Justice*.¹⁴⁹ Richard Posner's investigation into the decline of public intellectuals is pessimistic about Rawls' extension into the non-academic world: “[i]t is doubtful that even Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* ... the most celebrated work of political philosophy of the twentieth century, has had a significant impact on public policy” although Posner suggests that this is a broader problem for political philosophy because “real-world

¹⁴⁶ See: John H. Bryant, “Principles of Justice as a Basis for Conceptualizing a Health Care System,” *International Journal of Health Services* 7, no. 4 (1977): 707–19; John C. Moskop, “Rawlsian Justice and a Human Right to Health Care,” *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 8, no. 4 (1983): 329–38; Norman Daniels, *Just Health Care* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Thomas C. Shevory, “Applying Rawls to Medical Cases: An Investigation into the Usages of Analytical Philosophy,” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 10, no. 4 (1986): 749–64.

¹⁴⁷ See: Laurence H. Tribe, “Ways Not to Think about Plastic Trees: New Foundations for Environmental Law,” *The Yale Law Journal* 83, no. 7 (June 1974): 1315–48; Ernest Partridge, *Responsibilities to Future Generations* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1981); Russ Manning, “Environmental Ethics and Rawls' Theory of Justice,” *Environmental Ethics* 3, no. 2 (1981): 155–65; Dieter Birnbacher, “A Priority Rule for Environmental Ethics,” *Environmental Ethics* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 3–16.

¹⁴⁸ James Konow's survey of the experimental literature suggests that the difference principle in particular is on shaky ground here: “The experimental evidence on Rawlsian justice seems to constitute a near-categorical rejection of its crucial premise” (Konow 2003, 1196).

¹⁴⁹ See: Norman Frohlich and Joe A. Oppenheimer, *Choosing Justice: An Experimental Approach to Ethical Theory* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1993); Philip A. Michelbach et al., “Doing Rawls Justice: An Experimental Study of Income Distribution Norms,” *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (July 2003): 523–39; Kurtis Swope et al., “Social Position and Distributive Justice: Experimental Evidence,” *Southern Economic Journal* 74, no. 3 (2008): 811–18; Doug Bond and Park Jong-Chul, “An Empirical Test of Rawls's Theory of Justice: A Second Approach, in Korea and the United States,” *Simulation & Gaming* 22, no. 4 (1991): 443–62; Grzegorz Lissowski, Tadeusz Tyszka, and Włodzimierz Okrasa, “Principles of Distributive Justice: Experiments in Poland and America,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, no. 1 (1991): 98–119; Michael Jackson and Peter Hill, “A Fair Share,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 7, no. 2 (1995): 169–79; Paul Eugene Oleson, “An Experimental Examination of Alternative Theories of Distributive Justice and Economic Fairness” (Dissertation, University of Arizona., 2001); F. Carlsson, G. Gupta, and O. Johansson-Stenman, “Choosing from behind a Veil of Ignorance in India,” *Applied Economics Letters* 10 (2003): 825–827.

events have a much greater impact on public opinion than academic theories do”.¹⁵⁰ The most successful public intellectuals, according to Posner, are those not confined to the specialization that academia demands or, at least, those able to speak outside of their disciplinary jargon — neither of which could be said for *A Theory of Justice*. Michael Saward points out that “[i]n the political world itself, Rawls's influence is more uncertain, and difficult to detect”, but there is some evidence that it is not altogether absent.¹⁵¹ Posner’s empirical survey of public intellectuals labels Rawls as having a “modest” number of appearances in popular media; and James T. Kloppenberg’s *Reading Obama* has a significant focus on Rawls due to the fact that “Americans of Obama's generation ... learned much of their political theory from Rawls” and, more specifically, “because his ideas can be shown both to have influenced Obama and to illuminate Obama's political convictions”.¹⁵² This last point is what Steven Mazie refers to “Obama’s Rawlsian vision”.¹⁵³ More explicitly, when awarding Rawls with the National Humanities Medal, President Clinton referred to having been, “among the millions moved by a remarkable books [sic] he wrote, *A Theory of Justice*, that placed our rights to liberty and justice upon a strong and brilliant new foundation of reason ... Just as impressively, he has helped a whole generation of learned Americans revive their faith in democracy itself”.¹⁵⁴ While it is rea-

¹⁵⁰ Richard A. Posner, *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline* (Harvard University Press, 2008), 334; 335.

¹⁵¹ Michael Saward, “Veil of Influence: The Legacy of John Rawls,” *Soundings* 24 (2003): 4.

¹⁵² Posner, *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline*, 25; James T. Kloppenberg, *Reading Obama: Dreams, Hope, and the American Political Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 94; 87.

¹⁵³ Steven Mazie, “Obama’s Rawlsian Vision,” *The Economist*, February 19, 2013, <https://www.economist.com/democracy-in-america/2013/02/19/obamas-rawlsian-vision#comments>.

¹⁵⁴ Clinton, “Remarks By The President.”

sonable to question how seriously we should consider a few superlatives given at an awards ceremony, there is a significance to the public nature of the president's pulpit.

This falls far short of the direct and explicit ways that, say, John Locke shaped the American Founders, but perhaps such heights should not be expected given the considerable differences between founding and governing. Nor does it seem that Cobban was looking for a political philosopher of such stature: his conception of decline was of a discipline that lived solely within academia, a self-contained system that, granted, may have expanded in size throughout the twentieth century, but without ever opening itself up to the world beyond its walls. It seems undeniable that *A Theory of Justice* managed to be a breach within those fortifications. Consider Margaret Drabble's 1996 novel *The Witch of Exmoor* which reimagines the veil of ignorance as a parlour game to satirize conditions of Britain in the post-Thatcher era:

‘No, it's not a question of imagining a Utopia,’ he repeats. ‘It's more a question of unimagining everything that you are, and then working out the kind of society which you would be willing to accept if you didn't in advance know your own place in it. If you knew you would have no special privileges or bargaining powers. It's a much more modest proposal than a Utopia. All you have to imagine is that in the original position of choice you don't know who you are or where you stand — you don't know if you're rich or poor, able or disabled, clever or mentally subnormal, plain or beautiful, male or female, black or white, strong or weak ... If you cling to any trace of your existing self you will find yourself constructing a theory of justice and a society that favour you.’¹⁵⁵

If that were not evidence enough of the manner by which Rawls' work reached beyond academia, we could point to the modest success of *A Theory of Justice: The Musical!* which premiered at Oxford and then ran in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.¹⁵⁶ Aside from

¹⁵⁵ Margaret Drabble, *The Witch of Exmoor* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996), 4.

¹⁵⁶ It should be noted that these pop culture references go beyond name-dropping, as with something like Monty Python's "Bruces' Philosophers Song". While aimed towards entertainment

these thorough engagements, there have been references to the veil of ignorance on at least two popular television series: *Doctor Who*, in which “the most perfect treaty of all time” is negotiated from within a science fiction version of the thought experiment; and *The West Wing*, which uses it as an explanation for crafting tax policy.¹⁵⁷ Corey Mohler’s *Existential Comics*, a webcomic which attempts to make philosophical concepts and thinkers more widely accessible through comedy, begins an explanation of the original position by suggesting that “John Rawls is probably the most important political philosopher of the 20th century, especially for his best known work, *A Theory of Justice*”.¹⁵⁸ While the exact boundaries of Rawls’ sphere of influence can be debated, the fact is that they expanded far beyond the realm of other political philosophy scholarship of the same era and into, at least partially, the world that Cobban called for political philosophy to (re)enter. Therefore, at least according to this conception of the death of political philosophy, Rawls’ work could be seen a revival of sorts.

3.6 Laslett Revisited

If the case of Leo Strauss involved going too far beyond his own words and required parsing his thoughts from those who followed him, uncovering Peter Laslett’s perspective on John Rawls’ relationship to the death of political philosophy is almost too easy. Getting there, however, first requires a brief aside.

(and, to an extent, biography), both are also engagements with Rawls’ philosophical concepts. Thus they join a small body of non-academic works that attempt to bring political thought to a broader audience, which includes Jostein Gaarder’s novel *Sophie’s World*, Margarethe von Trotta’s film *Hannah Arendt*, and Peter Ruzicka’s opera *Benjamin*.

¹⁵⁷ Nick Hurran, “The Day of the Doctor,” *Doctor Who* (BBC One, November 23, 2013); Alex Graves, “Red Haven’s on Fire,” *The West Wing* (NBC, February 26, 2003).

¹⁵⁸ Corey Mohler, “In Which John Rawls Is a Bad Tipper,” Webcomic, *Existential Comics*, February 15, 2016, <http://existentialcomics.com/comic/119>.

The 4th Series of *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, the first volume published after *A Theory of Justice*, is noteworthy in what is absent: after both including works of Rawls and championing its quality in the 2nd and 3rd Series volumes, he is almost nowhere to be found in this volume — unless we are to count John Cornford’s “The Political Theory of Scarcity”, which is a direct engagement with a number of Rawls’ essays, including those published in prior Series. While there are any number of plausible reasons why there was no contribution from Rawls to the volume, the lack of attention to him in the introduction is noteworthy because it follows the 1971 publication of *A Theory of Justice* and because the 5th Series is positively effusive towards him. In fact, the 4th Series’ introduction has an altogether strange shift in tone suggesting that “[i]t is arguable that we were never right to think in terms of such pathological metaphors, and it is clear in any case that they are no longer applicable”.¹⁵⁹ It also makes reference to the ‘end of ideology’ thesis, offering that “our first introduction was written at a time when it seemed that ideology might be ending” and then goes so far as to claim that the death of political philosophy thesis was itself a “mask[] of disputable ideological positions” and that “[i]t was a lack of critical awareness about the character of [intellectual] movements rather than any genuine absence of ideological or theoretical reflection which gave rise to the always misleading and by now dramatically exploded sense that there might be nothing further to say”.¹⁶⁰ While these are not themselves questionable statements to make, it would be surprising — although perhaps charitably read as an echo of a Socratic mindset — for Laslett to

¹⁵⁹ Peter Laslett, W.G. Runciman, and Quentin Skinner, “Introduction,” in *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, *Philosophy, Politics and Society* 4 (Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1972), 1.

¹⁶⁰ Laslett, Runciman, and Skinner, 7; 1.

proudly declare them alongside the notion that he had “the need for greater self-awareness”.¹⁶¹

It should be noted that the authorship of this introduction is unstated in the text, but Quentin Skinner — a newly added third editor for the 4th series — has since taken responsibility for its content.¹⁶² This is a significant clarification to what would otherwise be a fairly complicated shift in Laslett’s views on the death of political philosophy.¹⁶³ Skinner’s introduction shows concerns for history and method in relation to political philosophy, a strand of thought that he had been developing since at least three years prior in “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas” (1969) and even earlier back to “History and Ideology in the English Revolution” (1965).¹⁶⁴ If this can be understood as an era in which Skinner was working out “an approach in which there was no need to make a dividing line between philosophy and history, but would allow an interplay between them” then the concerns of his *Philosophy, Politics and Society* introduction make a great deal more sense, even as they diverge from Laslett’s own disciplinary qualms.¹⁶⁵ Yet while it is clear that Skinner is skeptical, if not outright hostile, to the strict theses of disciplinary decline, his methodological concerns are themselves an articulation of a similar enough point: in asking towards the “appropriate procedures to adopt in the at-

¹⁶¹ Laslett, Runciman, and Skinner, 1.

¹⁶² Palonen, *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, 27.

¹⁶³ It is also especially significant given that Skinner’s interpretation of Daniel Bell’s *The End of Ideology* was explicitly rejected by Bell himself (Bell 1988, 409n1).

¹⁶⁴ To this point, Kari Palonen’s intellectual biography *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric* is helpful in showing the longevity of Skinner’s own thoughts on the role of the historian in the study of philosophical texts. Beyond that, Palonen also does well to trace the eddies of those thoughts in writings that might otherwise be thought unrelated to Skinner’s methodological concerns.

¹⁶⁵ Palonen, *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, 28.

tempt to arrive at an understanding of [a] work” he has in mind a critique of the methods that, when he is writing in the late 1960s, he finds common in the study of political philosophy’s classic texts.¹⁶⁶

Thus, although skeptical of more categorical claims about disciplinary decline, Skinner can be thought of as within its orbit. There *is* something wrong with the approach many have taken to considering the history of philosophy — although it should be noted that Skinner, as with many before him, altogether fails to provide meaningful evidence for his account of the state of the discipline — and attention to method is the way to resolve that error. Such a resolution is necessary because the state of the literature when he is writing is filled “with a series of conceptual muddles and mistaken empirical claims”.¹⁶⁷ In this sense, Skinner actually comes across as closer to Strauss than Laslett in the type of criticisms that he is levelling at the discipline: both see their respective disciplines to have been caught in self-made traps which, even if they have been rather beautifully constructed, remain traps nonetheless.¹⁶⁸

Yet it should again be emphasized that they would likely define those disciplines very differently: Skinner’s primary point of contention is how the classic texts of political philosophy have been approached, as opposed to Strauss’ argument about the inherent (and seemingly inevitable) logic of those same texts — and, most importantly, the two have underlying differences in how they approach the problem of truth with regards to those texts. Strauss’ engagement with texts is a mode of seeking out answers to key political questions whereas Skinner disagrees with the possibility of that project altogether:

¹⁶⁶ Tully, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” 29.

¹⁶⁷ Tully, 29.

¹⁶⁸ Recalling Hannah Arendt’s “Heidegger and the Fox” (1953).

The vital implication here is not merely that classic texts cannot be concerned with our questions and answers, but only with their own. There is also the further implication that ... there simply are no perennial problems in philosophy: there are only individual answers to individual questions, and as many different questions as there are questioners.¹⁶⁹

However, despite the appearance of antithetical differences in perspective, there is more overlap than is perhaps commonly understood to exist between their two approaches and a deeper interrogation of that can be helpful to practitioners of either method.¹⁷⁰

Both thinkers are concerned with a failure not in the practice of political philosophy (or, in the case of Strauss, not *just* that failure), but in the reading of philosophical texts. Yet where they diverge is again interesting: for Skinner, the focus is on reading in concepts and ideas that are not truly there in a text, whereas Strauss is suggesting that key arguments and understandings are being missed. Each is damaging to the pursuit of truth (even if both define that truth differently), but each in its own way — and the solutions, as one would expect, are particular to each. It is not altogether outside the realm of possible that in reading, say, Machiavelli's *Prince* one could commit both errors at the same time. The threat inherent to misreading texts is not simply that one would be mistaken, but that “to systematically misconstrue the history of reason puts on in great danger of misunderstanding reason itself”.¹⁷¹ While Arthur Melzer is explicitly referring to Strauss' attention to esoteric writing here, it could likewise be applied to Skinner's contextual approach — with the notable exception being that Skinner would find fault with the implied perennial truths in the statement.

¹⁶⁹ Tully, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” 65.

¹⁷⁰ For more on this point see Ian Ward's "Helping the Dead Speak: Leo Strauss, Quentin Skinner and the Arts of Interpretation in Political Thought" (2009).

¹⁷¹ Arthur Melzer, *Philosophy Between the Lines: The Lost History of Esoteric Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), xiii.

In the end, although Skinner wishes to distance himself from theories of disciplinary decline, he acknowledges that there was something to the elocutionary force of the ‘death of political philosophy’ arguments. As Kari Palonen suggests:

[W]hat Skinner has been doing when turning towards a critique of philosophy is not directed against the activity of philosophizing ... It is the philosopher’s claims on authority and superiority over other disciplines, on attributing a specific place to questions and on relying on a ready-made classification of categories an unhistorical conceptual ‘clarification’ that Skinner characterized as an ‘insufficient puzzlement’.¹⁷²

For those who truly believe there to be a loss of the possibility of philosophy, Skinner would argue that the facts have never been particularly favourable to its most fervent advocates — and that the political problems are quite of a different order than with *philosophy* itself. Still, by 1990, Skinner was arguing that there had been a change to the intellectual climate at some point such that ideas like Marxism and utopian theories of politics have been salvaged from “the dustbins of history”.¹⁷³ It was the turn towards a science of politics that allowed for the conditions in which “there was nothing systematic for [philosophers] to tell us about the substantive moral and political issues of day” — which thus became evidence for the decline theorists as to the pitiful state of political philosophy after WWII.¹⁷⁴ Skinner is one of many who point to the irony of the plethora of philosophical laments about the impossibility of philosophy and the implicit debates about ideological and political philosophy that were occurring under the guise of those laments (or celebrations, as was the case with the ‘end of ideology’ theorists). This is what Jan-Werner Müller refers to as the “apparent paradox in the intellectual history of the mid-

¹⁷² Palonen, *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, 144–45.

¹⁷³ Quentin Skinner, ed., *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (1985; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.5.

¹⁷⁴ Skinner, 4.

20th century” in which it very much seemed to be a war of ideas; or, as R. Bruce Douglass puts it, “the very fact that we can have such arguments is surely good evidence that the story of what happened to political philosophy in the first part of the twentieth century is considerably more complicated than the extinction narrative suggests”.¹⁷⁵ It seems entirely possible that there were more thinkers finding this particular fault with the argument than there were those making it.

While Skinner contends that there has been a change, he does not point to the Rawlsian moment as instrumental in that change. He does grant that *A Theory of Justice* is a legitimate theoretical work in that it “show[s] us what lines of action we are committed to undertaking by the values we profess to accept”, but he is unsure if “Rawls has really succeeded in freeing himself from the imaginative constraints imposed by history in the way his thought experiment claims”.¹⁷⁶ The fact that Rawls is making any attempt at all to do so is worth some degree of notice and Skinner does include a chapter dedicated to his thought in *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* in which Alan Ryan argues that “Rawls has set philosophy back on the path followed by his predecessors like John Stuart Mill”.¹⁷⁷ This, as we saw earlier in the chapter, was an all too common refrain.

Skinner praises Rawls’ systematic nature, but he actually considers Laslett’s historical approach to Locke’s *Two Treatises of Government* to be methodologically superi-

¹⁷⁵ Jan-Werner Müller, “Fear and Freedom: On ‘Cold War Liberalism’” 7, no. 1 (2008): 46; Douglass, “John Rawls and the Revival of Political Philosophy: Where Does He Leave Us?,” 83.

¹⁷⁶ Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (1998; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); qtd. in Palonen, *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, 78-79; 126.

¹⁷⁷ Quentin Skinner, ed., “John Rawls,” in *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (1985; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 107.

or¹⁷⁸: “Laslett placed [Locke] within an historical setting that convincingly explained why he wrote as he did about freedom, consent and arbitrary power”.¹⁷⁹ This is precisely in line with what Skinner believes to be the fundamental purpose of intellectual history: “that the history of thought should be viewed not as a series of attempts to answer a canonical set of questions, but as a sequence of episodes in which the questions as well as the answers have frequently changed”.¹⁸⁰ Skinner does not claim that such an attentiveness would serve to revive political philosophy, as he never saw the discipline to be so dire as to merit such language, but Laslett’s approach altogether avoided the apparently all too common mistake of confusing politics and ideology with political philosophy or intellectual history.

This conception of the death of the political philosophy is ultimately so at odds with Laslett’s earlier version that, despite appearing together as editors in the 4th Series of *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, it is unhelpful to use Skinner to get at what Laslett thought of Rawls and his revival of the discipline. In the introduction of the 5th Series of *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Laslett writes:

‘No commanding work of political theory has appeared in the 20th century.’ So said Isaiah Berlin, writing in 1962 ... in answer to the question *Does political theory still exist?* He was taking up a point made six years earlier in the introduction to the first volume. The outstanding difference now, in 1978, is that

¹⁷⁸ Laslett is one of two thinkers that he mentions in Prokhovnik’s interview as inspiring his own approach to Hobbes’ *Leviathan*. The other being John Pocock’s *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law*. Emile Perreau-Saussine also points to R.G. Collingwood’s *An Autobiography* and Duncan Forbes’ work on David Hume. See: Emile Perreau-Saussine, “Quentin Skinner in Context,” *The Review of Politics* 69, no. 1 (2007): 108.

¹⁷⁹ Raia Prokhovnik, “An Interview with Quentin Skinner,” *Contemporary Political Theory* 10, no. 2 (2011): 274.

¹⁸⁰ Skinner, *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*, 15; James Tully, ed., “A Reply to My Critics,” in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 235.

Berlin's assertion is no longer true. It ceased to be so in 1971, when *A Theory of Justice* by John Rawls of Harvard was published in Cambridge, Mass.¹⁸¹

A new descriptive adjective has been joined, *Rawlsian*, a word which will now be found to be accepted currency in the collection we now present.¹⁸²

Unlike in prior volumes where Laslett's pessimism had been transformed slowly over the years into a cautious sort of optimism about the possibilities that lay before the discipline, *A Theory of Justice* caused Laslett to throw all such caution to the wind: He calls it an "Olympian work" and goes so far as to suggest the arrival of a "post-Rawlsian era".¹⁸³ There is even a footnote, explaining that *A Theory of Justice* came out "during the course of publication of the previous volume of *Philosophy, Politics and Society*", as if apologetic for any offense that one might have taken at the Series' failure to address an event of such magnitude.¹⁸⁴ It would not be unfair, particularly with the benefit of hindsight, to understand the overall series of *Philosophy, Politics and Society* as, after having identified a fundamental problem for political philosophy, being immensely supportive of Rawls and advocating for serious attention to his work as a means of resolving precisely that problem.

Yet it would wrong to suggest, as David Schaefer does, that *A Theory of Justice* "invalidated" the death of political philosophy for Peter Laslett.¹⁸⁵ Rather Laslett believed, at least at this point, that it invalidated the absence of a truly 'commanding work'

¹⁸¹ Peter Laslett and James Fishkin, "Introduction," in *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, *Philosophy, Politics and Society* 5 (Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1979), 1.

¹⁸² Laslett and Fishkin, 1.

¹⁸³ Laslett and Fishkin, 1.

¹⁸⁴ Laslett and Fishkin, 1 note 1.

¹⁸⁵ Schaefer, *Illiberal Justice: John Rawls vs. the American Political Tradition*, note 26, 8.

in the 20th century that Berlin had identified,¹⁸⁶ because the death of political philosophy had largely been an empirical concept for Laslett, rather than a philosophical one — and one that related to a particular set of thinkers (and not necessarily to their thoughts). By virtue of being an American, Rawls cannot be said to have made whole the tradition of uniquely *British* political philosophy¹⁸⁷ that Laslett lamented almost as strongly as the death of political philosophy itself and identified as having ended roughly with Bernard Bosanquet, but there were those who saw Rawls as taking up the project that follows from Bosanquet. Among other thinkers, John Chapman thought:

Rawls's theory of justice is best seen as the culmination of the effort, begun by Kant and Hegel, and carried forward by T.H. Green, Bernard Bosanquet, and the other British and American idealists, to adapt Rousseau's theory of the general will to the modern state.¹⁸⁸

A Theory of Justice is an achievement of the first order. In this century only Bernard Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State* begins to compare with it.¹⁸⁹

Gerald Gaus' *The Modern Liberal Theory of Man* also places Rawls as an important thinker in modern liberalism's efforts to "combin[e] and reconcil[e] individuality and so-

¹⁸⁶ It is all too common to simply equate Isaiah Berlin's claim with those who saw political philosophy itself as in decline: Kukathas and Pettit refer to "Berlin's harsh judgment on the state of things in 1962" so as to provide context for the emergence of *A Theory of Justice* (Kukathas and Pettit 1990, 3). Yet Berlin can only really be understood as pessimistic about a particular conception of political philosophy: the academic literature of 'commanding' works (whatever they may be) — or what Kukathas and Pettit call "the big book ... [that] would make an unquestioned advance on established roads of thought" (Kukathas and Pettit 1990, 6). Berlin thought that political philosophy was thriving in a number of arenas and was being ignored either because of novelty or the ways they broke from tradition, and that these need not necessarily look anything like the canon. This is perhaps the best way of understanding his own path as a political philosopher: again, as a fox, rather than a hedgehog.

¹⁸⁷ Unless one would like to make the dubious claim that a Fulbright Scholarship at Oxford is sufficient to replace his nationality.

¹⁸⁸ Chapman, "Rawls's Theory of Justice," 588.

¹⁸⁹ Chapman, 591.

ciability”.¹⁹⁰ Unlike Laslett’s earliest hopes for disciplinary revival, Gaus is not so committed to British scholarship, and also granted that John Dewey’s early twentieth century work as worthy of consideration in this tradition. Rawls, however, is the only truly post-war theorist in this volume. After its publication in 1983, Gaus later work would expand list of “important and innovative contribut[ors]” of liberal theory to include deeper appreciations of Friedrich Hayek, Robert Nozick, and Isaiah Berlin — and also raised stronger questions as to the nature of Rawls’ contributions to liberal theory — but does not contradict his earlier claims about Rawls’ import.¹⁹¹ Thomas Hurka’s *Perfectionism* likewise identifies Rawls as one of the more influential twentieth century thinkers in this philosophical tradition and also included Bosanquet as a significant figure.¹⁹² Stephen G. Salkever is similar in how he positions *A Theory of Justice* in the canon: “Rousseau’s political theory can be understood as an alternative answer to the same basic question posed by the major tendency in political philosophy from Thomas Hobbes through John Rawls”.¹⁹³ In *The New Liberalism: Reconciling Liberty and Community*, Avital Simhony and David Weinstein suggest that “contemporary philosophical liberalism has been largely analytical ... [and] has, in short, been disposed to abstract severity and inflexibility”, and that too much attention to Rawls — and not enough to the earlier twentieth-century thinkers like Green, Bosanquet, and L.T. Hobhouse — is partially to blame.¹⁹⁴ Yet this is not meant to denigrate *A Theory of Justice*, but rather to point out that “the very dilem-

¹⁹⁰ Gerald Gaus, *The Modern Liberal Theory of Man* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983), 2.

¹⁹¹ Gerald Gaus, “Liberalism at the End of the Century,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 5, no. 2 (2000): 181.

¹⁹² Thomas Hurka, *Perfectionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹⁹³ Stephen G. Salkever, “Rousseau & the Concept of Happiness,” *Polity* 11, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 28.

¹⁹⁴ Simhony and Weinstein, *The New Liberalism: Reconciling Liberty and Community*, 2.

mas about liberty and community that reappeared in the period following the publication of Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*" were not entirely new and solutions to them could be found by better examining the entirety of the tradition which Rawls renewed.¹⁹⁵

While Laslett did not specifically respond to his earlier claims about the "broken" tradition of political philosophy, these scholars help make the point for him: as it turned out, liberal thought was not so much broken in the sense that it was at an end, but rather it was closer to a musical break, simply awaiting someone sufficiently bold to pierce through the silence.¹⁹⁶ Unlike Strauss, Laslett had not concluded that there was something inherent to modern political philosophy that had made it impossible, so the immediately recognizably high quality of Rawls' scholarship was able to show that the discipline had merely been in an interlude period.

Even before 1971, *Philosophy, Politics and Society* had proven itself to be a significant counter to the absence of philosophical investigations on political subjects in periodicals: 30 essays by 29 different thinkers,¹⁹⁷ that covered a variety of significant disciplinary problems from Robert Nozick, Hanna Pitkin, T.D. Weldon, and, of course, John Rawls (who, it feels particularly important to note in retrospect, was the only scholar repeated through the first three series). Beyond that, by the 3rd Series of *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Laslett's introduction¹⁹⁸ is dedicated in part to showing other signs of

¹⁹⁵ David Stevens, "Review: The New Liberalism: Reconciling Liberty and Community," *Contemporary Political Theory* 2 (2003): 117.

¹⁹⁶ Laslett, "Introduction," vii.

¹⁹⁷ 40 essays and 38 different thinkers, if we are to include the 1972 4th Series which did not yet take into account the publication of *A Theory of Justice*.

¹⁹⁸ While James Fishkin was an editor for this Series, he has confirmed that Laslett was the primary author of this introduction (James Fishkin, "RE: Philosophy, Politics and Society Question," June 15, 2018.).

"the revival of political philosophy and also the increased interest of philosophers in general in the social sciences" — debates in the literature, essays, translations of key non-anglophone works, lecture publications, and lengthier treatments of philosophical concerns.¹⁹⁹ In fact, Laslett goes so far as to add that there is "little purpose in labouring the point that political philosophy in the English-speaking world is alive again", although there is a markedly subdued tone here compared to the later introductions after the publication of *A Theory of Justice*.²⁰⁰

While Laslett points to the "small but continuing flow of articles in the Anglo-American philosophical journals on concepts central to the traditional concerns of the political theorist, and an increasing volume of discussion on problems in the philosophy of history and the logic of the social sciences", his comments undersell the thriving state of philosophical periodicals.²⁰¹ *The American Political Science Review* included political philosophy essays by Sheldon Wolin and Leo Strauss; and *Ethics: An International Journal of Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy* had publications by George Sabine, Harold Lasswell, and Friedrich Hayek. Similarly, the *Review of Politics* published contributions from Hannah Arendt, Hans Kohn, and Judith Shklar in that same period; *The Philosophical Quarterly* saw discussions on the political philosophy problems of Berlin, Hegel, and Marx — and, in 1973, it would include a substantial, two-part review of *A Theory of Jus-*

¹⁹⁹ Peter Laslett and W.G. Runciman, "Introduction," in *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, *Philosophy, Politics and Society* 3 (Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1967), 1.

²⁰⁰ Laslett and Runciman, 1.

²⁰¹ Laslett and Runciman, 2–3.

lice by R. M. Hare.²⁰² A few years earlier in 1968, *Polity* was established and, after its initial review of *A Theory of Justice*, rigorous praise and criticism towards Rawls frequently marked the journal's pages.²⁰³

Further lending credence to the discipline having found a new life, shortly after *A Theory of Justice* there was a wave of periodicals that seemed designed to fill the scholarly gap: *Political Theory* was established in 1973; *Historical Reflections and Theory and Society* in 1974; the *Canadian Journal of Political & Social Theory* in 1976; and *Polis* in 1977. This continued in the decade that followed with *History of Political Thought* in 1980, *Social Philosophy & Policy* in 1983, *Praxis International* was restarted in 1981, and *Critical Review* in 1986. Where Laslett had once suggested that political philosophy concerns were absent in anglophone journals, there were now almost too many to keep up with — and references to Rawls showed up in many of their early issues, in one way or another.²⁰⁴ None of this is to point to *A Theory of Justice* as the sole justification behind

²⁰² R.M. Hare, "Review: Rawls' Theory of Justice--I," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 23, no. 91 (April 1973): 144–55; R.M. Hare, "Review: Rawls' Theory of Justice--II," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 23, no. 92 (July 1973): 241–52.

²⁰³ Krislov, "Justice as Formal Theory.,"; Jean Bethke Elshtain, "The Feminist Movement & the Question of Equality," *Polity* 7, no. 4 (Summer 1975): 452–77; Abbott, "With Equality & Virtue for All: John Rawls & the Liberal Tradition.,"; Michael P. Zuckert, "Justice Deserted: A Critique of Rawls' 'A Theory of Justice,'" *Polity* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1981): 466–83; Michael W. Jackson, "Justice & Heroism," *Polity* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1983): 201–13; Manus I. Midlarsky, "The Balance of Power as a 'Just' Historical System," *Polity* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1983): 181–200; Gerald M. Mara, "Virtue & Pluralism: The Problem of the One & the Many," *Polity* 22, no. 1 (Autumn 1989): 25–48.

²⁰⁴ Just a brief sample: Keat and Miller, "Understanding Justice.,"; James S. Coleman, Boris Frankel, and Derek L. Phillips, "Review Symposium: Robert Nozick's Anarchy, State, and Utopia," *Theory and Society* 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1976): 437–58; Charles Taylor, "On Social Justice," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 1, no. 3 (1977): 89–96; Richard Dien Winfield, "Capital, Civil Society and the Deformation of Politics," *History of Political Thought* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 111–55; Fried, "Distributive Justice.,"; Ian Gough and Len Doyal, "Human Needs and Socialist Welfare," *Praxis International* 6, no. 1 (1986): 43–69; John Gray, "Mill's and Other Liberalisms," *Critical Review* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 12–35.

this flurry of new journals. It would be difficult to square such an argument with *Polis'* focus on Ancient Greek thought or “[t]he development of an authentic, humanist socialism” that motivated *Praxis*.²⁰⁵ There may indeed be a correlation between Rawls’ scholarship and the revival of political philosophy, but the reawakening of the discipline had begun prior to 1971 and so there is little evidence to support a causal relationship with *A Theory of Justice*. At best, at least in relation to Laslett’s early pre-Rawlsian conception of the death of political philosophy, Rawls could be said to have accelerated a renewal that had already been going on for years.

There remains one important point to make regarding Laslett: as he expanded his focus from uniquely British political philosophy to other Western nations, his conception of decline runs afoul of an all too common trap and one that is rarely made explicit in considerations around *A Theory of Justice* and the role it played in the death of political philosophy. John Horton, with his investigation into Rawls’ impact on Britain, in both academia and politics, offers an important distinction that makes explicit this pitfall: “Most, if not all, of the general terms used to characterize the style of political philosophy in which Rawls writes — ‘analytical’, ‘Anglo-American’, ‘English-speaking’ — fail to differentiate it from that of British political philosophers”.²⁰⁶ There are two significant points to draw out here: one being precisely the subject of Horton’s essay which concludes that, despite some differences that arise due to Britain’s own political and legal context, that “[t]he diffusion of Rawlsian scholarship in Europe took place, as in concentric circles, from an anglicized ‘core’ to a less anglicised ‘periphery’ — the core being of

²⁰⁵ Gajo Petrović, “Why Praxis?,” trans. Zdravko Saveski, *Praxis* 1, no. 1 (1964), <https://www.marxists.org/subject/praxis/issue-01/why-praxis.htm>.

²⁰⁶ John Horton, “Rawls in Britain,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 1, no. 2 (2002): 149.

course being Britain where ... the story of reception is barely distinguishable from that of the United States".²⁰⁷ In the introduction of a special issue of *European Journal of Political Theory* dedicated to exploring the influence of Rawls in a variety of European countries, Cécile Laborde helps draw out the other undertone behind Horton's comment about the notion of the flattening of Western political philosophy to Anglophone scholarship:

[i]n many countries, especially those where reception depended on translation, *A Theory of Justice* was usually not widely available until the mid- or late 1980s ... The impact of this time lag on the context of reception was of course ominous: not only the political situation had changed, but Rawls was introduced in the midst of an already vibrant debate between liberals and communitarians ... even more acute is the question of the relevance of a theory such as Rawls's for societies experimenting with a transition from authoritarian to liberal democratic rule.

Even if the centre of Western political philosophy (and political science) was transitioning to the United States in the post-war academic climate,²⁰⁸ it was not altogether absent from Germany, France, and Italy (among other non-anglophone contexts).

Jan-Werner Müller points out that "Rawls was recently cited in a landmark decision of the German Constitutional Court on redistribution between federal states within Germany" and that there have been "rather strategic uses of Rawls by politicians across

²⁰⁷ Cécile Laborde, "The Reception of John Rawls in Europe," *European Journal of Political Theory* 1, no. 2 (2002): 144.

²⁰⁸ See: Carl J. Friedrich, "Instruction and Research: Political Science in the United States in Wartime," *The American Political Science Review* 41, no. 5 (October 1947): 978–89., Pendleton Herring, "On the Study of Government," *The American Political Science Review* 47, no. 4 (December 1953): 961–74; Joseph Tanenhaus and Albert Somit, *The Development of Political Science: From Burgess to Behavioralism* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967); Raymond Seideman and Edward Harpham, *Disenchanted Realists: Political Science and the American Crisis, 1884-1984* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985); Theodore J. Lowi, "The State in Political Science: How We Become What We Study," *The American Political Science Review* 86, no. 1 (March 1992): 1–7.

the political spectrum”.²⁰⁹ This is in addition to the Muller’s claim that “Rawls has very much contributed to the actual ‘rehabilitation of practical philosophy’ in political argument — perhaps more than any German theorist ever did”.²¹⁰ This differs from his reception in France which seems to have begun in earnest with the first French translation in 1987. According to Catherine Audard, “[t]he French understanding of the ‘political’ is also deeply alien to the Anglo-American tradition as, for it, politics is about power and domination, not choices. In effect, no power can ever be legitimate and, therefore, Rawls’s ambition of legitimizing cooperation between individuals as fair is seen as futile”.²¹¹ So, while there may be an acknowledgment that *A Theory of Justice* (and *Political Liberalism*) are significant texts, “with very few exceptions, he is neither properly understood nor seriously discussed”.²¹² Similarly, Mario Ricciardi, offers that:

no Italian student of political philosophy can any longer afford to ignore the essentials of Rawls’s ideas and approach [but] many Italian philosophers’ acquaintance with Rawls’s theory of justice does not go very far. Apart from a small group of analytic political philosophers, references to Rawls’s works in the Italian literature are rather superficial.²¹³

It is not enough to simply recognize that he has been a significant presence in other contexts. If we are truly to accept that Western political philosophy was saved, writ large, by *A Theory of Justice*, an effort needs to be made to reconcile that claim with aspects of the Western tradition that does not seem to find it as valuable a text.

²⁰⁹ Jan-Werner Müller, “Rawls in Germany,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 1, no. 2 (2002): 175.

²¹⁰ Müller, 175.

²¹¹ Catherine Audard, “Rawls in France,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 1, no. 2 (2002): 220.

²¹² Audard, 216.

²¹³ Mario Ricciardi, “Rawls in Italy,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 1, no. 2 (2002): 233.

There are similarly complicated tendrils of Western thought that stretch out to Japan, which Satoshi Fukuma identifies as strongly rooted in the German tradition and, as a result, “English-language philosophy has been disregarded ... [*A Theory of Justice*] did not attract the interest of Japanese academics, especially political and social scientists and philosophers”.²¹⁴ One does not have to claim that Japan is the West to understand that some of its thinkers could be deeply imbedded in the Western tradition. If this is the case, then the Rawlsian moment in Japan — or lack thereof — is significant with regards to claims about its ability to rescue political philosophy: if the Japanese strand of Western thought was not revived by *A Theory of Justice* (or not even in need of being revived), then this at least complicates the narrative of revival.

Together these examples show that the death of political philosophy was, if not an anglophone phenomenon, dominated by anglophone perceptions of the discipline. Even without expanding the scope of inquiry to beyond the Western tradition itself, there are likely fruitful avenues of exploration around the ways that the death of political philosophy intersected (or did not) with other linguistic contexts. While such research is best left to those who could undertake such projects without the necessity of translation, it seems at least possible that those debates could have played out differently (if they appeared at all) outside of the anglophone tradition. There is currently insufficient evidence to say whether there *was* a difference, nor is this meant to be an outright dismissal of Rawls in the non-anglophone Western tradition, but it does at least trouble the strongest and most

²¹⁴ Satoshi Fukuma, “Rawls in Japan: A Brief Sketch of the Reception of John Rawls’ Philosophy,” *Philosophy East and West* 64, no. 4 (October 2014): 888.

absolute claims about the Rawls' significance and his relationship to the death of political philosophy.

Conclusion

To contest the conventional wisdom around the publication of *A Theory of Justice* almost fifty years after the fact could come across as little more than a curiosity of intellectual history. After all, Rawls *was* a stabilizing presence at a time when foundations were in question — not just particular instances, but their very possibility. The first half of the twentieth century saw not just nations disappearing, but entire empires; and modernism and structuralism had been found bankrupt and in their wake postmodernism and poststructuralism — in a range of forms and disciplines — emerged. If Rawls was not the new centre, he certainly was not the periphery.

Yet this is more than that. I am not taking issue with the fact that Rawls' scholarship arrived at an opportune moment in intellectual history nor am I taking a stance on whether he is the most important or influential political philosopher of the twentieth century. Although it is perhaps a novel question for historians of philosophy, it is likely that there is little *philosophical* value in such debates — at least in the manner in which they have largely been framed thus far. Nor should this be taken as a suggestion that *all* commentary on Rawls grants that he is solely responsible for the revival of political philosophy — and there were (and still are) certainly those who put significant caveats on claims about what *A Theory of Justice* achieved:

[I]t was about time for someone to revive the tradition of setting political thinking on a foundation of moral argument, and in a way that criticized the influential, and deeply flawed, Utilitarian norms.²¹⁵

²¹⁵ Nussbaum, "The Enduring Significance of John Rawls."

Rawls draws on the most subtle techniques of contemporary analytical philosophy to provide the social contract tradition with what is, from a philosophical point of view at least, the most formidable defense it has yet received. In addition, he revives the English tradition of Hume and Adam Smith, of Bentham and John Stuart Mill, which insists on relating its political speculations to fundamental research in moral psychology and political economy.²¹⁶

It was common enough claim to claim that Rawls had renewed social contract theory,²¹⁷ and it is on these grounds that *A Theory of Justice* can perhaps best be spoken of as reanimating. Which is of course not to suggest that Rawls could not have achieved more: that, by reviving the social contract, he also revived political philosophy, but that is not *necessarily* the case for all conceptions of the death of political philosophy. What I am suggesting is that there was a prominent theoretical position about the broader field of political philosophy that emerged after WWII, and the most commonly attributed refutation of that theory was founded on a series of errors. Even still it may be the case that political philosophy had never truly died, as many suggested in the years that followed concerns of decline, or that something else had revived it before 1971. Or it may not have. The treatment of Rawls as some sort of catchall saviour, however, brushes aside any serious conversation about the death of political philosophy.

²¹⁶ Cohen, "The Social Contract Explained and Defended."

²¹⁷ See: Patrick Riley, "How Coherent Is the Social Contract Tradition?," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34, no. 4 (1973): note 51, 554; John Schaar, "Reflections on Rawls' Theory of Justice," *Social Theory and Practice* 3, no. 1 (April 1, 1974): 75; Charles Frankel, "The Jurisprudence of Liberty The University of Mississippi School of Law Memorial Lectures," *Mississippi Law Journal* 46 (1975): 565; Glen A. Withers, "Hobbes and Halfpenny: Reflections on Social Justice and Industrial Disruption," *The Australian Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (1976): 89; Percy Lehning, "Social Contract and Property Rights: A Comparison between John Rawls and James M. Buchanan," in *Democracy, Consensus and Social Contract*, ed. Pierre Birnbaum, Jack Lively, and Geraint Parry, vol. 2, SAGE Modern Politics (London: Sage Publications, 1978), 279; William M. Dugger, "The Reform Method of John R. Commons," *Journal of Economic Issues* 13, no. 2 (June 1, 1979): 376.

Instead the discipline moved to a series of debates about *A Theory of Justice* and its merits and deficiencies, replacing what had once been a serious concern about more universal premises with a focus on a particular as a sort of stand-in for it. If we simply grant that *A Theory of Justice* saved political philosophy, we also accept a particular conception of political philosophy that is likely very different than the one that was claimed to be lost decades prior. Perhaps not altogether different so as to be disconnected from the rest of the discipline, but enough so that it is a mistake to claim that Rawls renewed the entire tradition of political philosophy — a part, perhaps; an important part, perhaps too — but the anglophone analytical tradition is not the only important strand of political philosophy, and it certainly is not the only strand to continue from that which was started by Ancient Greek thinkers.

CHAPTER FOUR: A Return to Form

I will tell you what I will do and what I will not do. I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it calls itself my home, my fatherland, or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defense the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning.

- James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*¹

To understand the situation around the death and revival of political philosophy, I want to turn towards a puzzle that, although it does not emerge with Leo Strauss, can perhaps be most clearly understood through him: the seemingly absolute disciplinary triumph of the political philosophy *treatise*. While Strauss' articulation of the death of political philosophy can be traced throughout a great deal of his work, it is in "What Is Political Philosophy?" that it is put most directly. It is not, however, in his thesis of decline itself that we find the puzzle, but rather in part of his definition of political philosophy: "[p]olitical thought which is not political philosophy finds its adequate expression in laws and codes, in poems and stories, in tracts and public speeches *inter alia*; the proper form of presenting political philosophy is the treatise".² This, in itself, is not particularly troubling, but it proves to be a difficult claim to reconcile especially within Strauss' broader work in which Plato is considered to be the pinnacle of political philosophy. It is a curious line that seems to have largely gone ignored in the Strauss literature and those who have attended to it have accepted it at face value.³ Resolving the nuances of this apparent con-

¹ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916; repr., Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1992): 191.

² Strauss, "What Is Political Philosophy?," 6–7.

³ Even — or perhaps especially — those who are critical of the sentiment. See: Steven Orr, "The Problem with a Pitiably Rump: On Impropriety and Political Philosophy," in *Flattering the Demos: Fiction and Democratic Education*, ed. Marlene K. Sokolon and Travis D. Smith (London: Lexington Books, 2018); Matthew Sharpe, "Uncovering Euthyphro's Treasure Reading

tradition can be found by looking to Strauss' treatment of Plato and Maimonides elsewhere.

One does not, however, have to accept Strauss' authority in order for this puzzle to remain coherent as some version of the mindset is widely shared in the discipline. This is important given that Strauss' account of political philosophy, whatever its merits, is not universal. Yet one is hard-pressed to find any serious scholar, historian, or theorist who would altogether reject Plato as political philosopher *par excellence* — even in criticism. This assertion is of a similar kind to the idea that Rawls revived political philosophy or even the division of the discipline into 'ancients' and 'moderns': they are disciplinary dogma which are more meaningful as identifying markers of those in the know. At best, they are a shorthand for an entire series of discussions about the discipline; at worst, as the preceding chapters were meant to show with regards to the death thesis, they are dead or empty metaphors which bear little of the evocative power that they once had⁴ and have become unmoored from history.

By directly engaging with the Straussian expression, I argue that we can find an explanation for the conceptual confusion that established ideal conditions for the debates around the death of political philosophy, but it also provides a way out of that confusion. Further, although Strauss' conception of the discipline is not universally held, this approach to the puzzle can be applied to more than just his thought and towards a more nuanced understanding of the broader field of political philosophy.

Plato's Euthyphro with Lacan," *Helios* 37, no. 1 (2010): 23–48; Roger D. Spegele, "Fiction and Political Theory," *Social Research* 38, no. 1 (1971): 108–38.

⁴ If, indeed, they ever had any at all.

4.1 Notes on Terminology

With regards to the task of defining what is meant by the treatise, there is a certain degree of intuitiveness to what counts and what does not. This is, of course, an insufficiently rigorous definition for a dissertation, which is, in some ways, precisely the point: a systematic presentation on a topic demands a formal thoroughness that appeals to intuition would be out of place within.

To begin, I take as granted that there is a distinction between the form of a dialogue and that of a treatise, and that Strauss himself would accept this distinction. There is some difficulty in this assumption, because there are at least two occasions on which Strauss explicitly makes reference to Plato's works as treatises:

Whether Plato has succeeded in discussing all character traits relevant to eros and all possible approaches to eros. Then and only then can we say whether he has written through his dialogue the definitive treatise on eros.⁵

Glaukon and Adeimantos accept this doctrine of ideas with relative ease, with greater ease than absolute communism. This paradoxical fact does not strike us with sufficient force because we somehow believe that these able young men study philosophy under Professor Socrates and have heard him expound the doctrine of ideas on innumerable occasions, if we do not believe that the *Republic* is a philosophic treatise addressed to readers familiar with more elementary (or "earlier") dialogues. Yet Plato addresses the readers of the *Republic* only through the medium of Socrates' conversation with Glaukon and the other interlocutors in the *Republic*, and Plato as the author of the *Republic* does not suggest that Glaukon—to say nothing of Adeimantos and the rest—has seriously studied the doctrine of ideas.⁶

If we can resolve the latter, the former quote may reasonably be explained away by its context: it is a casual response to a student's question in lecture and the deployment of

⁵ Leo Strauss, *On Plato's Symposium*, ed. Seth Benardete (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 61.

⁶ Leo Strauss, "Plato," in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Hilail Gildin (1963; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 197.

‘treatise’ should not necessarily have the same significance as if he had written it. The latter quote, however, is not so easily dismissed, but I suggest that it should be taken not as an endorsement of *Republic* as a treatise, but rather as a criticism of the notion.⁷

Strauss is attempting to point out that we do not have sufficient grounds for claiming that Plato intended for one to have read the *Phaedo* prior to engaging with the *Republic*. Ignoring the difficulty of putting Plato’s works into a definitive chronological order, individual dialogues must be understood in isolation from each other, because at no point is the reader expressly otherwise directed. It is entirely appropriate to read the entirety of Part IV of Hobbes’ *Leviathan* in light of the preceding three parts, but it is a mistake to treat the *Republic* as the direct continuation of some earlier dialogue. While it may be the case that one can trace an overall project through all of Plato’s works, to *begin* from that position can lead to the loss of key rhetorical and dramatic emphasis within the text. Contrary to the idea that the *Republic* should be read as a philosophic treatise, Strauss is actually suggesting that we err when we forget that it is not.⁸

⁷ Admittedly, there are others who have similarly labelled Plato’s *Republic* in this way: “[students] were really puzzled by Plato’s devoting time to rhythm and melody in a serious treatise on political philosophy” (Bloom 1987, 70). See also: P.S. Burrell, “The Plot of Plato’s Republic,” *Mind* 25, no. 99 (July 1916), 354; Robert G. Hoerber, “Plato’s ‘Euthyphro,’” *Phronesis* 3, no. 2 (1958), 95; Robert S. Brumbaugh, “A New Interpretation of Plato’s Republic,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 64, no. 20 (October 26, 1967), 668; Eric Havelock, “Plato’s Politics and the American Constitution,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 93 (1990), 15.

This chapter should not be understood as speaking to anyone else that characterizes Plato’s dialogues as treatises. Nor am I making claims as to whether their use fits into within a broader logic, has a more nuanced intention, or is simply a casual deployment of the term.

⁸ Catherine Zuckert’s *Plato’s Philosophers* crafts a narrative whole through all the dialogues, but her argument is that the only meaningful foundation we have for ordering them is their dramatic dates not their composition dates (Zuckert 2009, 10f23). This approach, she suggests, “not only to show[s] how the dialogues read in this order constitute a coherent narrative but also how reading them in this order affects the way we read and understand each of the individual dialogues” (Zuckert 2009, 47). It is a unitarian reading of Plato’s work that is philosophical, rather than historical. Yet Zuckert does not suggest this approach is obvious to all readers nor explicitly

In case there were any doubt, Strauss makes this point more directly in *The City and Man*:

We can know Aristotle's political philosophy through his *Politics*. Plato's *Republic* on the other hand, in contradistinction to the *Politics*, is not a treatise but a dialogue among people other than Plato. Whereas in reading the *Politics* we hear Aristotle all the time, in reading the *Republic* we hear Plato never. In none of his dialogues does Plato ever say anything. Hence we cannot know from them what Plato thought.⁹

A treatise, then, is a form of writing in which an author presents their thoughts on a subject in a formal and systematic manner such that they convey a teaching of some sort. This is not to suggest the treatise guarantees comprehension¹⁰ nor that other forms are incapable of offering teachings, but rather that the treatise is meant to be uniquely marked by its directness.¹¹

It can also be noted that, thus far, I have avoided explaining what is meant by 'political philosophy' — and have also treated all deployments of both political theory and philosophy as synonymous. This is not because I reject the possibility of a meaningful distinction between the terms,¹² but rather because there does not appear to have been a

stated by Plato. However compelling her account is, its careful construction is most certainly an esoteric reading — one that takes as granted the dramatic nature of the works — and, as such, does not fall into the mistake that Strauss is emphasizing: "Whereas all subsequent philosophers have written treatises (even if they have also produced some more literary works), Plato wrote only dialogues" (Zuckert 2009, 1). That she outright dismisses the dubiously attributed epistles is a not altogether uncontroversial choice, but even still it would be more accurate to say that all we have left to study of Plato are his dialogues. We have little guarantee that we have been left with all that Plato wanted to leave behind.

⁹ Strauss, *The City and Man*, 50.

¹⁰ As can be corroborated by most who have tried, without guidance, to read *Being and Time*.

¹¹ Or, at least, the attempt.

¹² Although I am partial to the honesty with which Ian Shapiro addresses the problem: "As one who has been unable to make any systematic sense of the difference in meaning between *political theory* and *political philosophy*, I use these terms interchangeably throughout" (Shapiro 1990, 3n2).

consensus, throughout the literature on the disciplinary debates,¹³ as to which is preferred (and in what context).¹⁴ As Strauss reminds us, “[e]very student of the history of philosophy assumes, tacitly or expressly, rightly or wrongly, that he knows what philosophy is or what a philosopher is”.¹⁵ This, however, presents considerable difficulty when attempting to engage in meaningful debates about the foundational understandings of what the discipline is — and the death of political philosophy debates were filled with these assumptions.

Laslett’s oft-quoted declaration was about political philosophy and he avoids other terminology in that initial piece, but some of the literature that he points to as troubling

¹³ Or elsewhere. Michael Haas refers to the ‘jigsaw puzzle’ of political science as a discipline made up of contested — and even opposing — subfields. Chapter Two of his *Political Science Revitalized* explores the history of these developments in the twentieth century and alludes to the messiness of the transition between theory and philosophy, but provides little explanation or analysis thereof. In fact, although David Easton and the behaviourist revolution features prominently throughout, Haas’ history of political science is largely absent a serious consideration of the death of political philosophy: he mentions that Sheldon Wolin “wrote one of the most forceful defenses of the need for classical political theory”, and Alfred Cobban’s “The Decline of Political Theory” is briefly cited and Leo Strauss merits a seemingly connected (albeit tenuous) single mention, but Peter Laslett’s formulation — and the broader debate, including placement of *A Theory of Justice* and John Rawls — is nowhere to be found (Haas 2017, 16). Whatever justification Haas might have for avoiding the death of political philosophy in his call for “a symbiotic discipline” — and given his emphasis on the *science* of politics, it can be justified — a significant aspect of the discipline is ignored here (Haas 2017, xii). And, as Emily Hauptmann has shown, the debates around the meaning of political *theory* alone — to say nothing of how *philosophy* fits alongside or in opposition to it — were nuanced, complex, and worthy of serious consideration. See: Emily Hauptmann, “Defining ‘Theory’ in Postwar Political Science,” in *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences: Positivism and Its Epistemological Others*, ed. George Steinmetz (London: Duke University Press, 2005), 207–32; Emily Hauptmann, “The Evolution of Political Theory in Berkeley in a Climate of Experiment and Secession,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 3 (July 2017): 792–96.

¹⁴ Nor has this ‘problem’ been resolved today. While it might be interesting to track these distinctions to see whether there are nuances to where and how the each term is deployed, I suspect we have long passed the point where such a study would be particularly meaningful. Individual thinkers are going to use their preferred terms, but the differences in the vernacular has likely gone the way of ‘literally’.

¹⁵ Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (1952; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 95.

his initial claim was explicitly labeled as political theory — as, at the time, with Margaret MacDonald's *The Language of Political Theory* or, later, C.B. Macpherson's *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*. When Laslett compiled the second edition of *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, he included Isaiah Berlin's "Does Political Theory Still Exist?" which, Stephen K. White suggests is "best comprehended as a response" to Laslett's claim.¹⁶ The title and its elocutionary force aside, Berlin himself switches between the two terms throughout the essay:

It suggests that political philosophy, whatever it may have been in the past, is today dead or dying. The principal symptom which seems to support this belief is that no commanding work of political philosophy has appeared in the twentieth century.¹⁷

Among the problems which form the core of traditional political theory are those, for instance, of the nature of equality, of rights, law, authority, rules.¹⁸

'In what kind of world is political philosophy - the kind of discussion and argument in which it consists - in principle possible?' the answer must be 'Only in a world where ends collide.'¹⁹

unless political theory is conceived in narrowly sociological terms, it differs from political science or any other empirical enquiry in being concerned with somewhat different fields.²⁰

To suppose, then, that there have been or could be ages without political philosophy is like supposing that, as there are ages of faith, so there are or could be ages of total disbelief. But this is an absurd notion: there is no human activity without some kind of general outlook.²¹

¹⁶ Stephen K. White, "Pluralism, Platitudes, and Paradoxes: Fifty Years of Western Political Thought," 473.

¹⁷ Berlin, "Does Political Theory Still Exist," 59.

¹⁸ Berlin, 64.

¹⁹ Berlin, 65.

²⁰ Berlin, 74.

²¹ Berlin, 74.

political theory, like any other form of thought that deals with the real world, rests on empirical experience, though in what sense of 'empirical' still remains to be discussed.²²

It is a strange paradox that political theory should seem to lead so shadowy an existence at a time when, for the first time in history, literally the whole of mankind is violently divided by issues the reality of which is, and has always been, the sole *raison d'être* of this branch of study.²³

These examples are not meant to suggest that Berlin was without a nuanced distinction in his own mind when utilizing each term, but absent clear definitions it is not immediately apparent what that distinction is.

Even if we were to uncover Berlin's precise meaning, it remains unresolved in conversation with Laslett — and the variety of interlocutors writing about the state of the discipline: while political theory appears to have been the most common term,²⁴ there were still many interlocutors who used language of political philosophy²⁵ to express similar points — to say nothing of the instances where there was less precision involved.²⁶

²² Berlin, 77.

²³ Berlin, 89.

²⁴ See: Cobban, "The Decline of Political Theory."; Dahl, "Political Theory."; Easton, "The Decline of Modern Political Theory."; Germino, "The Revival of Political Theory."; William A. Glaser, "The Types and Uses of Political Theory," *Social Research* 22, no. 3 (1955); Hacker, "Capital and Caribuncles: The 'Great Books' Reappraised."; Plamenatz, "The Use of Political Theory."; Wolin, *Politics and Vision*; P.H. Partridge, "Political Philosophy and Political Sociology," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 1, no. 1 (1965): 3–20; G.C. Field, "What Is Political Theory?," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (Aristotelian Society, London: Wiley, 1953), 145–66; H.R.G. Greaves, "Political Theory Today," *Political Science Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (1960): 1–16; Harry V. Jaffa, "The Case Against Political Theory," *The Journal of Politics* 22, no. 2 (May 1960): 259–75; Neil A. McDonald and James N. Rosenau, "Political Theory as Academic Field and Intellectual Activity," *The Journal of Politics* 30, no. 2 (May 1968): 311–44; Rathore, "In Defence of Political Theory."; Richard Ashcraft, "Political Theory and the Problem of Ideology," *The Journal of Politics* 42, no. 3 (August 1980): 687–705.

²⁵ See Strauss, "What Is Political Philosophy?"; Barry, "The Strange Death of Political Philosophy."; Pennock, "Political Science and Political Philosophy."; Faulkner, "Reason and Revelation in Hooker's Ethics," *American Political Science Review* 59, no. 3 (1965): 680–90; Partridge, "Politics, Philosophy, Ideology."; Donald Clark Hodges, "And the Withering Away of Social Philosophy," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 25, no. 4 (June 1965): 463–76;

Robert Dahl²⁷ offers Bertrand de Jouvenel, a French philosopher and thus a thinker outside the scope of Laslett's initial investigation, as "one of a very small group of writers in our own time who make a serious effort to develop political theory in the grand style".²⁸ He firmly establishes the ground for his understanding of proper political theory in relation to the 'dead' version of discipline:

In the West, this is the age of textual criticism and historical analysis, when the student of political theory makes his way by rediscovering some deservedly obscure text or reinterpreting a familiar one. Political theory (like literary criticism) is reduced to living off capital—other people's capital at that.²⁹

Shklar, *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith*; Carl J. Friedrich, "Political Philosophy and the 'Science' of Politics," in *Approaches to the Study of Politics*, ed. Roland Young (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1958), 172–88.

²⁶ While a full account of these imprecisions might be interesting, G.C. Field's "What Is Political Theory?" serves as representative of the point: while attempting a definitional project that "offer[s] some sort of indication of the kind of enquiry that the political theorist can reasonable attempt to carry on [emphasis added]", he refers to 'philosophers' throughout his remarks — and twice appeals explicitly to the "political philosopher" (Field 1953, 145). Likewise instructive is Daniel Germino's literature review of the thriving discipline in 1972 (interestingly enough, altogether absent an engagement with *A Theory of Justice* or Rawls at all): "throughout their long and varied history, *political theory* and *political philosophy* have been closely related, if not interchangeable, terms" (Germino 1972, 147). It is perhaps unsurprising that numerous thinkers either explicitly or accidentally flatten out the distinction between the two. See: Pennock, "Political Science and Political Philosophy.,"; David G. Smith, "Political Science and Political Theory," *American Political Science Review* 51, no. 3 (September 1957): 734–46; Herbert Kaufman, "Organization Theory and Political Theory," *American Political Science Review* 58 (March 1964): 5–14; Eugene J. Meehan, *Contemporary Political Thought: A Critical Study* (Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1967); McDonald and Rosenau, "Political Theory as Academic Field and Intellectual Activity.,"; Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (1952; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Neill, "Varieties of Positivism in Western European Political Thought, c. 1945–1970: An Introduction."

²⁷ With regards to preferred terminology, F.S.C. Northrop, too, refers to "de Jouvenel's political theory"; Melvin Richter claims that "Jouvenel writes political philosophy rather than chronicling its history"; and Neal Wood's review of the same text puts it in the realm of political philosophy: "Although the reader may hesitate to declare it a twentieth-century classic of political philosophy, he can hardly fail to be impressed by the rich learning, the graceful wisdom and the forceful argument of the author" (Northrop 1958, 1303; Richter 1958, 216; Wood 1958, 291-2).

²⁸ Dahl, "Political Theory," 89.

²⁹ Dahl, 89.

Such projects, it would seem, are largely a product of the ‘success’ of the anglophone nations in which they are written and that de Jouvenel’s grand theory arises because of the fact that “[p]olitical theory is stimulated more by the threat of failure than by the fact of success”.³⁰

In an extended footnote to an exploration of the limitations of political theory as a discipline, J.C. Rees explains the conceptual confusion:

There is no standard use of the terms ‘political theory’, ‘political philosophy’, and ‘political science’, though it is a widespread practice to contrast political theory and political philosophy with political science on the assumption that the former involve value questions whilst the latter does not ... I am using the term ‘political theory’ to cover such questions as the relation between order and freedom, the justification of political authority, the limits of political obligation, and the purpose of political power, as well as those questions that arise in the normative study of political institutions. I also employ the term ‘political philosophy’ to refer of the same field, though some writers prefer to reserve it for that more grandiose type of political theory which embraces the whole of traditional philosophy (ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics) in the endeavour to answer these questions.³¹

Highlighting these examples is not meant to avoid committing to my own definition, but rather to emphasize that there is a problem at the core of the discipline itself that was obscured by concerns about method, canon, and decline — and it is a problem that was not resolved by the publication of a single text in 1971. The myth of the death of political philosophy *and* its revival are not themselves the problem, but rather symptoms of conceptual confusion that exists at the very foundation of the discipline of political philosophy. In order to show that most clearly, we turn to Strauss’ attempts at definition.

³⁰ Dahl, 89.

³¹ J.C. Rees, “The Limitations of Political Theory,” *Political Studies* 2, no. 3 (1954): 242f1.

4.2 The Puzzle

Strauss' political philosophy is "conscious, coherent, and relentless effort to replace opinions about political fundamentals by knowledge regarding them".³² This is not an elevation of wisdom over mere belief, but rather an elevation of the *pursuit* of wisdom over the appearance of stability that comes with belief: "Human knowledge is imperfect. Human knowledge is at best progressive and never final. This is, of course a final assertion".³³ It is here that political philosophy lives: in the tension between the impossibility of conclusive truths, stemming out of our rootedness in particular contexts, and their seeming inevitability, stemming from our inability to be satisfied with that which we already are. This is not to suggest that political philosophy is a marriage between the realms of science and opinion. That would appear to be political theory, which can only claim to be comprehensive by insisting the absolute acceptance of "principles which can well be questioned".³⁴ Political philosophy overcomes this, not by founding its premises on firmer ground, but by accepting the legitimacy of *aporia* — the unconcluded thought. This tension is magnified in the *discipline* of political philosophy, because it is rooted in writing which necessarily must be concluded. Unlike speech, which can be clarified such that intention and meaning can be uncovered, writing lives by the attitude of the knife: "chopping off what's incomplete and saying: 'Now, it's complete because it's ended here.'".³⁵ A perfectly constructed political philosophy text might escape this problem, but

³² Strauss, "What Is Political Philosophy?," 6.

³³ Strauss, *On Plato's Symposium*, 5.

³⁴ Strauss, "What Is Political Philosophy?," 7.

³⁵ Frank Herbert, *Dune* (1965; repr., New York: Ace Books, 2005), 169.

it seems unlikely that such a thing is compatible with the foundational definition from which Strauss begins.

Yet there appears, for Strauss, to be one author who was capable of such elevated writing: “Plato’s dialogues demand to be read with exceeding care”.³⁶ This initial point is entirely appropriate and one with which I find no disagreement, but quickly evolves into a much greater claim:

There is nothing superfluous, nothing meaningless in a Platonic dialogue. Socrates in the *Phaedrus* compares the good writing, the perfect writing, to a living being in which each part, however small, has a necessary function for the life and activity of that living being. The Platonic dialogue has a function—the function is to make us understand. And the dialogue is comparable to an organism insofar as every part of it has a function in making us understand. Therefore we must consider everything in a dialogue.³⁷

Although it is possible that Strauss misspoke in a lecture setting, he elsewhere makes a similar claim in writing:

Nothing is accidental in a Platonic dialogue; everything is necessary at the place where it occurs. Everything which would be accidental outside of the dialogue becomes meaningful within the dialogue. In all actual conversations chance plays a considerable role: all Platonic dialogues are radically fictitious. The Platonic dialogue is based on a fundamental falsehood, a beautiful or beautifying falsehood, *viz.* on the denial of chance.³⁸

To suggest that *any* of Plato’s writings — let alone *all* of them — are pure intention without accident is to elevate him to the realm of our gods, beyond even those of Ancient Greece and to that of the omnipotent Christian God who wills being into existence, exactly as intended without desire—*Amo: volo ut sis*. If we take seriously what appears to be one of the key teachings of Plato’s dialogues, that human understanding is a pursuit that

³⁶ Strauss, *On Plato’s Symposium*, 5.

³⁷ Strauss, 5.

³⁸ Strauss, *The City and Man*, 60.

can never be *wholly* realized in life³⁹, then, to reconcile Strauss' claim with Plato's word — and seemingly Strauss' same understanding expressed only moments earlier — we are forced to admit Plato's divinity. It is one thing for Strauss to suggest that “Plato has not written his dialogues for his pupils only, but rather as a possession for all times” and another altogether to claim that someone has been absolutely successful in the attempt *for all time*.⁴⁰ It is not obvious that Plato reaches for this height or even believes it possible, other than the reference Strauss makes to the *Phaedrus*: “every discourse must be organized, like a living being, with a body of its own, as it were, so as not to be headless or footless, but to have a middle and members, composed in fitting relation to each other and to the whole”.⁴¹ Yet Plato has Socrates go on to tell us later in the same dialogue that the written word does not have this sort of life to it:

Writing, Phaedrus, has this strange quality, and is very like painting; for the creators of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing. And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself.⁴²

³⁹ Although, perhaps, in death, as Socrates tells us in the *Phaedo*: “I wish now to explain to you, my judges, the reason why I think a man who has really spent his life in philosophy is naturally of good courage when he is to die, and has strong hopes that when he is dead he will attain the greatest blessings in that other land” (Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Harold Fowler, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 63e-64a).

⁴⁰ qtd. in Hannes Kerber, “Strauss and Schleiermacher,” in *Reorientation: Leo Strauss in the 1930s*, ed. Martin D. Yaffe and Richard S. Ruderman (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 211n21.

⁴¹ Plato, *Phaedrus* in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Harold Fowler, vol. 9 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 264c.

⁴² Plato, *Phaedrus* in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Harold Fowler, vol. 9 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 264d-e.

The irony of Socrates ‘speaking’ these words in a written dialogue present complexities here, but it helps articulate that the difficulty of guaranteeing that the reader has understood precisely what the author intends impedes the *perfectibility* of any text as an expression of meaning — even if the author suggests otherwise, and perhaps especially then.⁴³ Especially in comparison with truly open-ended forms, such as worldly dialectic.

In response to precisely these concerns in the *Phaedrus*, Strauss suggests that, because Plato presented these thoughts in his dialogues,

[w]e may assume that the Platonic dialogue is a kind of writing which is free from the essential defect of writing ... We may conclude that the Platonic dialogue says different things to different people—not accidentally, as every writing does, but that it is so contrived as to say different things to different people, or that is radically ironical. The Platonic dialogue, if properly read, reveals itself to possess the flexibility or adaptability of oral communication.⁴⁴

This assumption is at the core of Strauss’ reading of Plato, that “the literary form of the dialogue, which merges the advantages of spoken and written communication, is Plato’s answer to Socrates’s critique of writing in the final exchanges of the *Phaedrus*”.⁴⁵ That the Platonic dialogue is more open-ended than other written forms, however, does not necessarily mean that it escapes the solemn silence of a text. What it does is make room for the reader to insert their own thinking into the process.

One does not have to think that Plato is a *perfect* writer — whatever that may mean — in order to consider him to be the pinnacle of political philosophy, but even if it is the case that Plato’s dialogues⁴⁶ are the best possible works of political philosophy, the

⁴³ Yeezy notwithstanding.

⁴⁴ Strauss, *The City and Man*, 52–53.

⁴⁵ Kerber, “Strauss and Schleiermacher,” 207.

⁴⁶ Which ones, in particular? We know that Strauss favors the *Republic*, *Laws*, and *Symposium*, to an extent, but are they all equally perfect — or are some more perfect than others? Perhaps it is

work itself is only *part* of political philosophy: without the reader to engage with it and question it, it is an entirely final work. So the reader is *necessary* for even the possibility of political philosophy to emerge in relation to the written word (just as the listener is required for the dialectical form). Yet that reader is necessarily (and increasingly, given the ceaseless march of time) divorced from the context in which the text was written — and is therefore even the most familiar aspects become strange, obscuring what was once obvious. This is not to suggest that we cannot engage with — and even understand — texts written outside of our context, but the dialogue we undertake with a text is surely deeply rooted in us as subjects. Historical study, linguistic and conceptual translation, and contextual factors are all lenses with which we have to apply to the study of texts to bring us closer to something resembling the intentions of the author, but the very fact that we have to train in order to do so puts us in a different relation to these texts than the world in which they were written.

To understand this point more clearly, we can turn to literary theory⁴⁷ which offers an explanation as to how a reader is able to comprehend anything within any text that constructs fictional worlds given the impossibility of lifelike imitation:

[T]he principle of minimal departure [which] states that we reconstrue the world of a fiction and a counterfactual as being the closest possible to the reality we know. This means that we will project upon the world of the statement everything we know about the real world, and that we will make only those adjustments which we cannot avoid ... It is by virtue of the principle of minimal departure that

neither any one nor each of them, but their totality that achieves something resembling comprehensiveness: “Plato’s work consists of many dialogues because it imitates the manyness, the variety, the heterogeneity of being. The many dialogues form a *kosmos* which mysteriously imitates the mysterious *kosmos*. The Platonic *kosmos* imitates or reproduces its model in order to awaken us to the mystery of the model and to assist us in articulating that mystery. There are many dialogues because the whole consists of many parts” (Strauss 1978 [1964], 61–62).

⁴⁷ With thanks to John Ryan for this particular rabbit-hole.

hearers are able to form reasonably comprehensive representations of the foreign worlds created through discourse, even though the verbal description of these worlds is always incomplete.⁴⁸

Reading is not merely a process by which we enter into a comprehensive world created by the author, but rather a process of building a version of the world in which the fiction — and all political philosophy, whether normative or descriptive, is a fiction of sorts, in that it either articulates a world that could be but is not or it tries to reduce the comprehensive totality of the world into a form that cannot possibly hold that totality — can come alive to us. There a sense of *rebuilding* here, in which the text serves as the preliminary foundations upon which our understandings are assembled. We fill out the unwritten details with our own assumptions which come first from the reality that we already know and, as Richard Gerrig points out, “[t]he greater the departure from the real world—the more adjustments that must be made—the greater the perception of distance”.⁴⁹ This increasingly becomes a problem across time and space, as the past becomes more alien to us — and thus distant — than it was to the author and those to whom the author was initially aimed. L.P. Hartley’s oft-quoted opening line to *The Go-Between* is a fitting articulation: “The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there”.⁵⁰ The written word, by virtue of being an object that is left behind, lives in that foreign country.⁵¹

Yet, according to Strauss and with regards to Plato, this would seem to be a deficiency with *us*: the truth of the texts is there for the discerning reader to access, if they are

⁴⁸ Marie-Laure Ryan, “The Principle of Minimal Departure,” *Poetics* 9 (1980): 406.

⁴⁹ Richard Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds* (Yale University Press, 1993), 14.

⁵⁰ Leslie Poles Hartley, *The Go-Between* (1953; repr., Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1997), 5.

⁵¹ Even if, as Hartley’s novel explores, that reader is the original author himself.

careful and attuned to its possibilities. This is not necessarily the same as Strauss' claims about persecution and esoteric writing in which "the truth about all crucial things is presented exclusively between the lines. That literature is addressed, not to all readers, but to trustworthy and intelligent readers only".⁵² While it appears to be the case that Strauss considered Plato to be a persecuted thinker⁵³ — and therefore may have found recourse in esotericism — it is unnecessary for us to accept that position, because understanding and interpreting Plato is inherently an exceedingly difficult task: "Plato never speaks to us in his own name, for in his dialogues only his characters speak. Strictly, there is then no Platonic teaching. Why Plato proceeded in this manner is not easy to say".⁵⁴ This, however, does not make the reading of Plato a futile experience. What it means is that we must remain alert to the possibility that there is a divide between what Plato himself believed and what is found in his texts — and that we may never be able to bridge the two. Without "an exact consideration of the explicit statements of the author", uncovering an author's intention remains a murky proposition.⁵⁵ Fortunately for the student of political philosophy, such exercises are the domain of the historian: our concern here is with the truth of Plato's dialogues. Not in the sense of Plato's 'system' of philosophy, which Strauss does not believe exists⁵⁶, but there is knowledge of political phenomena to be revealed in the reading — and there is something novel (and superior) about Plato's work in comparison with its antecedents, especially that of modern political philosophy.

⁵² Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 25.

⁵³ Strauss, 33.

⁵⁴ Strauss, "Plato," 167.

⁵⁵ Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 30.

⁵⁶ Strauss, *On Plato's Symposium*, 5.

To elevate Plato in this manner would appear to be in contradiction with Strauss' claims about proper form. One could closely parse Strauss' examples of political *thought* for clues: for example, attempting to understand whether there is a particular significance to *public* speeches versus those that are intended for a more discerning audience, and if one could be hidden within the other. This would be in line with his arguments about esotericism and political philosophy, but the actual problem with regards to Plato arises in relation to the suggestion that the seemingly absolute propriety of the treatise. While he does not explicitly subordinate the dialogue to the treatise, there are no definitions of the latter which include the former. It would seem that, if we are to take his claim about proper form seriously, then we who seek the truth about political things — that is to say, political philosophy — should ignore Plato altogether and turn our attention to those who wrote treatises. That Strauss himself does not do this in “What Is Political Philosophy?”, in his broader written works, and in his many lectures, is itself puzzling.

It is unlikely that there is a way to reconcile Plato's dialogues with the form of the treatise, so understanding Strauss' claim in relation to Plato's work necessarily must involve the nuance of the ‘proper form’ statement itself — from which there are two ambiguities to consider.

4.3 On Presentation and Propriety

The first is that Strauss appears to emphasize the notion of ‘presenting’ political philosophy. Although he does not directly clarify what is meant by this, we can understand it in relation to mere political thought which “finds its adequate expression”.⁵⁷ Political opinions are expressed through poetry or speeches, but political knowledge is

⁵⁷ Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy?,” 6.

properly expressed through the treatise. One could perhaps claim there is a distinction between the *presentation* and the *practice* of political philosophy, the former being a matter of expressing already uncovered knowledge about political things and the latter being the uncovering itself. This would go well with Strauss' broader concerns around the value of liberal education and the cultivation of "human excellence, of human greatness".⁵⁸ Further, it has echoes of a distinction that Strauss makes: "[I]t is as absurd to expect members of philosophy departments to be philosophers as it is to expect members of art departments to be artists. We cannot be philosophers, but we can love philosophy; we can try to philosophize".⁵⁹ Ignoring that there are indeed art departments in which its faculty are artists, the point is that those within the formal discipline of political philosophy are fundamentally different than true philosophers — such as Plato and Aristotle, the 'great minds'.

This clarification does not, however, help resolve the problem of Plato's dialogues, because the written text is not the same as engaging in a worldly dialogue. There are perhaps ways of reading such classical texts that can closely resemble the result of a dialogue, as with Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*⁶⁰ that was written in the form of

⁵⁸ Strauss, "What Is Liberal Education?," 316.

⁵⁹ Strauss, 317.

⁶⁰ I take as granted that we can consider the *Guide* to be a work of political philosophy, despite Strauss' seeming protestation that "The *Guide* is then under no circumstances a philosophic book" (Strauss 1988 [1952], 46). Unpacking the nuances of this point would likely be a project unto itself, so here I will simply suggest that Strauss appears to be adhering strictly to Maimonides' own definitions with the original publication of "The Literary Character of *The Guide for the Perplexed*" in 1943. By the 1953 publication of "Maimonides' Statement on Political Science", Strauss puts Maimonides in the realm of "classical political philosophy" (Strauss 1988 [1952], 129). It may be the case that there is a great deal more to be said on this matter, but, not being sufficiently familiar with Maimonides, I leave such matters to more capable hands.

a letter to a student, but was not *merely* a letter: “Producing a clear statement of the author, in the case of a book like the *Guide*, is tantamount to raising a question; his answer can be ascertained only by a lengthy discussion, the result of which may again be open, and intended to be open, to new ‘difficulties’”.⁶¹ Yet Strauss is clear that “although the method employed by Maimonides in the *Guide* may come as near as is humanly possible to the method of oral teaching, the *Guide* does not for that reason cease to be a book”.⁶² So too, one imagines, with *Crito* and *Republic*. Were Strauss to be claiming Socrates himself, rather than the reflection of him that occurs throughout Plato’s work, as the pinnacle of political philosophy, we could easily make sense of seeming contradiction: the proper form of *presenting* political philosophy might very well be the treatise, but proper form of *practicing* political philosophy could very well be the Socratic dialogue.⁶³ This does not appear to be the claim that Strauss is making.

The second ambiguity is when Strauss refers to the ‘proper form’. Here the word choice is particularly significant: had he written of the *ideal* form presenting political philosophy, the allusion to Plato’s forms would easily cause us to assume him to be suggesting that the treatise is the *best* way to present political philosophy. Proper could likewise be used in this manner, but it also has another connotation: that of propriety, the standards that have been accepted and recognized without necessarily an assessment to their

⁶¹ Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 48.

⁶² Strauss, 48.

⁶³ Strauss does suggest that “we do well to take [Socrates] as our model that one among the greatest minds who because of his common sense is *the* mediator between us and the greatest minds” (Strauss 2005 [1961], 315) There is no doubt that he champions the Socratic method, but there simply is not enough Socrates left behind for us to meaningfully engage with. We can, however, explore the character that Plato has created, which is one of the key ways that Socrates endures today.

veracity. In this reading, we might understand Strauss to be making a point about established codes and practices around political philosophy today: the convention of political philosophy, as a discipline, is that it must be presented in the form of a treatise.

Given that the essay in which he makes the claim about the treatise is largely concerned with the division between classical and modern political philosophy, there is reason for us to consider how that division plays out more broadly. While Strauss does not believe that it is possible to simply return to classical political philosophy, he very clearly thinks the approaches of Plato and Maimonides (among others) to be superior to the moderns that followed: “Compared with classical political philosophy, all later political thought, whatever else its merits may be, and in particular modern political thought, has a derivative character”.⁶⁴ Again, Strauss’ approach to Maimonides’ *Guide* is instructive here:

It is noteworthy that Maimonides himself in the *Guide* never calls it a book, but consistently refers to it as a *maqâla* (*ma’amar*). *Maqâla* (just as *ma’amar*) has several meanings. It may mean a treatise ... But it may also mean—and this is its original connotation—a speech. Maimonides, by refraining from calling the *Guide* a book and by calling it a *maqâla*, hints at the essentially oral character of its teaching. Since, in a book such as the *Guide*, hints are more important than explicit statements, Maimonides’ contentions concerning the superiority of oral teaching very probably have to be taken quite literally.⁶⁵

The *Guide* is not, by Strauss’ account, to be considered a treatise, *but it may have the appearance of being one*. More precisely, it is “a written explanation of the Biblical secrets as would meet all the conditions required from an oral explanation”.⁶⁶ Propriety — in this

⁶⁴ Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy?,” 25.

⁶⁵ Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 47.

⁶⁶ Strauss, 52.

case, honouring talmudic law⁶⁷ — demanded certain things of Maimonides in writing the *Guide*, but this was a matter of prudence rather than truth. What is interesting in the case of the *Guide* is that the ‘proper form’, in this case, is the oral conversation: “By addressing his book to one man, Maimonides made sure that he did not transgress the prohibition against explaining *ma’aseh merkabah* to more than one man”.⁶⁸ Just as “the term persecution covers a variety of phenomena”, so too can we think of the appropriateness of any particular form.⁶⁹ Different political environments make different demands of those who seek to engage to be educators: avoiding persecution forced Maimonides to write in a form that was considered proper *in his context*, but this form would not necessarily have offered any protection to Socrates, Voltaire, or Kant.

In the same lectures where Strauss speaks of the superiority of Plato in relation to all those who follow him, he twice goes on to consider the problem of form:

A contemporary novelist with a reasonable degree of competence tells us much more about modern society than volumes of social science ... If you want to get a broad view and a deep view you read a novel rather than social science.⁷⁰

If scientific political science were the highest form of the understanding of political things, then we should close Plato and return to Talcott Parsons or similar writers. But if scientific social science is not quite sufficient, then we need some supplement. This supplement is generally supplied by novels today. In other words, by utterances which are not scientific, not rational, which are subjective. This implies that there is a potential conflict between poetry, which includes

⁶⁷ “According to the ordinance of the talmudic sages, *ma’aseh merkabah* ought not to be taught even to one man, except if he be wise and able to understand by himself ... As regards the other secrets of the Bible, their revelation to many people met with scarcely less definite disapproval in the Talmud. Explaining secrets in a book is tantamount to transmitting those secrets to thousands of men. Consequently, the talmudic prohibition mentioned implies the prohibition against writing a book devoted to their explanation” (Strauss 1988 [1952], 46).

⁶⁸ Strauss, 49.

⁶⁹ Strauss, 32.

⁷⁰ Strauss, *On Plato’s Symposium*, 7.

novels, and philosophy. Perhaps philosophy can do the job that poetry claims to do and to some extent does.⁷¹

So we are to understand a number of points that follow from these claims. First, that Strauss sees the scientific study of politics as a lesser form of understanding political things — certainly not the highest. He is not claiming that such approaches are worthless, merely that they are insufficient to reach an actual understanding of political things. Second, that the gulf between science and understanding, in the 1950s at least, has only poetry as a meaningful bridge between the two. And third, that there may be reason to think that philosophy is better suited to this role. It is this last point that Strauss builds over the course of his lecture on Plato's *Symposium*: the rivalry between poetry and philosophy is, in Strauss' reading, ultimately resolved in favour of philosophy. This is to say that, "[t]he poets, these wonderful men, produce a virtue which is not genuine virtue".⁷² So, even as a supplement, we are to understand that poetry is found wanting.

Yet we are still left with the initial claim unresolved: the extent to which poetry and the novel can bring us closer to understanding political things than scientific approaches alone — and that he advocates for attention to the former *rather* than the latter. Poetry is not merely a supplement to, but it has actually *replaced* the science of politics. Further, if science does not suffice and proper philosophy escapes the problem of the poets — that "they produce no more than a shadow of true virtue" — then it does not seem coherent for Strauss to suggest that a reasonably competent novelist is superior to the vast swathes of social science, unless we turn our attention to the chronological references: "a

⁷¹ Strauss, 17.

⁷² Strauss, 245.

contemporary novelist”, “*modern* society”, and “supplied by novels *today*”.⁷³ Read in this way, we can see Strauss’ elevation of poetic forms as in line with the criticisms that he elsewhere levels at education in political philosophy and the social sciences more broadly: they are insufficient to task of “the broadening and the deepening of the human being”.⁷⁴ Strauss’ context is one in which poetry, broadly defined, brings people closer to these kinds of political truths, but he also thinks that such arational forms may be insufficient to the task of knowledge — or, at least, that their subjective qualities make less certain the revelatory quality. It is not, however, clear that this is should be understood as a bad thing.

Recall that Strauss conceives of political philosophy as the *pursuit* of rather than the *acquisition* of wisdom. A work that could guarantee its reader would receive the truths therein could not, by this definition, be political philosophy, because it is in the nature of these kinds of truths to be *and remain* contested: “Political things are by their nature subject to approval and disapproval, to choice and rejection, to praise and blame”.⁷⁵ The value of Plato’s dialogues are not in the final truths that they reveal to the careful searcher, but rather in the manner by which they *avoid* finality.

Not all Plato’s dialogues end in *aporia*, but when the conclusion of a text leaves the philosophical questions themselves unconcluded, it leaves a space for the reader to begin their own investigation. Closely related to this is the notion of ambiguity within a text — or a thinker’s broader *oeuvre* — that present a wide multitude of possible an-

⁷³ Strauss, 245; 7; 17.

⁷⁴ Leo Strauss, “Liberal Education and Responsibility,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Hilail Gildin (1962; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 343.

⁷⁵ Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy?,” 5.

swers. As Conal Condren suggests, “the ideas of those we call the ‘classics’ of political thought are fixed in the mordant of ink. They are dead and dyed”, but this can be overcome when a text is “deemed ambiguous, vague, uncertain, or unclear [and thus] provides a flux for the mordant of ink”.⁷⁶ With Plato, there was a period in which that ambiguity existed independently of the texts themselves: “Throughout the whole Middle Ages, Plato’s name was one to be conjured with, even if his works were largely unavailable and clustered with accretions of forgery ... [and, in the Latin tradition] Plato could be most things to most men”.⁷⁷ The uncertainty of knowing the content of those dialogues left a certain degree of flexibility for Medieval philosophers to, even when appealing to Platonic authority, think for themselves. This, of course, is different than ambiguity within a text itself, but the principle remains the same.

Aporia and ambiguity, however, are not the only ways that Plato’s truths remain unfixed: there are times where an aware reader can find the texts serve to destabilize other truths. The use of contradiction is another way that the political philosopher overcomes the limitations of the written word for engaging in the practice of political philosophy. When Socrates, in the *Phaedrus*, critiques the act of writing, it is an irony that forces an attentive reader outside of the text and into thoughtfulness: if these two things cannot be simultaneously true, one is presented with a puzzle. The reader ceases to be a passive recipient of textual truths and must actively choose how to navigate their bewilderment: negation, synthesis, or creation. Each of these approaches ultimately flattens out any contradictions, albeit in different ways: negation removes some aspect of the puzzle alto-

⁷⁶ Conal Condren, *The Status and Appraisal of Classic Texts: An Essay in Political Theory, Its Inheritance, and the History of Ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 259; 260.

⁷⁷ Condren, 269.

gether, arguing in favor of whatever idea remains; synthesis weaves together the opposing notions until a unity is found that was not initially apparent; and creation actually treats the contradiction as justification for charting an alternative that is unlike the positions that were found to be inconsistent. The text begins the process, but if the reader chooses to take it up, they must turn inward and pursue the truth of the matter themselves.⁷⁸

Strauss, it should be noted, makes use of all three throughout his writing. Although there are entrenched camps of thought that owe him a considerable intellectual debt — whether in support or opposition — there are significant barriers to articulating a single reading of his work. Once one understands his broader philosophical project, the intricacies of its nuances and movement leave significant space for the reader. Strauss is best understood first as an intellectual historian, although not in manner or tradition of the Cambridge School, but rather as a historian of the present rooted firmly in the question, “How did we get here?” such that we can understand how to escape the crises of modern thought — towards the end of what Michael and Catherine Zuckert call “an unprecedented fusion of history and philosophy” and “the restoration of Socratic philosophy which ... correctly understood is political philosophy in the original and still valid sense”.⁷⁹ Accordingly, instead of analyzing each of his individual contributions to the discipline as solitary and complete, we should read them as part of a much wider-reaching argument.

⁷⁸ This is still the case when the author provides a means of resolving the contradiction, as is the case with the *Guide*, because “[t]o discover the contradictions or find out which contradictory statement is considered by Maimonides to be true, we sometimes need the help of hints. Recognizing the meaning of hints requires a higher degree of understanding by oneself than does the recognition of an obvious contradiction” (Strauss 1988 [1952], 74). The reader must uncover those hints and apply them.

⁷⁹ Zuckert and Zuckert, *Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy*, 63; 338.

This is particularly important in relation to those occasions where it appears that Strauss' rereading of the Western tradition is a *misreading*,⁸⁰ because it might be that such errors make sense when examined through his broader disciplinary question. Ambiguity, contradiction, and the appearance of errors in one space might then be tools utilized towards some other end.

This can come dangerously close to a sort of hero worship, in which imperfections are not mistakes, but rather ever more proof of the magnificence a thinker — and one should be accordingly cautious. Still, there is reason enough to justify such an approach, because that is how Strauss insists that we read others. Consider again his interpretation of the *Guide for the Perplexed*:

As far as Maimonides is concerned, the Bible *is* an esoteric book, and even the most perfect esoteric book ever written. Consequently, when setting out to write an esoteric book himself, he had no choice but to take the Bible as his model. That is to say, he wrote the *Guide* according to the rules which he was wont to follow in reading the Bible. Therefore, if we wish to understand the *Guide*, we must read it according to the rules which Maimonides applies in that work to the explanation of the Bible.⁸¹

Without needing to delve into the nuances of how to read the *Guide* itself, plainly stated, Strauss argues for reading an author with the same method and approach that they themselves read others — particularly those that they deem to be exemplars. As we have already seen, it is not Maimonides' work that Strauss would have us understand to be in the highest echelon of political philosophy, but rather that of Plato — and, for this reason, we need to understand how Strauss read Plato's dialogues:

⁸⁰ What the Zuckerts refer to as his “novel understanding of this history of philosophy” (Zuckert and Zuckert, 64).

⁸¹ Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 60–61.

Plato's work consists of many dialogues because it imitates the manyness, the variety, the heterogeneity of being. The many dialogues form a *kosmos* which mysteriously imitates the mysterious *kosmos*. The Platonic *kosmos* imitates or reproduces its model in order to awaken us to the mystery of the model and to assist us in articulating that mystery. There are many dialogues because the whole consists of many parts.⁸²

We can leave aside whether this was either correct or even Plato's intention, because Strauss himself does the same with Maimonides⁸³, and instead engage with Strauss on his own terms.⁸⁴ If we believe that Strauss wanted to revive political philosophy in what he believed to be its original manner, *i.e.* that of Plato's Socrates, then, if we wish to understand Strauss' work, we must read it according to the rules which Strauss applies to the explanation of Plato.⁸⁵

For our methodological purposes, we do not have to seriously consider particular examples of what Strauss calls "intentional perplexities", but simply their possibility.⁸⁶ This is not an insistence that we return to all of Strauss' work with an ironic lens to mirror Socrates. Arnaldo Momigliano's suggestion that Strauss was "an addict of esotericism if ever there was one" is a neat turn of phrase, but it misses the point.⁸⁷ Strauss' consideration of esoteric meaning is not a set of tools to apply to universally in the reading of

⁸² Strauss, *The City and Man*, 61–62.

⁸³ "It matters little whether or not we accept Maimonides' two assumptions, rejected by modern criticism, that the Bible is an esoteric text, and that its esoteric teaching is closely akin to Aristotle" (Strauss 1988 [1952], 60).

⁸⁴ There is, of course, the risk of running into the 'turtles all the way down' problem in which, because Plato reads Socrates in this way and Strauss reads Plato in this way, it makes a certain degree of sense to read interpreters of Strauss — such as myself — in this manner. Let me therefore state it as clearly as possible: I am not myself a careful enough writer to have done this here and can be read in a much more straightforward matter.

⁸⁵ Steven Smith says this point more generally: "Strauss wrote as he read, that is, with an awareness that there are multiple kinds of readers with different interests and different needs and that like any good teacher it is necessary to address them in different ways" (Smith 2006, 9).

⁸⁶ Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 62.

⁸⁷ Arnaldo Momigliano, *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 259.

texts. As Steven Smith reminds us, “Strauss stressed that every text will inhabit a different set of historical circumstances that delimit what can and cannot be said and that every author will express a very different temperament and sensibility regarding his audience ... he sought to avoid the reductionism inherent in the view that every book can be read in exactly the same way”.⁸⁸ *This* is what rests at the core of Strauss’ esotericism thesis: not that every careful thinker will make use of textual silence in the same manner that Maimonides does⁸⁹ or irony in the same manner that Plato does,⁹⁰ but that the tools and techniques involved in the art of writing will change depending on the context in which the author is attempting to engage in political philosophy. The art of *reading* involves being aware of the demands of propriety that would have been placed upon a thinker and thus attentive to the ‘literary character’ of the text. Put another way, this art of reading almost has a banal quality to it that could otherwise be articulated as nothing more than taking a writer seriously.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Smith, *Reading Leo Strauss: Politics, Philosophy, Judaism*, 8.

⁸⁹ “[T]he omission of something which only the learned, or the learned who are able to understand of themselves, would miss” (Strauss 1988 [1952], 75).

⁹⁰ “[I]t is one of Socrates’ peculiarities that he was a master of irony. We are back to where we started: to speak through the mouth of a man who is notorious for his irony seems to be tantamount to not asserting anything. Could it be true that Plato, like his Socrates, the master of the knowledge of ignorance, did not assert anything[?]” (Strauss 1978 [1964], 50-1).

⁹¹ This is, of course, an oversimplification, but it is an instructive one. Consider Andrew Hacker: “Men may be the things that Machiavelli says they are, but they are also trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, and kind. Yet to say that Machiavelli’s characterization of mankind is not the whole truth is protesting too much and too soon. The reader should first of all acknowledge that Machiavelli is no fool, and he knows full well that his description is selective and one-sided. He is aware that men are often trustworthy and loyal, helpful and friendly. If he omits mention of these worthy attributes and chooses to emphasize the more somber ones, then he has a reason for doing so. It is the reader’s responsibility to discover why Machiavelli selects this particular emphasis” (Hacker 1961, 6). It would not be surprising to find such a methodological reminder among Strauss’ writings. Understood in this way, the call for careful reading likely has a variety of allies that might otherwise be omitted if we remain committed to only the most extreme version of esotericism.

Conclusion

In order to put all of these pieces together, I must admit that it was not entirely fair to have so quickly dismissed the notion of ‘presenting’ political philosophy as a significant ambiguity, because political philosophy is not a thing to be delivered so neatly: it is not a series of facts or opinions to be transmitted. Political philosophy must be practiced, and part of that practice involves thinking for oneself. Any form that is indifferent to the participation of the reader, that does not make space for one to engage in a dialogue with the text, encourages something other than political philosophy: history, theology, science, *et cetera*. If and when there is no longer an opportunity or possibility for this kind of engagement, politics altogether ceases. This is what Strauss means when he suggests that “political philosophy does not exist anymore, except as matter for burial, i.e., for historical research”.⁹² It may be the case that a thoughtful reader can be inspired by biography, history, or scientific treatise, forcing uncertainty where none was intended, but leaving the onus entirely on the reader relegates the text itself to some other field, at best to the history of political philosophy.

The history of political philosophy is not, by Strauss’ measure, itself political philosophy, but rather more akin to the scientific approach and the “careful and judicious collection and analysis of politically relevant data”.⁹³ To emphasize this history is to be engaged in a task that is “only preliminary and auxiliary to political philosophy ... [but] does not form an integral part of it”.⁹⁴ What goes by the name of political philosophy has

⁹² Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy?,” 13.

⁹³ Strauss, 8.

⁹⁴ Leo Strauss, “Political Philosophy and History,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 10, no. 1 (1949): 30.

become, in his account at least, entirely devoid of comprehensiveness as the discipline has ceded that territory to the political and social sciences. This may have been fully realized in the twentieth century, but is a process that Strauss would say begins with the turn towards modern political philosophy in Machiavelli and Hobbes. All that remains is “the pitiable rump” where historians, rather than philosophers, place the classic works of the discipline into more nuanced contexts so as to better allow for debates about intention.⁹⁵

Here, Strauss is lamenting the fixation on uncovering historical facts, the technical problems of democratic administration, and the accompanying encroachment of the scientific mindset into the study of philosophy:

There exists a whole science—the science which I among thousands profess to teach, political science—which so to speak has no other theme than the contrast between the original conception of democracy, or what one may call the ideal of democracy, and democracy as it is. According to an extreme view, which is the predominant view in the profession, the ideal of democracy was a sheer delusion, and the only thing which matters is the behavior of democracies and the behavior of [people] in democracies.⁹⁶

This rejection of ideals became a rejection of the possibility of achieving truths, transforming philosophical pursuits into historical study or administrative training. While he does not suggest that such training is without value — the historical study is essential for understanding works from far removed contexts and administrative training is capable of providing a range of skills “which enables a [person] to manage well the affairs of [their] political community as a whole” — Strauss is troubled by the way that both seem to have replaced anything resembling political philosophy.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Strauss, 12.

⁹⁶ Strauss, “What Is Liberal Education?,” 313–14.

⁹⁷ Strauss, “On Classical Political Philosophy,” 63.

These concerns are relatively meaningless for the *practice* of political philosophy: what does a seeker after political truths care whether their questions are labeled economics, psychology, or gender studies? As long as the questions themselves remain firmly in the realm of transforming mere opinions about political matters to knowledge about the same, they remain political philosophy, if not the discipline that goes by the same name. The problem is that the pursuit of wisdom about political things *cannot* be done in isolation from the world of others, because the answers to these fundamental questions must collide with each other lest they lose their political quality.

Plato's dialogues, by the fact that he never speaks to the reader in his own voice, ensure that we can never have the same certainty of authorial intention that the treatise appears to provide us. We have no option but to do our thinking for ourselves. Thus, Plato forces us into a philosophical position. By emphasizing the treatise in relation to proper political philosophy, Strauss is indicating just how far removed the contemporary discipline is from *ideal* political philosophy. The proper task of this 'new' discipline is not truth, but rather the recovery of authorial intent. Debates about intention are psychological histories which may provide a useful foundation from which to begin — consider, as an example, that it is outside the realm of plausibility for Plato or Aristotle to have intended 'feminist' readings of their work — but psychohistory is not itself political philosophy.

Improper political philosophy, that is to say political philosophy that is indifferent to propriety, does not concern itself with authorial intention, but rather with the pursuit of truth, which is to say that it is comfortable with ambivalence and contradiction, insofar as

both are tools for forcing the reader into a philosophical position. In some ways, this account of Strauss' Plato destabilizes him somewhat: it is not *what* Plato said that elevates him to the heights of political philosophy, but rather *how* he said it. In some ways, this leads to the possibility that the Platonic dialogue actually proves superior to the worldly dialogue, because it removes the author from consideration. In a worldly dialogue, we can ask, "What did you mean?", but a Platonic dialogue gives no space to meaningfully or coherently address that question without thinking. The genius of Plato is not in the truth that he reveals, but rather in the method by which he allows the reader to pursue truth themselves, which is to say that when we call Plato a political philosopher *par excellence* what we also mean is that he is an educator *par excellence*.

In this way, the conceptual confusion that has been highlighted over these last few chapters, with regards to the death of political philosophy, its curious revival, and the foundational definitions, are all stark in what is absent from these debates: while we can understand the discipline of political philosophy to be concerned with the production and analysis of texts, it is also inextricably linked to the *reproduction of knowledge*. That is to say, political philosophy is fundamentally a pedagogical practice — and teaching is not synonymous with texts nor are they even a necessarily aspect of the process. They can certainly play a part and perhaps serve as a significant catalyst for thinking, but they should not be mistaken for it. This is not, however, to suggest that there is no such thing as a political philosophy text, but that the very qualities that make the treatise suitable for the professional and academic discipline make it an unlikely candidate for the practice of political philosophy.

Although there are occasional public forums for the practice of political philosophy — coffee shops, libraries, FaceBook walls — the contemporary space that is primarily designed to reify those possibilities is the classroom. The question that emerges here is whether we can reconcile the ‘proper form of political philosophy’ (and its highest works, like *A Theory of Justice*) with the task of awakening students to the pursuit of political truths that they do not know, to the absence of knowledge that comes with pursuing political philosophy. The implicit answer that emerges out of the death of political philosophy and its revival, whether one points to John Rawls or Hannah Arendt or Michel Foucault, is that this task is too much for us: given that we can never know truth, expedience should rule the discipline. Hence, the absolute triumph of the political philosophy *treatise*.

CHAPTER FIVE: Reorienting

*Time comes into it.
Say it. Say it.
The universe is made of stories,
not of atoms.*

- Muriel Rukeyser, “The Speed of Darkness”¹

The solution that John Rawls provided to the death of political philosophy — not in his own argument, but through the form in which he wrote and, more importantly, in the manner that it was *received* — was quite unlike conceptions of political philosophy that were compatible with liberal education. A treatise does not require that its reader engage in the practice of political philosophy to understand it. It is not a matter of coming to our own thoughts, but rather of coming to those of the author: when we sit down with *A Theory of Justice* we are supposed to be looking for Rawls’ theory, not our own. There is nothing unconcluded in a treatise: that is the thing itself, to be conclusive.² Building on the reminder of the last chapter, if we want to grant that Rawls revived anything, it was the proper form of political philosophy.

The death of political philosophy debates did not so much find resolution as its belligerents dispersed and redeployed to new fronts: of these, the method debates, behaviouralism, and the culture wars have all proven to be prominent disciplinary battlegrounds. Of course, there were also those who eschewed theorizing about the state of the discipline and instead (re)committed themselves to the questions of political philosophy. While these thinkers often made implicit contributions to the debates going on around

¹ Muriel Rukeyser, *Out of Silence: Selected Poems*, ed. Kate Daniels (1992; repr., Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000): 135

² There are, undoubtedly, errors and things missing from the text, as is to be expected: magisterial does not necessarily mean perfect. Indeed we would rightly find absurd any suggestions that *A Theory of Justice* was a ‘perfect’ work.

them, the death thesis was echoed most strongly in the continued attempts to define the boundaries and scope of political philosophy. In some ways, this is an entirely natural result of the participants: Peter Laslett was a key player in the Cambridge School and contextualism; David Easton viewed a turn towards behaviouralism and empirical theory as a way to counter³ what he had labelled as a disciplinary decline; and Allan Bloom, a prominent student of Leo Strauss, had popular and academic influence with *The Closing of the American Mind*.⁴

This chapter — and, implicitly, the entire project — looks to the place of political philosophy within contemporary educational institutions. Accordingly, there are a number of thinkers and arguments in this chapter that are used instrumentally to help provide shape of that education. It is not that Bloom or Ronald Beiner are responsible for the current state of the entire discipline nor are their arguments meant to be taken as definitive assessments. Instead their perspectives are unpacked so as to explore the implications of them, but it also is meant to highlight the inadequacies of those approaches given the realities of the contemporary discipline and how difficult a truly liberal education is in that environment. Put another way, even if there are some academics who operate within ideal

³ “I was searching for a kind of theory that I had not been taught, which seemed to diverge considerably from political theory—the history of ideas largely—as it was taught. I wanted theory that was explanatory rather than only historical. I came to graduate school somewhat starry-eyed, thinking I was going to discover something that would help me change the world. I looked back in history and I looked at the great political theorists, and they had very significant things to say. They were worldly oriented. But the political theory I was studying at the time was largely commentary on what others had written. The creation of new visions of the world was not integral to the project.” (Easton and Gunnell 1991, 202-3).

⁴ Regarding the Cambridge School, see: Petri Koikkalainen, “Contextualist Dilemmas: Methodology of the History of Political Theory in Two Stages,” *History of European Ideas* 37, no. 3 (2011): 315–24. Regarding David Easton, see: David Easton and John G. Gunnell, “David Easton,” in *Political Science in America: Oral Histories of a Discipline*, ed. Michael A. Baer, Malcolm E. Jewell, and Lee Sigelman (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 195–214.

institutions, there are a great many who do not — and one of the weaknesses of the disciplinary debates thus far is the failure to seriously consider what is to be done for those in the latter category.

5.1 Political Philosophy and Liberal Education

John Rawls was trying to reach an audience of intellectuals and academics who had been trained on academia and thus he wrote a treatise. Rawls was himself a product of that training and likely so deeply embedded in it that it seems altogether unlikely that he would have considered doing otherwise: the treatise was the proper form for engaging in the discipline of political philosophy. He wrote essays to hone his ideas until they were sufficiently formed to be placed into a treatise, *A Theory of Justice* — and when people misunderstood his ideas, he returned to essays to correct them. He also, as we all do, changed his mind over time, partially as a result of engaging with others. When these corrections and changes were sufficiently honed, he placed them into treatises too: *Political Liberalism*, *The Law of Peoples* and *Justice as Fairness*. Rawls is hardly innovative in this approach. Not only is this what academic political philosophers do, it is the structure of academia more broadly.

To be listened to and not simply heard we must speak in such a way that we are understood. This is an obvious enough point, but it bears mentioning because it is not necessarily the case that academic language is fit for anywhere else. Are the codes and conventions of political philosophy within the academy ill-suited to be understood outside its walls? Does it matter? If political philosophy were nothing more than an exercise in self-improvement, the need to be understood would only exist insofar as it provides a

means to correct errors that arise of our own biases and opinions. Rather than being intrinsically political, there is only incidentally — and not even necessarily — a political element to this. This might be appropriate for a philosophical study of politics, that is to say as a branch of philosophy, but I would suggest that what distinguishes the political philosopher can be found in something akin to Marx’s adage, “philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to change it”.⁵

When President Clinton claimed that “[Rawls] helped a whole generation of learned Americans revive their faith in democracy itself”, we can understand this as an expression of how *A Theory of Justice* changed the world.⁶ Leaving aside the question of whether there is sufficient evidence to support Clinton’s grandiose statement, ‘learned Americans’ is a fairly narrow slice of the American population and relying solely on them as the measure of political philosophy’s health suggests a practice that is meaningful only for the few. Even were we to accept the dubious proposition that *A Theory of Justice* was read by everyone who studied or worked in political philosophy — charitably conceived, we could include political scientists, legal professionals, and philosophers — that group would still be an extreme minority of Americans.⁷ It seems likely that more people read *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* than *A Theory of Justice*.⁸ Popularity is, of

⁵ Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach,” in *Selected Writings*, ed. Lawrence H. Simon, trans. Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (1888; repr., Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), 101.

⁶ Bill Clinton, “Remarks By The President” (September 29, 1999), <https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/html/19990929.html>.

⁷ In surveying responses at the time, it seems entirely likely that it was not even read by all those who responded to it.

⁸ Granting that it is an entirely unscientific metric, the *New York Times* Best Seller list might be a reasonable shorthand: *A Theory of Justice* altogether failed to make the nonfiction list whereas *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* spent 38 weeks at the top of fiction list.

course, not necessarily a measure of quality. The point is not, however, that Rawls imparted political wisdom to only a few Americans, but rather there seems to be an implication that Rawls' influence was significant because it was with a particularly important subset of Americans, including the President himself. Granted, we are only half-a-century removed from *A Theory of Justice* whereas Machiavelli's *Prince* has had almost five hundred years and Plato's dialogues have had millennia to trickle through to the standing they now hold.

Focusing on a politician's comments at an award ceremony might seem an odd way of explicating the death of political philosophy, but the sentiment is not particularly different than the effusive praise from intellectuals that occurred at publication and continue to this day. It is all in accordance with a practice of political philosophy — and perhaps politics itself — that is not for the many, but rather a select few who are properly trained. If political philosophy is a fundamental part of the human experience, if the continued struggle for political wisdom is one of the necessary markers of our humanity, then it would seem that there is a disconnect between the discipline and contemporary liberal democratic principles. It may well be that political philosophy has nothing to do with the condition of being human in this shared world, that it is a mistake to believe that concerns about how to live together are at all necessary. To this there is no entirely satisfactory response and, as we will see shortly, this goes to the core of political philosophy and its training, because there is a degree to which what we are selling is our own experiences of revelation and those who remain behind are outside the scope.

To better nuance this point, I want to turn to the idea of liberal education, that is to say, “education in culture or toward culture. The finished product of a liberal education is a cultured human being”.⁹ In Allan Bloom’s *Closing of the American Mind*, he suggested that “[d]emocratic education, whether it admits it or not, wants and needs to produce men and women who have the tastes, knowledge, and character supportive of a democratic regime”.¹⁰ The crisis around which liberal education debates of the 1980s and 90s orbited¹¹ was that “relativism has extinguished the real motive of education, the search for the good life”.¹² It could be argued that there is a difficulty here in that the period to which Bloom is harkening back to was ‘open’ only for a select, privileged few: there was never an era in which this liberal education was universal. For Bloom, this is not actually that difficult because such teachings are not meant to be universal: “I am referring to the good students in the better colleges and universities, those to whom a liberal education is primarily directed and who are the objects of a training which presupposes the best possible material”.¹³ While he is clear that the American political tradition “tells one story: the unbroken, ineluctable progress of freedom and equality”, it is not an equali-

⁹ Strauss, “What Is Liberal Education?,” 311.

¹⁰ Allan Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today’s Students* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 26.

¹¹ See also: Roger Kimball, *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Higher Education* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990); James Seaton and William K. Buckley, eds., *Beyond Cheering and Bashing: New Perspectives on The Closing of the American Mind* (Bowling Green: Popular Press, 1992); Peter C. Emberley and Waller R. Newell, *Bankrupt Education: The Decline of Liberal Education in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Frederick Turner, *The Culture of Hope: A New Birth of the Classical Spirit* (New York: Free Press, 1995); Lawrence W. Levine, *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

¹² Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today’s Students*, 34.

¹³ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 49.

ty without judgement.¹⁴ Bloom's conception of liberal education is rooted in a distinctly American formulation¹⁵ of natural right in which human beings are all equal *as human beings* but not all expressions of being human are equal: *natural* differences abound and, just as those born with an affinity for rhythm are best-suited to poetry, those who are naturally predisposed to the rigours of a liberal education should receive it.

While this is an admittedly brief sketch of Bloom's arguments, it suffices for the purpose of drawing out his concluding remarks:

Of course, the only serious solution is the one that is almost universally rejected: the good old Great Books approach, in which a liberal education means reading certain generally recognized classic texts, just reading them, letting them dictate what the questions are and the method of approaching them ... [because] wherever the Great Books make up a central part of the curriculum, the students are excited and satisfied, feel that they are doing something that is independent and fulfilling, getting something from the university they cannot get elsewhere. The very fact of this special experience, which leads nowhere beyond itself, provides them with a new alternative and respect for study itself.¹⁶

Yet, beyond comprehensive changes to the university such that liberal education is again the norm — changes that he admittedly believes to lack both administrative and popular support — Bloom does not provide meaningful steps towards the reopening of the American mind. In fact, he ultimately suggests that “[o]ne cannot and should not hope for a general reform. The hope is that the embers do not die out”.¹⁷ Instead of a call to action, *Closing* ends with the distinct impression of little more than a collection of lamenta-

¹⁴ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 55.

¹⁵ While there are those who contested Bloom's formulation, it is important to note that he did not see anything particularly controversial about it. Or, more precisely, the fact that some consider it contentious is one of the symptoms of Bloom's crisis.

¹⁶ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 344.

¹⁷ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 380.

tions.¹⁸ However, much as with Stephen White's speculation about Peter Laslett's claims about the death of political philosophy¹⁹, one suspects incitement was really on Bloom's mind — as is often the case with the lament genre of academic literature. Yet, as if taking seriously Strauss' claims about the need for philosophers to protect themselves from popular persecution, Bloom does not make his operative strategy easy to follow. If Bloom had truly been concerned about facing persecution, it seems unlikely he would have written an almost 400-page scathing critique only to come up short on the prescriptive dimension — unless, of course, his prescriptions were even more radical. As we will see, it is not so much that he advocates for anything particularly revolutionary, but rather that there is an apocalyptic element to his thought.

On the surface of Bloom's assessment, the solutions that he advocates for seem to be grand changes in the university and redesigning the education curriculum, but he makes clear that such a process would be ill-received by the general divisions of the university (natural science, social science and the humanities) — to say nothing of the radicals and activists that have advocated for a relativist turn that is at odds with the university as a national project. "The old core curriculum—according to which every student in the college had to take a smattering of courses in the major divisions of knowledge—was abandoned".²⁰ While it may be the case that some institutions are able to provide a liberal

¹⁸ "The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to the festivals; all her gates are desolate, her priests groan; her young girls grieve, and her lot is bitter" (Lam 1:4 New Revised Standard Version). One wonders if educators might be better served by the inscription Dante finds at the beginning of *Inferno*: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here".

¹⁹ See: Stephen K. White, "Pluralism, Platitudes, and Paradoxes: Fifty Years of Western Political Thought," in *What Is Political Theory*, ed. Stephen K. White and J. Donald Moon (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 9.

²⁰ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 320.

education (or, at the very least, a rough approximation), Bloom seems to believe these will be the exception, not the norm. The conditions are such that “[t]he university [is] incorporated much more firmly into the system of democratic public opinion” and (re)establishing liberal education programs faces foes from both without and within.²¹ “It is difficult to imagine that there is either the wherewithal or the energy within the university to constitute or reconstitute the idea of an educated human being and establish a liberal education again”.²²

Earlier in *Closing*, Bloom reminds us that “[t]he study of ancient Greece and Rome used to be the scholarly discipline par excellence, at times igniting brilliantly and illuminating the world, at others flickering and almost being extinguished”.²³ Whether this is deliberately echoed in his concluding remarks about the mere “embers” of liberal learning that remain in universities, this metaphor is where Bloom’s normative project is most alive:

Moments of great transformation have started with refreshment at the Greek source, its inspiration slaking a burning thirst ... Nothing fancy, no infinite searching outside; the book in itself is always intelligible, as long as human nature remains the same. This is the role played by the Greek authors throughout the wildly varying ages since they wrote, always Phoenix-like when they appear to have been consumed and are only ashes conserved by the scholars.²⁴

The crisis that relativism presents for Bloom — the “dreadful regime [which] gets its power to maintain rule from the natural sciences. As sciences are neutral, except with respect to what concerns their interests, and cannot judge Roosevelt to be superior to Sta-

²¹ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 319.

²² Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 380.

²³ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 304.

²⁴ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 304.

lin” — is not one that can be easily dismissed.²⁵ It has infected all parts of American life and the dire state of the university is a symptom, rather than its cause, in part because “[t]he scholar could never conquer the mind of man”.²⁶ This is a particularly important point for Bloom, because he concerns himself not merely with the state of the institution, but dedicates a significant amount of time to the state of the students who arrive there. That the teachers let themselves be “made into dancing bears” was certainly an educational failure, but it was one that merely played into the worst impulses of their students, rather than created them.²⁷

The project that implicitly rests behind these critiques is similar to that of Ronald Beiner’s interludes as discussed in Chapter One which harkens back to Nietzsche’s invocation at the beginning of *Beyond Good and Evil*: “now that Europe is breathing a sigh of relief after this nightmare and at least can enjoy a healthier—sleep, we, *whose task is wakefulness itself*, are the heirs of all that strength which has been fostered by the struggle against this error”.²⁸ Dutiful scholars must, while the liberal mind sleeps, remain wakeful so as to tend the few remaining embers of its once-brilliant fire. While Beiner acknowledges that the current interlude “certainly seem[s] to present us with a rather deflating or anticlimactic conclusion to the grand tradition set in motion by Socrates and Plato”, he is clear from the outset that this “does not give us a reason to give up on the

²⁵ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 297.

²⁶ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 309.

²⁷ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 315.

²⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufman (1886; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 2.

enterprise of reflecting on the ends of life”.²⁹ Our responsibility during Beiner’s interludes is a matter of maintaining the foundation upon which the future of political philosophy will be built — which involves attending to the great debates of the twentieth century — and Bloom’s scholars are keepers of an ancient flame — which seemingly has little room for adding twentieth century texts to the existing canon of Great Books.³⁰ Both ultimately admit to a certain degree of hopelessness that scholars and educators can change the situation in which they find themselves: for Beiner, the stakes are insufficiently high such that political philosophers are not yet called upon to return to public life³¹; and for Bloom, the crisis is indeed dire, but it is not recognized enough that people are willing to turn away from their own “accidental lives” and towards essential truths.³² Until then, all academic political philosophers can do is carry the fire³³ while waiting on the raging river of *fortuna* to come, flooding the plains and sweeping away the conventions of the day.

5.2 Carrying Fire

Here we run into a longstanding problem of political philosophy: that of persuasion — or, perhaps more precisely, we run away from it. To better understand this, first we must unpack the responsibilities of the academic political philosopher.

²⁹ Ronald Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 228; lv.

³⁰ And, as we saw in Chapter 3.4, even if it did, Bloom certainly would not have those debates include *A Theory of Justice*.

³¹ In 2014, that is. As we will see shortly, Beiner’s mind appears to have changed by 2018.

³² Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 380.

³³ “‘You have to carry the fire.’ ‘I dont know how to.’ ‘Yes you do.’” (McCarthy 2006, 234).

Beiner opens *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters* by suggesting that, “[i]f John Rawls is right that ‘studying the exemplars’³⁴ is essential to initiating ourselves into philosophy, including political philosophy, then we cannot avoid judgments about who the exemplars are”.³⁵ This might be an entirely reasonable justification for a project aimed towards judgments about the exemplars of twentieth century political philosophy, but it accompanies his defense of political philosophy — as a grand project — itself. To better understand this, consider that, writing in 2014, Beiner claims that “[t]wenty-first-century political philosophy doesn’t yet exist”.³⁶ By this it seems clear that he is writing about political philosophy that is not merely *in* the twenty-first century, but *of* it; and, given that we do not yet know what marks the era in which we live, we are in no position to recognize political philosophy of this era. It might be that political philosophy ‘returns’ before the end of the twenty-first century — “Will it be twenty years? Or fifty? Or one hundred? It is impossible to say” — but, at least in Beiner’s estimation, it is an all-but certainty that it *will*.³⁷ One of the difficulties with this conception of political philosophy is that of causes: Beiner’s claim forces us to consider whether we need to understand the era in which we live before we can write political philosophy of that era?; or does understanding the era in which we live allow us to look back and recognize works written in that era as political philosophy of it? Midnight may be when the owl of Minerva is best equipped to take flight, but what good does that serve beyond that of the owl?

³⁴ “We learn moral and political philosophy, and indeed any other part of philosophy, by studying the exemplars—those noted figures who have made cherished attempts—and we try to learn from them, and if we are lucky to find a way to go beyond them” (Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy* 2).

³⁵ Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*, ix.

³⁶ Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*, 229

³⁷ Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*, 235

There is a degree to which Beiner's point is an obvious one: the future is an undiscovered country that we will only know by crossing the ocean of years.³⁸ It is not necessarily the case, however, that political philosophy itself is missing. A more fair articulation would be that there is not yet political philosophy that speaks to (and/or is written) amidst circumstances in which we do not yet find ourselves: the body of knowledge that we would call twenty-first century political philosophy, then, might not exist, but nor does the twenty-first century.³⁹ Political philosophy, however, is not a body of knowledge, but a practice; and any definition that fails to address this practical element is missing the distinction between knowledge itself and the pursuit of the same. To put it another way, twenty-first-century political philosophy might not exist, but certainly there is a political philosophy of the now.

There is also the way that Beiner transforms Rawls' notion of 'learning' political philosophy to an 'initiation' which only serves to further obscure the discipline: a sacra-

³⁸ For those who believe that Hamlet's "undiscovered country" in Act III, Scene I is not the future, but the afterlife: "You have not experienced Shakespeare until you have read him in the original Klingon" (*Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*).

³⁹ Or, at least, it did not in 2014, but four years later Beiner finds cause enough to agree with Steve Bannon that "[w]e are witnessing the birth of a new political order" (qtd. in Beiner, *Dangerous Minds: Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Return of the Far Right*, 12). This coincides with what Beiner goes on to call "the populism genie ... [by which] we seem to have been thrust into a new Zeitgeist that few of us anticipated or were prepared for" (Beiner, *Dangerous Minds: Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Return of the Far Right*, 121). Yet, when he explains the problem facing Western liberal democracy, there appears to be more to the twenty-first century than populism: "To be sure, it can be perilous to make grand historical judgments from up close. We probably need a vantage point of decades or longer to really know whether Western liberal democracy is truly in crisis. But in 2017 it certainly looks as if a crisis (or interconnected series of crises) of fairly large proportions has begun or is at least on the horizon: Brexit in England; Trumpism in the US; Putinism in Russia and Orbánism in Hungary; Erdoğanism in Turkey; a real crisis of identity and purpose with respect to the whole EU project; the rise of a hypernationalist far right in various parts of Europe; a huge migrant crisis as a result of the chaos in the Middle East; a broad revolt against globalization; the challenge of militant Islamism, including a relentless stream of terrorist episodes, with escalating effects on all the other crises or perceived crises; and so on" (Beiner, *Dangerous Minds: Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Return of the Far Right*, 129).

ment that takes place behind the curtain, out of sight of the congregation. It is a common conception of political philosophy as something inscrutable to all but the high priests rather than the property of the laypeople. Insofar as Beiner answers his book's subtitle, he does so only to an academic audience.⁴⁰ He offers *Political Philosophy* “[a]s a means of initiation into the vocation of political philosophy”, but, despite the casual tone of the book, it is hard to believe that it is an adequate introduction to either the practice or the discipline of political philosophy: one must understand the tradition up to the twentieth-century, at least in a cursory manner, before a proper foray into Beiner's text can be made. Beiner is not focused on the common political questions and concerns of the twentieth century, rather he is rooting twentieth century political philosophy in the academic literature of the era.

This is, of course, by design: he is presenting political philosophy in its proper form. This point is made more obvious in his introductory remarks: “political philosophy exists in order to confront human beings with a range of the most intellectually ambitious accounts of the standard by which to judge what makes a human life consummately human”.⁴¹ It may be that Beiner's *Political Philosophy* — along with political philosophy as an academic discipline⁴² — exists to facilitate this confrontation. Indeed, despite that

⁴⁰ This is, pretty clearly, an example of throwing stones despite living in a glass house: the opening of very dissertation is uncited paraphrasing of Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* and only becomes more obtuse from there.

⁴¹ Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*, xxi-ii

⁴² Rawls' initial claim about exemplars is made from a similar perspective: “[p]olitical philosophy can only mean the tradition of political philosophy” (Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy 2*). Both thinkers are highlighting our obligation, as students of political philosophy, to attend to these exemplars and, if political philosophy is defined narrowly as a canon of exemplars, then of course it would be impossible to engage in the discipline without studying those thinkers. This, however, is a conception of political philosophy is not concerned with the world,

Bloom would almost certainly disagree with the content of *Political Philosophy* in favour of “the old Great Books conviction”, this is precisely in accordance with his conception of liberal education which “look[s] toward the goal of human completeness”.⁴³ This is a significant intersection that shows Beiner and Bloom are among those disciplinary practitioners who haggle over the contents of the canon, but ultimately agree that political philosophy *is* the canon and everything in between those texts is not simply of lesser quality, but rather is something else altogether.

Political philosophy itself, however, is not an ossified body of knowledge about political standards, but rather it is the *attempt* to arrive at those standards for oneself — and with others. It is an activity that might be helped by those exemplars who either astutely articulated existing standards or discovered novel avenues of inquiry, but political philosophy requires a dialogue between engaged minds that aims towards consensus and a shared world. Philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom; and political philosophy, as the pursuit of wisdom about political things, cannot occur in isolation and retreat from the political world. In this way, political philosophy is not merely philosophizing about politics, but is also always a political activity in its own right that involves a negotiation of the very terms and boundaries in which it is occurring — from the formal structures of academia to the social structures of the broader political world. The renegotiation of these kinds of boundaries is commonplace, but what distinguishes political philosophy is the

merely with itself: it relegates political philosophy to little more than a series of footnotes to Plato. If this is the case, then perhaps it makes sense to concern ourselves not with political truths, but with what Plato had to say — and what others have to say about what he had to say *ad infinitum* (and, for that matter, *ad nauseam*). This would be a bit like suggesting that literary studies involves nothing more than reading Shakespeare.

⁴³ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 51; 19.

arena in which its negotiations occur. Not that this is uniquely the case for political philosophy, but the evolution of the political world in which it occurs — that is to say, the expansion of liberal democratic principles — would seem to have repercussions on the discipline.

This is not politics as debates about administration of political decisions or behaviour of political elites, but rather as the everyday and inescapable matter of living together in the world, as public life, as a fundamentally inescapable aspect of a shared world. Even those who attempt to retreat into private lives are unavoidably bound to the lives of others such that their private acts either have public implications or are mediated, to some degree, by others. This is, in fact, one of the key difficulties of receiving only part of a liberal education: by eliminating the linkages between political philosophy and history, moral philosophy, and art, it perpetuates the altogether mistaken belief that it is possible to wholly retreat from the shared world.

It is perhaps noteworthy that, in 1954, Harold Nicolson wrote that “fact has become so far stranger than fiction that we are losing, not the capacity only, but also the desire, for wonder” and one of the results, he proclaimed, was that the novel was dead.⁴⁴ These lamentations became so common that, in 1998, James Schiff would declare that “[e]nd-of-the-world reports on the novel have become more stale than the novel itself”.⁴⁵ As we have seen, this is a familiar complaint around the death of political philosophy. Kathleen Fitzpatrick suggests that “[t]he discourse announcing the death of the novel has

⁴⁴ qtd. in Erich Kahler, “The Transformation of Modern Fiction,” *Comparative Literature* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1955): 121.

⁴⁵ James A. Schiff, “Contemporary Retellings: A Thousand Acres as the Latest Lear,” *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 39, no. 4 (1998): 367.

served throughout the twentieth century to separate the canonical from the noncanonical, the literary from the pulp, the meritorious from the meretricious”.⁴⁶ It is interesting that the twentieth century was seen to be the dying time for the novel — and poetry,⁴⁷ painting,⁴⁸ the author,⁴⁹ and art itself⁵⁰ — alongside political philosophy. What sets academic political philosophy apart is that it lives within political science, that indeed it was once synonymous with political science: the tension between the scientific and the philosophic is inherent to academic political philosophy in a way that is not the case with these humanities. Yet it is not altogether clear what the consequences of this distinction are.

Articulating it in this way would seem to be in conflict with Strauss, Bloom, and Beiner — as well as with a variety of the death thesis interlocutors — but I would suggest that these various practitioners advocated a political philosophy that was comfortable living in the pages of jargon-filled treatises and academic journals; those who went beyond university presses and into the City, who were engaged not just with truth but with opinion, were labelled as aphilosophical or, worse still, political. John Lachs says, speaking of philosophy broadly:

Nearly from the time of the earliest practitioners, philosophers wondered about how they could do what they were doing and frequently even about what they were doing in the first place. Of course, there always were unselfconscious souls who pursued what was of interest to them without concern for method or the arbitrary limits of fields of study. But such people tended to be labeled amateurs and dismissed as lacking technical sophistication. This left philosophy in the hands of

⁴⁶ Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006), 15.

⁴⁷ Joseph Epstein, “Who Killed Poetry,” *Commentary* 86, no. 2 (1988): 13–20.

⁴⁸ Donald Crimp, “The End of Painting,” *October* 16 (Spring 1981): 69–86.

⁴⁹ Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” *Aspen*, 1967.

⁵⁰ Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (1997; repr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

professionals who crafted novel concepts, gloried in minute distinctions, and spoke in a torrent of neologisms.⁵¹

It is not inherently a bad thing that these professionals exist, but to what extent can their academic and intellectual debates be said to constitute a political world? One can philosophize about politics in private, but until returning to and engaging with the world of others, insofar as politics is absent, it is not yet political philosophy. While there is the possibility that academic and intellectual debates constitute such a shared world, the death of political philosophy ‘debates’ are themselves a good example of the problem with this approach: as we saw in Chapter Two, rather than attempting to come to shared concepts, its various interlocutors seemed more interested in constructing and defending their own definitions. By, at best, talking over each other and, at worst, ignoring each other, the interlocutors in the death of political philosophers ‘debates’ altogether failed to engage in the creation of a shared world that is necessary for all politics, including political philosophy.

Bloom, of course, insists on more than just political philosophy but liberal education, which is to say the classroom where “[a]ttention to the young, knowing what their hungers are and what they can digest [is] the essence of the craft”, and that “students are only potential, but potential points beyond itself; and this is the source of the hope, almost always disappointed but ever renescent, that man is not just a creature of accident, chained to and formed by the particular cave in which he is born”.⁵² Peter Emberley and Waller Newell’s notable contribution to the debates about the crisis of liberal education

⁵¹ John Lachs, “The Future of Philosophy,” *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 78, no. 2 (November 2004): 5.

⁵² Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 19; 20.

in Canada⁵³, *Bankrupt Education*, puts this even more clearly: “Traditionally, liberal education is an encounter between a teacher and a student, in which the teacher’s actual superiority of knowledge in the present is placed at the service of bringing forth the student’s potential superiority of knowledge in the future”.⁵⁴ In addition to the academic’s role as stewards of texts that will one day be called upon again, there is also the responsibility to the cultivation of students’ attention beyond the particular and towards the whole. These two sets of duties are not in conflict with each other: stewardship complements cultivation. Bloom suggests that these texts speak to all who listen and that “wherever the Great Books make up a central part of the curriculum, the students are excited and satisfied, feeling they are doing something that is independent and fulfilling, getting something from the university they cannot get elsewhere ... Programs based upon the judicious use of great texts provide the royal road to students’ hearts”.⁵⁵ There are, of course, educators for whom these books arouse little more than a “tepid reaction”, but Bloom suggests this is the result of teaching “recent scholarly interpretation[s] of the classics rather than a vital, authentic understanding”.⁵⁶ Properly taught, these texts “feed[] the student’s love of truth and passion to live a good life”.⁵⁷ *Properly* taught.

⁵³ In another version of this project, considerable space would have been dedicated to exploring the various national manifestations of the liberal education and its decline, both from the earliest diagnoses and the changes that time has wrought. *Bankrupt Education* makes a uniquely Canadian argument that echoes Bloom’s *Closing*, but also goes beyond it in novel and nuanced ways. One wonders what would come of a rigorous comparison across the full range of Western institutions.

⁵⁴ Peter C. Emberley and Waller R. Newell, *Bankrupt Education: The Decline of Liberal Education in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 64.

⁵⁵ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 344.

⁵⁶ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 346.

⁵⁷ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 345.

There is a loftiness to this assessment, not only of the Great Books — as we saw in Chapter Four with Strauss’ assessment of Plato — but of the instructors themselves: that individuals trained in *reading* are at all equipped to pass them on to others. Bloom’s calls Plato’s *Republic* “the book on education, because it really explains to [him] what [he] experiences as a man and a teacher”, but even if we grant that Plato provides clear guidelines as to the *methods* of education⁵⁸, surely it is a craft that must be developed — to say nothing of those who lack the capacity necessary to fulfill such responsibilities.⁵⁹ While there is plenty of scorn in *Closing* placed upon poor instructors, there is precious little guidance as to what one could do to be a good one — although he offers an anecdote in which a student claims, much to Bloom’s satisfaction, that he is “not a professor of political philosophy but a travel agent”.⁶⁰

Strauss denied that the vast majority of us could be political philosophers and Beiner’s interludes are premised upon a similar claim. Bloom, likely in agreement with Strauss, provides a somewhat more detailed and nuanced account of this in *Closing*:

[T]eaching can be a threat to philosophy because philosophizing is a solitary quest, and he who pursues it must never look to an audience. But it is too much to ask that teachers be philosophers, and a bit of attachment to one’s audience is almost inevitable. And if it is well resisted, the very vice can turn into something of a virtue and encourage philosophizing. Fascination with one’s students leads to an

⁵⁸ While a contestable point, it is not outside the realm of possibility that pedagogy is yet another one of the lessons available to a careful reader. Bloom seems to suggest that a good teacher is one who gets out of the way of the texts and that such an education involves “just reading [the Great Books], letting them dictate what the questions are and the method of approaching them—not forcing them into categories we make up, not treating them as historical products, but trying to read them as their authors wished them to be read” (Bloom 1987, 344). Even if this alone were the task of the instructor, it is a considerably difficult one.

⁵⁹ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 381.

⁶⁰ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 63.

awareness of the various kinds of souls and their various capacities for truth and error as well as learning.⁶¹

To be a philosopher might be possible, then, but not for the professor of political philosophy — or, at least, such outcomes should not be expected.⁶² This idea of proper political philosophy is then one of carrying fire as bound up in being an academic and an instructor, steward to the Great Books⁶³ and political philosophy itself until they are needed again. Until either a political philosopher emerges or the *polis* recognizes the need for philosophizing. The problem with this notion of hopefully waiting during what one believes is an interlude is that it eschews the most difficult task before the political philosopher: to persuade not merely those who are already predisposed to agree with you, but precisely those who are not.

5.3 *The Accident of Education*

One of the key responsibilities that Bloom suggests of educators involves assessing the state of the souls of students in the classroom as “[n]o real teacher can doubt that his task is to assist his pupil to fulfill human nature against all the deforming forces

⁶¹ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 20-1.

⁶² Michael Oakeshott similarly tells us that a philosophy which seeks to persuade has lost its way: “To popularise philosophy is at once to debase it; a general demand for philosophy is a general demand for its degradation. Few, perhaps, will be found willing to surrender the green for the grey, but only those few are on the way to philosophy. And instead of a gospel, the most philosophy can offer us (in respect to practical life) is an escape, perhaps the only complete escape open to us” (Oakeshott *Experience and its Modes*, 3). If by ‘philosophy’ we are to understand Oakeshott to mean philosophical *answers*, there is perhaps a reasonableness to the notion: full-throated partisanship for particular answers is best understood as missionary work. If, however, Oakeshott is suggesting that it is an error — more than that, a contradiction or even an impossibility — to advocate for the *practice* of philosophy, to push others to themselves engage with philosophical questions, then we are left with little more than raw escapism. A discipline that claims to be rooted in an absolute and apolitical commitment to the pursuit of truth is ultimately masturbatory — and, given how committed he is to the idea of it as “something independent of the futile attempt to convince or persuade”, would appear to be impossible to teach (Oakeshott *Experience and its Modes*, 3). At which point it seems an impossible discipline to justify.

⁶³ Or, in Beiner’s case, great books.

of convention and prejudice”.⁶⁴ In more direct language, one evaluates the capacities, opinions, and prior education that shapes, but Bloom offers little in the way of details as to what that looks like in practice. Of course, it is almost impossible to teach without experiencing this, at least to some degree, because of the seemingly innate capacity students have for revealing what they do not know.⁶⁵ Having recently taught an introductory political philosophy course, I was startled to learn that there were students who did not know what the Fall from Eden was — or, worse still, had a mistaken understanding.⁶⁶ How is one to engage with — let alone understand — Augustine and Aquinas⁶⁷ without this background? The answer from Bloom would seem to be that it is not possible and that this is precisely what is achieved when liberal education is a foundation, but at this point it is too late: one cannot change a student’s prior learning. What once perhaps was assumed knowledge for the vast majority of citizens — let alone incoming students — can no longer be so. Nor is it the case that these students will necessarily acquire that background elsewhere in the studies, because of the *à la carte* nature of many, if not most, higher education programs.

An obvious response is that this is not much of a problem: if a student were to walk into a calculus classroom and lacked the fundamentals of mathematics, nobody could reasonably fault the instructor — the institution more broadly, perhaps, for neglecting prerequisites, but a seed requires *some* soil in which to grow:

⁶⁴ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 20.

⁶⁵ As if they have not yet been trained to keep their deficiencies to themselves.

⁶⁶ Bloom finds something of this himself when he suggests that it was once the case that “[m]ost students could be counted on to know the Bible, that ubiquitous source of older traditions” (Bloom 1987, 54).

⁶⁷ To say nothing of Calvin, Dante, Erasmus, Luther, etc.

We are long past the age when a whole tradition could be stored up in all students, to be fruitfully used later by some. Only those who are willing to take risks and are ready to believe the implausible are now fit for a bookish adventure. The desire must come from within. People do what they want, and now the most needful things appear so implausible to them that it is hopeless to attempt universal reform.⁶⁸

For Bloom, writing in the late 1980s, “there is less soil in which university teaching can take root ... It is much more difficult today to attach the classic books to any experience or felt need the students have”.⁶⁹ Although he once believed that “the human desire to know is permanent” he eventually decided, during the rise of relativism in America, “that nature needs the cooperation of convention”.⁷⁰ If political philosophy training is for those who have already begun the turning around of their soul towards the good,⁷¹ rather than the first step in that process, there is an excuse for its limited audience: everyone else has self-selected out.⁷² Those who remain can continue the lifelong journey towards understanding and political philosophy training in universities serves to aid them.

One of the problems with this logic is that it is predicated on prepared students knowing that they should make their way to political philosophy courses in political science programs — and it is altogether unclear from where that knowledge should come. Further, it relies on the notion that students ever arrive in the classroom to us in an ideal form — that is to say, students who are ready for exactly what we have prepared to teach. Whether that was ever the case, I cannot speak to — although looking back to the Platon-

⁶⁸ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 64-5.

⁶⁹ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 61.

⁷⁰ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 51.

⁷¹ Republic VII 518d

⁷² Ignoring, for a moment, how free we can consider such a decision: if one has truly been oriented towards the good, it would not make sense for them to turn away from it. What freely choosing human being would make such a choice? This conception, however, requires considerable intellectual baggage.

ic Socrates and his interlocutors, it seems to have been a problem stretching back to antiquity. Our responsibility as educators is not simply about guiding the Ideal Student, but rather to find ways to stir the democratic soul itself — what Peter Emberley and Waller Newell call “a journey of the soul, beyond the familiar world of our own time and place with our own particular attachments” — prepared as they may be for it or not.⁷³ It might be — as Bloom articulates throughout his work and Strauss did before him — that Plato and his *Republic* is the pinnacle of philosophical thought, and that those who understand it are able to appreciate the Whole beyond its parts. Further still, it might be that nature and convention have properly guided some of our students to a place where they are ready to engage in that sort of understanding, properly shepherded by a dutiful instructor, but how few does that number have to be before we are failing to adequately carry the fire of political philosophy into the future. In an era in which liberal education was widespread, it might be appropriate to see political philosophy training as a matter of sifting through citizens in order to find human beings, much in the same way that Strauss recommends that a teacher “always assume that there is one silent student in your class who is far superior to you in head and in heart”.⁷⁴ But what is the use of such logic when liberal education is almost nowhere to be found? Even if political philosophy training were largely about ensuring political elites⁷⁵ — those who will have access to the levers of

⁷³ Peter C. Emberley and Waller R. Newell, *Bankrupt Education: The Decline of Liberal Education in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 137.

⁷⁴ Leo Strauss, “Liberal Education and Responsibility,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Hilail Gildin (1962; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 322.

⁷⁵ As before has been argued about Bloom and Strauss before him, but Jack Hayward shows a similar drive in the development of the British political sciences “with its practical concern to train an elite to serve the state” (Hayward 1991, 95). See also: Admir Skodo, “The Political

power, future presidents and prime ministers — are properly oriented as democratic citizens, there is absolutely nothing in the current educational system that guarantees they will make their way into our classrooms. Nor is there any reason to believe that political philosophy training will make these properly oriented students better equipped to rise to political power.

When Bloom suggests that democratic education involves a responsibility to train towards the “tastes, knowledge, and character supportive of a democratic regime”, his point is made in critique, offering that the contemporary education system fails to do this.⁷⁶ However, Bloom’s *Closing*, as a lament, does a fairly good job of charting the way that the current regime is not really one of the once-uniquely American nature that he finds in the Declaration of Independence and other founding documents. Whether it ever truly was is beside the point for those of us trying to be educators in the existing intellectual climate. Yet none of this is meant to seriously return to Bloom’s assessment of American higher education. While debates about the efficacy of higher education continue to this day, that particular iteration of the culture wars has been well-worn by academics and public intellectuals alike — and, at times, included a fair amount of talking over each other in much the same way as we saw with the death of political philosophy. Instead, this is a matter of taking seriously that Bloom is writing more than a lament for a discipline and aims towards the question of what good political philosophy education can be today.

Thought of Revisionism,” in *The Afterlife of Idealism: The Impact of New Idealism on British Historical and Political Thought, 1945-1980* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 181–239.

⁷⁶ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 26.

The higher education regime might one day return to something resembling the liberal education, but, until then, it is clear that few of us will ever teach within the Ideal University. Accordingly, calls for reform should not dwell exclusively within them either, but rather we should be open to considering the structures of political philosophy education *as it exists*. Perhaps even with the explicit aim of setting the conditions for a ‘return’ to liberal education proper; or perhaps not. Instead of simply mourning the loss of the Ideal, let us steel ourselves for situation in which we find ourselves. As Hannah Arendt — misleadingly, it should be noted, as there is nothing simple about it whatsoever — writes at the beginning of *The Human Condition*, “[w]hat I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing”.⁷⁷ Bloom’s *Closing* opens the door to this task, but his nostalgia for a prior era seems to get in the way of going through it. Put another way, Bloom’s commitment to a normative vision of a regime puts him at odds with the pedagogical project that is expected of him. If political philosophy training is to be in accordance with our existing democratic regime, it behooves us to stop structuring that training on the few who accidentally arrive in our classrooms. Even for those who suggest that the Great Books are great because they speak to universal questions about a universal human nature are forced to admit that they already do this: Plato and Aristotle are taught without a passing knowledge of Ancient Greek, Augustine and Aquinas without Latin, etc.⁷⁸ Where Bloom uses the state of students to speak to the state of the system that produces them, I suggest that we should from it take a different lesson: it

⁷⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (1958; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 5.

⁷⁸ To say nothing of the fact that a great many of us read and work from translations ourselves, having little, if any, working knowledge of the original languages.

reveals the inadequacies on our part, as educators, to predict the capacities, opinions, and prior education of our students — and teach towards them.

5.4 *The State of the Art*

This would involve attending to where our students already are — and, indeed, it is not a stretch to imagine that means not simply our students in the sense of the university, but in society writ large. It is a reorientation of political philosophy training away from the cultivation in the character of our democratic regime of the few souls who accidentally arrive in our classrooms and, seemingly following in the tradition of the Plato-Socrates that can be found in *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*, instead sees the responsibility of the political philosophy educator to something much greater: to the health of the regime itself. Avner de-Shalit suggests that “[p]olitical philosophers⁷⁹ must remember that the society they study is not only an object for analysis, it is also human beings who can and deserve to flourish”.⁸⁰ Even if one does not go so far as to accept this possibility, it seems entirely reasonable to ask whether the extremely limited audience that arrives in political philosophy classrooms is sufficient to carry the fire.

Before that can be answered, one of the prerequisites of any reorientation involves a better understanding of the shape of political philosophy training as it exists today. Individual instructors and programs undoubtedly have a strong grasp of their own approaches, but it is what we do in common that makes us a discipline — and if there are going to be changes proposed to what we do, it should again begin from the political phi-

⁷⁹ To which I would add, political philosophy educators as well — de-Shalit himself does not subscribe to the belief that political philosophers are unlikely to be found teaching.

⁸⁰ Avner de-Shalit, *Power to the People: Teaching Political Philosophy in Skeptical Times* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), 183.

losophy classroom *as it exists*. It is not immediately clear, however, what such an assessment would look like. While I take as granted the notion that there is something different about the treatments of political philosophy in political science and philosophy programs, there is a wide range of courses and programs to consider. The sheer scope involved is perhaps one of the reasons why this has not been meaningfully attempted in the academic literature.

Consider that, when addressing the boundaries of his own study in *Closing*, Bloom offers that “[i]t consists of thousands of students of comparatively high intelligence, materially and spiritually free to do pretty much what they want with the few years of college they are privileged to have—in short, the kind of young persons who populate the twenty or thirty best universities”.⁸¹ Yet Bloom’s personal experience is not across twenty or thirty institutions, instead he is explicit that what he is doing is generalizing to the multitude of students at elite institutions based on the thousands that he has interacted with. Even if this is an entirely reasonable assumption on his part, it helps to highlight the difficulty of any wide accounting of political philosophy training: a single instructor, even an influential one, has a rather limited perspective. Consider Matthew Moore’s 2008 survey of what American political theorists teach: he looked to 5,144 individual instructors at 2,073 higher education institutions.⁸² Trying to understand what political philosophy training looks like nationally is a daunting exercise, especially given that there is not

⁸¹ Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind*, 22.

⁸² See: Matthew J. Moore, “How (and What) Political Theorists Teach: Results of a National Survey,” *Journal of Political Science Education* 7, no. 1 (2011): 95–128. It should be noted that Moore’s sample is inflated by instructors that he could not rule out as theorists. If those are ignored, the number of instructors (2,203) is still prohibitively high.

a particularly strong disciplinary emphasis in political philosophy on quantitative analysis.

Yet reducing the scope — to smaller national context by, for example, looking at Canadian institutions, instead of those in United States — helps reveal other difficulties: of the approximately 300 post-secondary schools in Canada, some explicitly call themselves liberal arts institutions, while others might have something resembling a liberal arts core but with a significantly expanded conception of what that means.⁸³ Some institutions have a plethora of political philosophy course offerings, while others attempt to cover the discipline in one or two semesters. Beyond that, we have the distinctions between undergraduate and graduate level studies which, even though the latter sees significantly fewer students, is a complicating factor at least. Finally, there are the instructors themselves who range from career professors who have been teaching for decades to precariously employed doctoral students coming to the classroom for the first time.

Appendix 1 is an attempted survey of political philosophy training in Canadian political science departments, but to make the project manageable it focused on introductory level courses and only those at institutions which also offered doctoral studies in political philosophy. Although the intention was to look solely universities that could be said to hold the highest expertise in the discipline — as represented by offering the highest level of training in the field — the scope might inadvertently serve as something of a mirror to Bloom's 'best' universities. Given that Bloom was writing fairly explicitly about a privileged group of students, there is a reasonableness to his approach — but if I

⁸³ There are many technical colleges, trade schools, and other specialized institutions included in this number. To get an accurate consideration of possible political philosophy courses would require investigating further.

an attempting to survey the entire Canadian discipline, then such a restrictive focus begins to raise questions: who is political philosophy training for?; are more students being taught political philosophy outside of these few institutions?; does a Canada-wide approach even make sense, given how education is a domain of the provinces?

The project largely hones in on the texts and thinkers that used to introduce students to political philosophy and provides an empirical snapshot of that canon, but it is not immediately apparent what can (or should) be done with this data. It is an interesting snapshot, especially given the appearance of distinct approaches based on region, but without a clearer understanding of what is being done with those texts it is *merely* interesting as there is an almost entirely ephemeral quality to the survey. It provides a poor roadmap for new instructors to follow in their own classes — and even if it could be used as such a guide, that ignores the problem that these courses tend to be a reproduction of knowledge that we already know and were ourselves taught.⁸⁴ Similarly, it seems unlikely that seasoned professors going to redesign their courses simply to include popularly taught texts. It may be that this survey is best used as evidence in the seemingly eternal debate about the merits of the disciplinary canon, but then it needs to be considered with an explicit exploration of the differences between liberal education, introductory courses, and advanced studies in political philosophy.

Part of the difficulty here is that mainstream political philosophy scholarship is methodologically different from the kind of quantitative work necessary to adequately provide evidence that would back up both anecdotal assessments of what the discipline is and theoretical claims about what it should be. For academics that have been working in

⁸⁴ Or used as mirrors to ongoing research projects.

one mode for decades, asking them to engage in data-heavy research or analysis is akin to asking them to flex long-atrophied muscles. For those closer to their methodological training — assuming, of course, that that training involved data collection and analysis — there is the incentive problem: how are you going to establish your *bona fides* as a political philosopher if your work does not look like what is published in *Political Theory* or *The Review of Politics*? It might seem particularly risky⁸⁵ for early career scholars to work outside the bounds of propriety at the disciplinary margins unless they are confident that there is a job to be found from those margins.

Yet, at the same time and much like the variety of articles that Michael Moore produced out of his empirical investigation⁸⁶, the survey can be a piece to the broader puzzle of what we are doing with political philosophy training and another data point on the continued valorization of the Great Books — what Robert M. Hutchins called, “the books that had endured and that the common voice of mankind called the finest creations, in writing, of the Western mind” — as the products of a few of the best minds⁸⁷ who themselves were able to engage in political philosophy.⁸⁸ The research allows those engaged in the ‘canon wars’ to ground their arguments in some degree of fact, rather than

⁸⁵ Insofar as being a scholar at most anglophone institutions can be considered “risky”.

⁸⁶ Matthew J. Moore, “Textbooks and the Dilemma of Teaching Political Theory,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 2 (2017): 531–35; Matthew J. Moore, “How (and What) Political Theorists Teach: Results of a National Survey,” *Journal of Political Science Education* 7, no. 1 (2011): 95–128; Matthew J. Moore, “Political Theory Today: Results of a National Survey,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 43, no. 2 (2010): 265–72.

⁸⁷ In fact, Mortimer Adler and Hutchins’ *Great Books of the Western World* does not actually use the *books* themselves to demarcate its 54 volumes — with the exception of 43 which collects American State Papers, *The Federalist*, and J.S. Mill into a single volume — instead the volumes are dedicated to *thinkers*. This, of course, is an entirely coherent approach when one desires to include multiple works by the same author and individual volumes are then further divided into texts by those authors, but there remains an oddity to the framing.

⁸⁸ Robert M. Hutchins, “The Great Conversation,” in *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), xi.

vague appeals to their personal experiences with the discipline — even if these kind of investigations are in accordance with those intuitions. At the very least, they are something that must be contended with, when arguments run counter to what appears to be the situation ‘on the ground’. Even if this survey is ultimately only a preliminary investigation of current pedagogical practices in political philosophy, it would seem to be valuable given that disciplines and programs are regularly subject to (re)appraisal by students, administrators, and, in some cases, political actors.

Appendix 1 seems to point to the fact that political philosophy training is rooted in at least a variation of what John G. Gunnell’s calls “the myth of the tradition” and “the invention of political theory”.⁸⁹ Gunnell suggests that “[a]lthough we have become accustomed to thinking of the history of political theory as the chronologically ordered canon of classic texts, such history is in fact largely a reified analytical construct”.⁹⁰ He understands the death of political philosophy debates as revealing a fundamental and widespread disciplinary misunderstanding about the relationship of the history of political thought to its practice in which “[c]ommentators on both sides of the controversy generally assumed that an identifiable tradition of political theory was self-evident and was in a stage of decline, transition or crisis”.⁹¹

Gunnell’s work shows the way that those conversations, as well as political philosophy more broadly, were detached from the political realm in which they were em-

⁸⁹ Gunnell, *Political Theory: Tradition and Interpretation*, 66; Gunnell, “American Political Science, Liberalism, and the Invention of Political Theory”.

⁹⁰ Gunnell, “American Political Science, Liberalism, and the Invention of Political Theory”, 72.

⁹¹ Gunnell, *Political Theory: Tradition and Interpretation*, 9.

bedded.⁹² In the transition to a formal academic discipline, “[p]olitical theory has become so absorbed with justifying itself as a practice, seeking an identity, and securing some ground of rationality that would validate its claims to authority that it has increasingly failed to speak to or about politics as either events or a kind of phenomenon”.⁹³ If this is the case, then those of us who find there to be value in political philosophy training need to find ways of shoring up disciplinary defenses and reorienting our courses so that a political philosophy classroom remains after the coming reappraisal.

Conclusion

If political philosophy is to be seen as more than a necropolis, built upon the bones of greatest thinkers throughout history, then the dominance of the treatise in the discipline needs to be evaluated if not outright challenged. Similar to Phyllis Webb’s in-

⁹² David Easton claims that this was the state of political philosophy at the beginning of his career and inspired his push towards behaviouralism. See: David Easton and John G. Gunnell, “David Easton,” in *Political Science in America: Oral Histories of a Discipline*, ed. Michael A. Baer, Malcolm E. Jewell, and Lee Sigelman (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 195–214. For a broader conversation about the ‘detachment’ of 20th century political philosophy (and earlier), see: John C. Garnett, “Normative Theory,” in *Commonsense and the Theory of International Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984), 76–101; John G. Gunnell, *The Descent of Political Theory: The Genealogy of an American Vocation* (University of Michigan Press, 1995); Richard Tuck, “History,” in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ed. Robert E. Goodin, Philip Pettit, and Thomas W. Pogge, 2nd ed., vol. 1, 2 vols. (Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 69–87; Avner de-Shalit, “Political Philosophy and Empirical Political Science: From Foes to Friends?,” *European Political Science* 8 (2009): 37–46; David Miller, “Political Philosophy for Earthlings,” in *Justice for Earthlings: Essays in Political Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). This is not to suggest that there is no value to ‘pure’ political philosophy, as I take David Estlund’s view that “there are questions in political theory whose practical value, if any, is difficult to guess. Nevertheless, there is probably great practical value to be found in those areas in ways we can’t specifically anticipate” (Estlund 2011, 408). Rather that there *seems* to have been something of an overemphasis on a detached approach to the discipline. Whether that is the case (and to what extent) is a topic worthy of serious consideration — as there are a range of thinkers who believed it to be so — but this chapter looks to what Bloom (and Beiner) appear to be arguing for and attempts to unpack the implications.

⁹³ John G. Gunnell, *Between Philosophy and Politics: The Alienation of Political Theory* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 175–76.

vocation that “[t]he proper response to a poem is another poem”, the formal and systematic nature of a treatise allows for — or encourages — certain modes of response: the logic and structure of another treatise.⁹⁴ It is not that the treatise is incapable of leading to political philosophy in other forms, but rather that propriety makes certain demands on us. It is not altogether clear that we fully appreciate what has been lost by the turn towards the treatise.⁹⁵ What has been gained — a discipline, canon, and body of knowledge that can be passed on — is well-understood, but the long-held assumption that we must engage in political philosophy through these professionalized codes and conventions is in need of more rigorous theorizing than space was made for in 1971.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Phyllis Webb, “There *Are* the Poems,” in *Hanging Fire* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1990).

⁹⁵ One could contend that there was never really such a turn, that for as long as political philosophy has been a discipline it has been rooted in the treatise. See: Aristotle. I, however, take seriously the idea that, if we want to root the origin of political philosophy itself with the historical Socrates, Plato’s dialogues are where that spark becomes a fire.

⁹⁶ Of course, there were those some questioned the *content* of *A Theory of Justice* on the grounds that it was not truly political philosophy: David Lewis Schaefer suggested that *A Theory of Justice* was “... the culmination of a decay in political philosophy that has been going on for more than a century. The essence of this decay is the severance of the study of morality from that of nature and ultimately, therefore, from politics”; and Chantal Mouffe claimed that it “rest[ed] on the elimination of the very idea of the political” (Schaefer 1979, 103; Mouffe 1987, 115). Robert Paul Wolff called *A Theory of Justice* “the most distinguished product” of a political philosophy tradition of “inherent weakness” (Wolff 1997, 210). While there were plenty of comments about the length of the text, there were also occasionally considerations about its formal difficulties as a treatise: “[i]t seems that the book has been selling very well. This is remarkable, because it makes for tough reading: the reasoning is highly abstract; the language is forbidding; the setup of the book is difficult; and examples from daily life are carefully avoided ... The reading is therefore both intriguing and irritating and takes a lot of patience” (Pen 1974, 59). Allan Bloom offered a different kind of consideration of form, perhaps coming closest to an assessment in relation to other forms of writing: “Men are equal in dignity. Our business is to distribute esteem equally. Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice* is the instruction manual for such distribution. Kant’s theory of justice makes it possible to understand *Anna Karenina* as a significant expression of our situation; Rawls’s does the same for *Fear of Flying*” (Bloom 1987, 229).

Even amidst the death debates there were those who either looked beyond the treatise or thought that political philosophers should make an effort to do so. As early as 1960, Michael Oakeshott called for just such attention:

To rescue the conversation [of humankind] from the bog into which it has fallen and to restore to it some of its lost freedom of movement would require a philosophy more profound than I have to offer. But there is another, more modest, undertaking which is perhaps worth pursuing. My proposal is to consider again the voice of poetry; to consider it as it speaks to the conversation ... It is true that the voice of poetry has never been wholly excluded; but it is often expected to provide no more than an entertainment to fill in the intervals of a more serious discussion.⁹⁷

This being part of what J.G. Blumler called “the aesthetic nature of Professor Oakeshott’s approach to politics”.⁹⁸ In the same year, Allan Bloom likewise defended the relationship between poetry and political philosophy:

A free man and a good citizen must have a natural harmony between his passions and his knowledge; this is what is meant by a man of taste, and it is he whom we today seem unable to form. The unity is lost from life. We are aware that a political science which does not grasp the moral phenomena as presented by art is crude, and that an art uninspired by the passion for justice is trivial. Shakespeare wrote before the time of the separation of these things, and we sense that he unites the vigor of the sentiments with the clarity of reason.⁹⁹

Bloom claims that “[w]ithin the tradition in which Shakespeare lived and worked, the sovereignty of the philosophic discipline was almost universally accepted”.¹⁰⁰ We do not read Shakespeare despite the lack of treatises among his oeuvre, but rather we do not concern ourselves with that detail and instead look into his poetry and drama for political

⁹⁷ Michael Oakeshott, “The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind,” in *Rationalism and Politics* (1960; repr., London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1962): 202-3.

⁹⁸ J.G. Blumler, “Politics, Poetry, and Practice,” *Political Studies* 12, no. 3 (1964): 355.

⁹⁹ Allan Bloom, “Political Philosophy and Poetry,” *American Political Science Review* 54, no. 2 (June 1960): 464.

¹⁰⁰ Allan Bloom, “Political Philosophy and Poetry: A Restatement,” *American Political Science Review* 54, no. 2 (June 1960): 471.

philosophy — which, because of the unity of passion and knowledge from which he wrote, leaps off the page to even the most casual reader. Berlin's famous essay "The Hedgehog and the Fox", taken up (perhaps too seriously) by many other political philosophers, looks to Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*¹⁰¹ and treats it as a philosophical text. While Berlin is explicitly focused on Tolstoy's philosophy of history, rather than political philosophy per se, there is a sense in which the distinction breaks down throughout the essay, as if Berlin lives within the unity that Allan Bloom refers to — at least with regards to Russian literature. In 1970, David McCracken wrote explicitly of the "alliance" of political philosophy and fiction in which "[i]maginative works ... have importance functions in spreading truths and suggesting new truths" — an alliance that found its most "remarkable" *dual-expression* in William Godwin's treatise *Political Justice* and novel *Caleb Williams*.¹⁰²

These thinkers are not explicitly framing their considerations around the death thesis and there appear to be few attempts to assess the state of political philosophy in the twentieth century beyond the treatise. It is interesting to note that political philosophy was 'revived' not by a dialogue *a la* Plato or aphorisms *a la* Nietzsche — but it is perhaps more noteworthy that there appeared to be little, if any, expectation that the discipline would be reborn in anything but a treatise.¹⁰³ Likewise interesting, although again unsurprising, despite the way that these thinkers call for attention to the non-traditional forms

¹⁰¹ And makes reference to other literary figures such as James Joyce and Fyodor Dostoevsky.

¹⁰² David McCracken, "Godwin's Literary Theory: The Alliance Between Fiction and Political Theory," *Philological Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (January 1, 1970): 117-8; 113.

¹⁰³ Indeed Isaiah Berlin's status as an essayist seems to be one of the reasons he is so often ignored from consideration as a serious political philosopher in twentieth century. Without a *treatise* to his name, his work was, apparently, lacking.

of political philosophy, all of them appear to exclusively concern themselves with writing essays and treatises: as if to say poetry for thee, but not for me — at least the writing of.

Bloom co-wrote *Shakespeare's Politics*, because Shakespeare's plays could (and should) “provide the necessary lessons concerning human virtue and the proper aspirations of a noble life ... [if] properly read and interpreted”.¹⁰⁴ Bloom and Jaffa “intended [*Shakespeare's Politics*] as first steps in the enterprise of making Shakespeare again the theme of philosophic reflection and a recognized source for the serious study of moral and political problem”.¹⁰⁵ Bloom would also go on to write *Love and Friendship* which, although he claims they are a topic “beyond justice”, brushes up against the boundaries of political philosophy, if not altogether breaching them: here we see Plato, Rousseau, and Nietzsche explored next to Shakespeare, Austen, and Tolstoy.¹⁰⁶ Yet Bloom is not so much calling for poetry, broadly construed, to be understood as a mode in which political philosophy could occur, but rather for specific attention to Shakespeare as “practically our only link with the classic and the past. The future of education has much to do with whether we will be able to cling to him or not”.¹⁰⁷

That Bloom considers Shakespeare to be the last remaining bridge to a past in which philosophy was sovereign above all other disciplines is instructive as to the form in which his approach takes: the proper response to philosophy is philosophy and the modern era is such that poetry can no longer be considered philosophical. This would seem to have something to do with modern poetry as a subjective mode of writing that contains

¹⁰⁴ Allan Bloom and Harry V. Jaffa, *Shakespeare's Politics* (1964; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 2.

¹⁰⁵ Bloom and Jaffa, *Shakespeare's Politics*, 3.

¹⁰⁶ Allan Bloom, *Love and Friendship* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 548.

¹⁰⁷ Bloom, *Love and Friendship*, 271.

many, often contradictory, truths. The implicit suggestion that we are left with is that it is no longer possible to engage in poetry properly understood that is otherwise and, accordingly, if we moderns are to converse with Shakespeare at all, we must do so in another mode.

The idea that there is anything resembling a dominance of the treatise in political philosophy, however, is complicated by the obvious point that the discipline would seem to be marked more by essays than treatises, likely by orders of magnitude. To this point is the fact that many contemporary treatises began as essays — including *A Theory of Justice* which can be traced through a number of Rawls' earlier works, including the 1962 “Justice as Fairness”.¹⁰⁸ Yet, as we saw in Chapters Two and Three, while Peter Laslett was able to see inklings of Rawls' greatness in those essays, but it is not until they are

¹⁰⁸ Which, it should be noted, was different than “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical”, a 1985 essay that further developed his ideas into what would later become *Political Liberalism*, and *Justice of Fairness: A Restatement*, a 2002 posthumously published collection of what were, for the most part, originally lectures (including the aforementioned essay of the same name) that “rectify the more serious faults in *A Theory of Justice* that have obscured the main ideas” and, further, “connect into one unified statement the conception of justice presented in *Theory* and the main ideas found in [his] essays beginning with 1974” (Rawls 2002, xv). In this way, *Justice as Fairness* is not a wholesale revision — or even condensed — version of *A Theory of Justice* (or *Political Liberalism*, for that matter), but neither does it wholly stand alone. James Buchanan ultimately suggests that “Rawls seems so anxious to meet every criticism that he stands in danger of destroying the limited incisiveness of *The Theory of Justice*. It is perhaps often best to allow books, like children, to assume lives of their own” (Buchanan 2002, 490). Ignoring that *Political Liberalism* was as much a child of *A Theory of Justice* as *Justice as Fairness*, even if this is sound advice, Rawls was in good company for not taking it: it does not seem a stretch to suggest that there are more examples than not of thinkers in the political philosophy canon who ended up revising earlier works and ideas, as far back as Plato. The entire developmental thesis with regards to Plato's dialogues is predicated on a belief that Plato's thought changes, in some way, over the course of his career. One does not have to go so far as to say that *Timaeus* is best understood as *Crito: A Restatement* (at least with regards to the soul), but there is some sort of reconsideration going on. If one ignores altogether the development account and embraced the literary nature of Plato's work, this can perhaps be sidestepped to a degree, but the underlying point remains.

transformed into a single, comprehensive tome that he is elevated to the creator of a Great Book.¹⁰⁹

The problem is not so much with the idea of the treatise as a rigorous, formal, and systematic engagement, but rather that by treating the treatise — and its smaller cousin, the essay — as *the* instruments of political philosophy leads us to a what Avner de-Shalit calls “stories about great philosophers and what they wrote rather than the study of the themes and questions that human beings have been asking”.¹¹⁰ It treats these canonical texts as a wall that must be climbed, instead of as a series of lenses through which we can view the world. At the risk of stretching yet another metaphor further than it is useful, it may well be that the Great Books are the lenses that provide the most detail to the world, but they will be worse than useless if citizens are not equipped to wear them. It could even be that those texts are what we should eventually aim towards guiding people through, but what seems to be apparent is that trying to persuade and coax people to the pursuit of political philosophy should no longer be done solely with the modes and assumptions of liberal education. This is not to suggest that we altogether abandon the approaches of Strauss, Skinner, Berlin, or Rawls. There is certainly a place for them all in the discipline, but neither the treatise nor essay alone are sufficient for political philosophy as a practice. The endless debates about which treatises are truly Great and which are pretenders should be set aside, or at least made somewhat less prominent, in favour of debates which texts are best able to stir the souls of our students.

¹⁰⁹ Similarly, it can be noted that the survey in Appendix 1 runs somewhat contrary to the significance of the contemporary academic essay: introductory courses are dominated by the Great Books and texts that resemble them.

¹¹⁰ Avner de-Shalit, *Power to the People: Teaching Political Philosophy in Skeptical Times* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), 105.

FINAL REMARKS

*There will come a time when you believe everything
is finished. That will be the beginning.*

- Louis L'Amour, *Lonely on the Mountain*¹

This has, thus far, been a considerable amount of effort expended to trouble the death of political philosophy as a single, coherent phenomenon. Were this sort of revised understanding to be the sum total of the project, it might be an interesting contribution to the history of political philosophy — and perhaps even a novel one, given the often cursory attention given to these debates — but to what end? Numerous dead metaphors have found their way into common usage and to call for precision in how academics use this particular one is an intellectual extravagance of the worst kind.² Even if this were this the point, it would be more fruitful to instead turn to Nietzsche:

Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins.³

Or Donald Davidson:

Many of us need help if we are to see what the author of a metaphor wanted us to see and what a more sensitive or educated reader grasps. The legitimate function of so-called paraphrase is to make the lazy or ignorant reader have a vision like that of the skilled critic. The critic is, so to speak, in benign competition with the metaphor maker. The critic tries to make his own art easier or more transparent in some respects than the original, but at the same time he tries to reproduce in others some of the effects the original had on him. In doing this, the critic also, and perhaps by the best method at his command, calls attention to the beauty or aptness, the hidden power, of the metaphor itself.⁴

¹ L'Amour Louis, *Lonely on the Mountain* (1980; repr., New York: Bantam Books, 2010): 1.

² Nor this this a new phenomenon. See: R.N. Spann, "Cliches and Other Bad Habits in Political Science," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 1 (1966): 1–16.

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," in *Philosophy and Truth*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (1896; repr., Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979), 84.

⁴ Donald Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean," *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 47.

It would also show a considerable lack of restraint were the sum total of this project to be a return to the death of political philosophy debates merely to insert myself into them long after the fact. Those sorts of excesses are what cause journal editors to reject articles on the grounds of relevance: “We found your essay erudite and insightful, but ultimately failed to discern in it a sufficiently important contribution to current debates in political theory”.

Nor is it sufficient to merely conclude that there is a definitional vagueness at the core of academic political philosophy, because that ambiguity is a disciplinary necessity: political philosophy, because of its political nature, is unlike other pursuits and is a matter of essential contestability. There is an important distinction to be made here: it is more than simply that we have not *yet* arrived at a satisfactory conception of political philosophy or that we have been unable to reach a consensus.⁵ Rather when that contestation ceases, when a particular conception of political philosophy becomes hegemonic, politics is absent. Yet this is not sufficient justification for the rise of political *theory* as a discipline, because it is precisely the fact that they cohere into theories that strips them of their political nature. We would be better off calling the field that emerges once we have given up on political philosophy ‘administrative theory’ — or perhaps sociology, if we are truly desperate.

It is, of course, not a truth universally acknowledged that political philosophy is inherently unstable — and it may be the case that we should understand the Rawlsian

⁵ Norman Barry suggests that the task of writing a book on political thought is difficult because of “the absence of any real agreement as to what the subject is about” (Barry 1995 [1981], viii). He is not alone in this assessment: Andrew Vincent refers to the discipline’s “profound ambiguities”; and James Tully refers to the lack of “universal criteria for adjudicating among” disagreements about the bounds of the discipline (Vincent 2004, 4; Tully 2004, 80).

moment as an attempt to (re)establish disciplinary foundations against those who preferred instability. This was the case with political science more broadly throughout the twentieth century: as Gabriel Almond puts it, the discipline “[took] off in solid growth in the 20th century as political science acquire[d] genuine professional characteristics”.⁶ He charts the rise of academic political science that happened alongside the behavioural revolution and his “progressive-eclectic” disciplinary history emphasizes the “growth and spread of empirical, explanatory quantitative political science”.⁷ When compared with the ‘success’ of its home discipline, it may have been increasingly difficult to justify a version of political philosophy that rested upon Socratic ignorance.⁸ Thus, the return of social contract theory was a hedge against the long night of the first half of the twentieth century — whether it held the shadows of nihilism and existentialism, the various spectres of Marx, or the rise of post-structuralism. As C.B. Macpherson wrote to explain why Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government* was worth returning to during the Cold War:

The Western liberal constitutional state, whose title-deeds Locke was one of the first to establish, is now under attack from new quarters—from the communist world and the third world so that the liberal state is thrown back on the defensive and glad to enlist in its support any plain hard-hitting case in its favour.⁹

What makes [the *Second Treatise*] especially valuable in both respects is that it is a case not only for the liberal state but also for liberal property institutions. Locke’s case for the limited constitutional state is largely designed to support his

⁶ Gabriel A. Almond, “Political Science: The History of the Discipline,” in *A New Handbook of Political Science* (1996; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 50.

⁷ Almond, 74.

⁸ “Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is,—for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows; I neither know nor think that I know. In this latter particular, then, I seem to have slightly the advantage of him” (Plato, *Apology*, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Harold Fowler, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 63e-64a).

⁹ C.B. Macpherson, “Introduction,” in *Second Treatise of Government*, by John Locke, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980), vii.

argument for an individual right to unlimited private property. Defenders of the modern liberal state see, or sense, that that right is at the heart of their state. And nobody has made a more persuasive case for that right.¹⁰

With barbarians perceived to be at the gate, there was a pressing need to properly shore up the intellectual foundations of Western liberalism — and an unmoored conception of political philosophy was ill-suited to the task. The elevation of Rawls' *Theory of Justice* may have had as much to do with rallying around the flag in a time of crisis as it did the strength of the text itself.¹¹

The death thesis is concerning not because of the possibility that political philosophy could die nor due to the incoherence of the debates of that death, but rather because of the implication that there could be any meaningful resolution to it. This stability may have served propriety, but doing so was also a superficial end to the debates around the death of political philosophy. This is more than simply the suggestion that those debates ended prematurely, because the essentially contested nature of political philosophy ensures that, like all political things, it *cannot* end — at least not if it is to remain political. It may be the case that the boundaries of physics or chemistry have a certain fluidity to them such that they are subject to renegotiation, but there is no inherent contradiction between the fixed possibility of the sciences and the content therein. When the boundaries of political philosophy become entrenched, when open questions are reformulated into rigid answers, when there is no further need for thinking as ideas become facts and all

¹⁰ Macpherson, "Introduction", vii–viii.

¹¹ Strauss' own concerns echo this language, even if he would not have rallied around Rawls: "[t]he Western tradition is threatened today as it never was heretofore. For it is now threatened not only from without but from within as well. It is in a state of disintegration. Those among us who believe in the Western tradition ... must therefore rally around the flag of the Western tradition" (Strauss 1989b, 72).

that is left are administrative details, when the pursuit itself becomes hegemonic, no longer are we in the realm of political philosophy. Perhaps this is why so many eschew the label of ‘philosopher’ and academic institutions have transitioned to ‘theory’ and ‘thought’ — as a frank admission that we have succumbed to the demands of propriety.¹² We would rather have a place in proper society, in the halls of the university, than practice political philosophy.

This reading of the death thesis would suggest that it was a continuation of healthy debate about the nature of the discipline, but the context in which it occurred — and the turn towards Rawls — reveals a tendency, in the name of propriety, to conflate academic political philosophy with political philosophy in general. As this project has shown, in the post-war anglophone scholarship they were frequently regarded as the same — at least rhetorically.¹³ Further, this conflation largely endures to this day. Even if we

¹² This differs somewhat from Hannah Arendt’s avoidance of the title: “The expression ‘political philosophy,’ which I avoid, is extremely burdened by tradition. When I talk about these things, academically or nonacademically, I always mention that there is a vital tension between philosophy and politics. That is, between man as a thinking being and man as an acting being, there is a tension that does not exist in natural philosophy, for example. Like everyone else, the philosopher can be objective with regard to nature, and when he says what he thinks about it he speaks in the name of all mankind. But he cannot be objective or neutral with regard to politics. Not since Plato! ... There is a kind of enmity against all politics in most philosophers, with very few exceptions ... ‘I want no part in this enmity,’ that’s it exactly! I want to look at politics, so to speak, with eyes unclouded by philosophy” (Arendt 2005, 2). It also differs from Strauss’ similar avoidance, as explored in Chapter Four.

¹³ Alfred North Whitehead’s 1929 assessment of philosophy — while I admit that there is a distinction between philosophy and political philosophy (without delving into what that distinction might be), the sentiment is certainly widespread in the latter (sub)field — is interesting here: “[t]he safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato” (Whitehead 1985 [1929], 39). There is, however, something strange about this description: consider that footnotes are themselves an early modern invention — and, what is more, altogether absent from Plato’s dialogues. Acknowledging that Whitehead was not intending for ‘footnotes’ to be taken literally, his ‘safest’ characterization is already embedded in the language and tools of the modern academic discipline. This is not a substantive criticism of Whitehead, as much of European thought is in Plato’s shadow. There are

accept Strauss' claim that "political philosophy appeared at a knowable time in the recorded past" — by his measure, with the Socratic project in Ancient Greece¹⁴ — it is undeniable that political philosophy predates the twentieth century university¹⁵, if not academia altogether.¹⁶ Academic political philosophy seems to be particularly narrowly defined, finding its proper expression in monographs, journal articles, and monological lectures. This might not present a problem for political philosophy in general — in much the same way that it is of no concern to chemists when children play with chemistry sets without any regard for scientific principles — but because we were so preoccupied with whether or not academic political philosophy could be saved, we did not stop to think if it should be.

complications and nuances as to what exactly that means, but both his breadth and influence are undeniable. This differs significantly from Rawls and *A Theory of Justice*: while his thought was certainly influential, there was — and continues to be — a great deal of political philosophy that owes/d him no intellectual debt. Nor was *A Theory of Justice* as wide in scope as Plato's dialogues (if nothing else, *Political Liberalism* shows this: a single work does not a corpus make). None of this should be taken as a statement about the quality of Rawls' work, rather I am simply continuing to draw attention the hyperbole that surrounded a single text. There is a degree to which it makes sense to, from our far-removed vantage with the advantage of history, speak so grandly about Plato — even if the point is debatable. There is an absurdity to make similarly bold claims about Rawls within months or even years of publication. Much like granting Barack Obama the Nobel Peace Prize ten months into his presidency, canonizing Rawls before the ink had dried on *A Theory of Justice* appears to be a triumph of hopefully immediacy over a full measure of merit. That it may later have been (or still might be) proven to be accurate does not make the initial claim any less absurd.

Regarding the footnote as distinct from marginalia: "We will assume that Gutenberg and his first printed books had to appear before the arrival of the first footnote. Scholars of the Middle Ages were just as choleric as their later colleagues, but their disagreements, their anger, could be easily expressed in manuscripts by handwritten comments inserted directly into the text or scrawled in the left or right margins. It was the printed book that brought a need for order and predictability, space allocation, and the formal apparatus of reference marks" (Zerby 2002, 18).

¹⁴ As Zuckert and Zuckert say, "Socratic philosophy, unlike the pre-Socratic variety as parodied in Aristophanes's *Clouds*, is thoroughly aware of its dependence on the city ... The Socratic philosopher is, in a word, public-spirited" (Zuckert and Zuckert 2014, 339).

¹⁵ It could be suggested that political philosophy emerges with Plato's Academy rather than with the Socratic project itself, but there is clearly a distinction to be made between the School of Athens and contemporary industrial academia.

¹⁶ Strauss, "What Is Political Philosophy?," 7.

It might be noted that Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind* represents precisely the kind of break from academia that is possible when one goes beyond the proper treatise: as Saul Bellow writes in the forward, *Closing* "is not the book of a professor, but that of a thinker, but that of a thinker who is willing to take the risks more frequently taken by writers. It is risky in a book of ideas to speak in one's own voice".¹⁷ Whether Bloom's assessment of higher education is correct — or even sufficiently rigorous — is beside the point: it forced a great many readers into a philosophical position and provoked serious responses, even (perhaps especially) from its detractors.

To inspire thoughtfulness on political things, rather than the recitation of an instructor's views, should be the goal of all political philosophers. The language here reveals a conception of political philosophy that is empty without an earnest attempt to bring it to others, a political philosophy that is dead without persuasion. Yet persuasion does not begin with oneself, but with the audience — whether intended or accidental. As John le Carré reminds us, "[t]here is no true conversation, not without a quarrel".¹⁸ What is interesting about Bloom's *Closing* is that part of its success has to do with who it was aimed towards: an intellectual but not academic audience. If he had attempted to directly persuade his peers in the academy, he would have likely written in a very different mode — although, admittedly, it is to some of them that some of his complaints are directed, but not in such a way that suggests a possible dialogue. Further, it seems unlikely that it would have had inspired the same level of response had he approached the topic in the

¹⁷ Saul Bellow, "Forward," in *Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 12.

¹⁸ John le Carré, *The Honourable Schoolboy* (1977; repr., New York: Pocket Books, 2002): 266.

codes and conventions of the discipline: had it merely been a poor quality academic text, it might have been ignored.¹⁹ In this, one thinks of Martha Nussbaum's review of the text: "How good a philosopher, then, is Allan Bloom? The answer is, we cannot say, and we are given no reason to think him one at all".²⁰ It is precisely the fact of his popular success that forced academic responses, suggesting that it was made for an audience beyond the formal discipline. This is a point that Nussbaum herself makes, which then become the grounds upon which she further criticizes Bloom's argument and its implications.

What is surprising is that, even if Nussbaum is correct in her assessment of the intentions behind *Closing*, Bloom does not appear to advocate taking this approach with his classroom audience. By relying on an ideal conception of liberal education, he gives up on the majority of students: the structure in which he finds himself teaching is flawed, but his seemingly absolute commitment to the 'true' form of education prevents him from accommodating those flaws. That might, of course, be an impossible task, but then so too is his own understanding of political philosophy itself.²¹ We may be best served by reading between the lines and, pairing the argument of *Closing* with the form it takes, interpret Bloom as having eschewed the university as a pedagogical site in favour of society at large — or, at least, its intellectuals. Even if Bloom does not altogether renounce academ-

¹⁹ It is perhaps too much to hope that poor quality academic texts would not be published at all. It would, of course, be absurd to hope that they all received the same level of scrutiny as a doctoral dissertation.

²⁰ Martha Nussbaum, "Undemocratic Vistas," in *Philosophical Interventions: Reviews 1986-2011* (1987; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 45.

²¹ At which point it seems best to invoke another twentieth century philosopher: "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better." (Beckett 1996, 89). I can think of no better articulation of the Herculean task before the political philosophy and the educator alike.

ia or the classroom, his critique offers few clues as to how to teach in the contemporary Western university. There are, of course, certain inferences that can be made from the fact that he refers to Plato's *Republic* as "the book on education", but it is a vast chasm between that text and the world in which we teach.²²

This project has been primarily motivated by a selfish desire: to see political philosophy training continue. As I hope has been clear throughout, I find little to support the notion that we are in danger of losing political philosophy itself. This is not to suggest that we will always have the most serious or thoughtful engagements with political truths, but I firmly believe that the attempt will continue as long as there are human beings.²³ Political philosophy training as a formal discipline rooted in expertise and history has no such guarantees — nor, perhaps, does it need to. It is obviously not the case that political philosophy *requires* the institutional trappings of academia lest we would be forced to jettison the historical figure of Socrates, Plato's entire corpus, much of Machiavelli and Nietzsche, some of Rousseau and Marx — all on the grounds of being insufficiently academic.²⁴ There are legitimate reasons why one might choose not to read, teach, or write about these thinkers, but there are few, if any, justifications as to altogether excluding

²² Bloom, *Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*, 381.

²³ If political philosophers are concerned that the human being is at risk — and there have long been serious arguments as to why that might be the case — then there may well be a responsibility to set aside the study and practice of political philosophy in favour of escaping such a fate. The world itself must endure, even for those who wish to retreat from it. Barring, of course, a pairing of political philosophy with apocalyptic thinking.

²⁴ This ejected work could be given some sort of heritage status such that studying it would be permitted as foundational for establishing academic political philosophy, but its admission would be on historical grounds rather than merit. These thinkers and their works that predated academic political philosophy — whenever it emerged — would be understood as its forbearers. Studying them could not rightly even be called a history of political philosophy, but rather would be best described in vague, open-ended terminology: perhaps '*history of political thought*'.

them from consideration as political philosophy. Even if the academy is not necessary for political philosophy to occur, it is reasonable to believe that there is something valuable in the formal discipline. The task before those of us who share that belief is to maintain that core value while also finding a way to keep the discipline alive in contemporary institutions. The problem is that, absent a clear understanding (if not articulation) of what precisely is valuable about political philosophy, this desire is a feeling rather than a coherent justification for the discipline. Appeals to a comprehensive liberal education project are not particularly helpful here, because little political philosophy training takes place within that kind of structure — and, even if it did, political philosophy as a subfield of political science does not.

One obvious solution is to, in recognizing this incompatibility, admit defeat: to give up on the vast multitude of spaces in which political philosophy training is said to occur, but ultimately does not. This is where we are left if we follow advocates of recovering liberal education who present no meaningful plans for achieving that end. There is, of course, good reason for their failure to offer such a programme: they feel unfit to the task. They are not political philosophers — not even poor ones. Instead they carry the fire to ensure that the etchings of prior Greats are available for the next political philosopher who emerges. In doing so, this echoes Thomas Carlyle and his Great Men of History:

[N]o time need have gone to ruin, could it have *found* a man great enough, a man wise and good enough: wisdom to discern truly what the Time wanted, valour to lead it on the right road thither; these are the salvation of any Time. But I liken common languid Times, with their unbelief, distress, perplexity, with their languid doubting characters and embarrassed circumstances, impotently crumbling down into ever worse distress towards final ruin; —all this I liken to dry dead fuel, waiting for the lightning out of Heaven that shall kindle it. The great man, with his free force direct of God's own hand, is the lightning. His word is the wise

healing word which all can believe in. All blazes round him now, when he has once struck on it, into fire like his own.²⁵

There is a certain degree of romance to the notion that one's work, rather than being a failure to overcome the problems of the times, will eventually serve as kindling for greatness. While there is humility in such an admission, it is quite unlike the Socratic modesty that it seems modelled on: Plato-Socrates gives the reader an impression of legitimate ignorance — and while there are moments throughout the dialogues where we might be skeptical of how ignorant the character of Socrates truly is, the form and tenor of the dialogues tends towards avoiding answers.

What lurks behind the death of political philosophy debates is an uncomfortable admission: that the discipline is not very convincing. Instead of admitting that this as a problem of method and approach, the tendency seems to be to follow Michael Oakeshott's suggestion that "[t]o popularize philosophy is at once to debase it" — or, one step further, to altogether reject it as political philosophy.²⁶ By ignoring culpability in the problem of persuasion, this approach political philosophy training sounds like Principal Skinner: "Am I out of touch? No, it's the children who are wrong".²⁷ We can see this theme throughout Plato's dialogues: from the deaf ears upon which Socrates' defense falls in *Apology* to the breakdown of the conversation in *Protagoras* to the need for the Noble Lie in *Republic*. It is perhaps in the *Gorgias* and the obstinance of Callicles²⁸

²⁵ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History* (1840; repr., New York: Wiley & Halsted, 1857), 11.

²⁶ Oakeshott, Michael. *Experience and Its Modes*. 1933. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986: 3.

²⁷ Jeffrey Lynch, "The Boy Who Knew Too Much," *The Simpsons* (Fox, May 5, 1994).

²⁸ For more on this point, see: George Klosko, "The Insufficiency of Reason in Plato's *Gorgias*," *The Western Political Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (December 1983): 579–95; Jessica Moss, "The Doctor

where this is best articulated: “It seems to me, I cannot tell how, that your statement is right, Socrates, but I share the common feeling; I do not quite believe you”.²⁹ Belief — or, in this case, disbelief — can overcome reason. The poets are evicted from the City in Speech not simply because of their tendency towards falsehood, but because they risk destabilizing the City’s founding falsehoods.³⁰ That Socrates’ in the *Gorgias* does not simply admit defeat, but rather takes to the argument with new energy — and a turn away from reason towards myth — seems instructive here. It is political philosophy as a practice connected not simply to truth, but to matters of belief and persuasion. It is about convincing others of that rightness. In fact, it is not that the political philosopher must be engaged first in the pursuit of truth and only then attempt to bring others to that truth, but rather that the pursuit of political truths is always already a cooperative exercise.

This is not a retreat into absolute relativism wherein the political philosopher is forced to admit the legitimacy of all truths, but rather a simple acceptance of the fact that even the most carefully reasoned political truth is practically meaningless if others are not persuaded by it. Political philosophy, if it is more than simply philosophizing about politics and a political activity in its own right, *requires* that we consider the problem of participation: What can draw people to engage in political questions about the world in which they want to live? Addressing this is, above all, the task of political philosophy and

and the Pastry Chef: Pleasure and Persuasion in Plato’s *Gorgias*,” *Ancient Philosophy* 27, no. 2 (2007): 229–49; and especially Nicholas Robert Thorne, “The Unity of the *Gorgias*” (Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2013). As Thorne says, “The problem brought to light in the course of the *Gorgias* is essentially mixed up with a deepening sense of the non-rational” (Thorne 2013, 231).

²⁹ Plato, *Gorgias*, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Harold Fowler, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 513c.

³⁰ It is interesting to note that Socrates never explains why this would allow the Noble Lie to endure absolutely, but that is because he does not have to: his interlocutors accept it.

to fixate on truths abstracted from whether they are politically salient is to retreat from the world.

The inadequacy of relying on the canon — even if we are to update it in something similar to the manner of Ronald Beiner, among many others — is that it does not begin from the perspective and capacities of the intended audience. It presents, as Avner de-Shalit suggests, “the history of ideas as a story about ‘great authors’ or ‘genius scholars’ who can cope with [the fundamental political] questions”.³¹ To escape this problem, de-Shalit advocates for reorienting disciplinary training “around *themes* rather than big names. In that way the students will be encouraged to see these questions as eternal moral questions, which they discuss and think about in every day”.³² While this is explicitly a reference to the classroom experience, it fits into a broader reorientation of political philosophy that suggests “what people think and *the theories they hold* can be the philosopher’s starting point” — and de-Shalit’s conception of public reflective equilibrium “aims to produce practical knowledge”, not simply for the philosopher but for the public of which she is a part.³³ It suggests a conception of political philosophy that is in accordance with (and in service to) deliberative democracy, such that its practitioners “view reason as communicative rather than as a solitary or abstract activity”.³⁴ In relation to the classroom, he calls for this training to “promote critical thinking” and, further, to be aimed towards the cultivation and “empowering” of healthy citizens.³⁵

³¹ Avner de-Shalit, *Power to the People: Teaching Political Philosophy in Skeptical Times* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), 165.

³² de-Shalit, *Power to the People*, 166.

³³ de-Shalit, *Power to the People*, 95; 102.

³⁴ de-Shalit, *Power to the People*, 136.

³⁵ de-Shalit, *Power to the People*, 145; 12.

This approach avoids some of the structural problems faced by those who take a canon-centric approach to updating political philosophy training: in adding the twentieth century to the already existing canon of political philosophy, thinkers and texts must inevitably be eliminated so as to accommodate the limitations of a 13-week semester.³⁶ This does not even get into debates about modifying the existing canon: if one wants to teach Hume, do they cut Machiavelli?; in adding Christine de Pizan, do we condense Aristotle, or Aquinas, or Hobbes?³⁷ This, of course, would be no problem at all if there were a perfect correlation between classroom limitations and the canon, but even the most restrictive list of Great Works leaves us with more readings than there is time. To add additional texts, we must make accompanying subtractions. All training programmes require hard choices about what to include, but the placement of political philosophy within political science makes those choices harder still as there is even less hope of future opportunities to fill the gaps. In granting primacy to the themes of political philosophy, rather than the thinkers, de-Shalit has considerably more leeway in what is assigned: it is not a matter of a text's inherent 'greatness', but rather its ability to provoke or draw out the theme(s) at hand.

³⁶ Speaking of political philosophy training as a single-semester course is not meant to suggest that this is necessarily the case — nor that it would be the ideal form for this training to take. Instead it should be understood as an extreme but instructive example from which we can draw out and compare.

³⁷ In my first attempting at crafting and teaching a "History of Political Thought" course, I tried to weigh the need to meet departmental guidelines for a class that explored "Western political thought from classical times to the Renaissance" while also privileging the vantage point of the students. It is for this reason that I taught both Sophocles' *Antigone* and Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies* as texts that have fairly explicit gendered dimensions to them. I also explicitly assigned popular songs to each week, in an attempt to provide the students with something familiar that related — even loosely — to the material at hand. The hope was that this could be used as a *lingua franca* for particularly difficult aspects of the texts. Appendix 3 is a copy of the syllabus for that course with the weekly listenings included.

John Gunnell suggests that this is already implicitly the case, at least with regards to the initial formulation of American political science: “the history of political ideas was presented chronologically as moving toward culmination in American self-government”.³⁸ The classics, in this articulation, could be understood as speaking to the ‘theme’ of liberal democracy (and its triumph). That the twentieth century discipline turned towards a critique of that theme did not, in his account, escape this problem. Instead the discipline reoriented itself to “a much more dramatic and structured tale but now one detailing and explaining the decline of modern politics and political thought”.³⁹ The constructed nature of these approaches to the discipline does not in itself disqualify them, but rather highlights that the traditional canon has largely implicit outcomes and ideas that themselves need to be understood.

De-Shalit, however, takes this notion further and towards a more radical approach: “a teacher should start with questions, probably questions that the students would raise, about specific political issues that bother them or the general public at that time. The teacher could then show how these questions relate to broader questions”.⁴⁰ While the use of traditional texts *might* have a role to play in this, he makes explicitly clear that the goal of his political philosophy training is not simply a form of self-improvement. Approaching political philosophy training through his public reflective equilibrium involves encouraging students “to listen to the public, and to derive items for their works

³⁸ John G. Gunnell, “History of Political Philosophy as a Discipline,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, ed. George Klosko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 62.

³⁹ John G. Gunnell, “History of Political Philosophy as a Discipline,” 66.

⁴⁰ de-Shalit, *Power to the People*, 172.

and research from the public deliberation that surrounds them”.⁴¹ Political philosophy become a form of translation, in which its practitioners take the immediate and parochial concerns that they encounter in the world and try to uncover the underlying principles at stake, whether they be truly universal and cosmopolitan or simply more extensive than at first articulation. It is not that de-Shalit wants to altogether throw out the long history of the academic discipline: “I do not expect philosophers to become politicians and activists; rather I am looking for a way to make philosophers’ texts and teaching more relevant to those directly involved in politics”.⁴² The discipline of political philosophy has something to offer the world. The task before us is to find out how to make those offerings gratefully received.

This is no easy task. Nor is it something I propose to resolve in a few concluding words. I do, however, believe this project hints towards potential avenues of exploration. For starters, there needs to be a better understanding of the gap between the academic discipline of political philosophy and the worldly practice of political philosophy. This is not possible if we continue to focus our attention solely on the traditional canon nor debates about whether someone is truly ‘great’ enough to be considered alongside them. Where, beyond the ivory tower, can political philosophy be found? One of the most thought-provoking pieces I have read on American conservatism since the election of Donald Trump was from Frank Wilhoit: “Conservatism consists of exactly one proposition, to wit: There must be in-groups whom the law protect[s] but does not bind, alongside out-groups whom the law binds but does not protect. There is nothing more or else to

⁴¹ de-Shalit, *Power to the People*, 173.

⁴² de-Shalit, *Power to the People*, xvi.

it, and there never has been, in any place or time”.⁴³ Setting aside the content of the statement, what is noteworthy about this remark is that it is found not in an academic journal or a university-published treatise, but as a comment on a blog post.⁴⁴

The point is not that academics should throw out our copies of *Republic* or *Leviathan* and attend solely to pseudonymous blogs, but rather to consider that something is lost by our failure to recognize other sites and spaces as potential avenues of political wisdom — if not as modes that we ourselves should consider engaging in. Even if one is committed to the existing canon as the absolute best works of political philosophy, the quality is a moot point absent a convincing argument as to its merits and why it should be read in the first place. What seems clear is that the discipline of political philosophy, if it is to continue, must find a way to relevance. The failure to pursue such a path will not lead to the death of political philosophy, but may result in an increasingly marginalized place within academia — and perhaps this would be best. If the discipline of political philosophy cannot come up with a compelling purpose that it serves in society at large or the field of political science in which it is housed, then maybe it should be left entirely in the hands of amateurs. After all, is there anyone who would argue that the practice of political philosophy is better off under the structures of peer review, publish or perish, and supervision of arrogant doctoral students?

As flippant and snarky as that phrasing may be, the thread that runs through this whole project — from the belief that political philosophy *as a practice* could ever die to

⁴³ Wilhoit, Frank. March 3 2018. Comment on Henry Farrell, “The Travesty of Liberalism,” Blog, *Crooked Timber*, March 21, 2018, <http://crookedtimber.org/2018/03/21/liberals-against-progressives/#comment-729288>.

⁴⁴ With thanks to Jessica Price (@Delafina777) for the source.

the incoherence of the initial debates about its health to the uncritical acceptance of Rawls as the reanimator of the tradition to the almost universal turn towards proper political philosophy to the entrenchment of liberal education in institutions that are distinctly divorced from those principles — what has followed through all of that is a growing unease that the very people who were best-suited to defend political philosophy, to advocate for thoughtfulness about political things, somehow lost their way. They started to believe that the endpoint of their journey, and the guideposts which they followed, were worth defending more than the journey itself.⁴⁵

To borrow from Isaiah Berlin, the condition of perfect liberal education is the play of idle fancy.⁴⁶ Of course, I come not to bury Caesar, but to praise him. The reality is that we are far more likely to lose political philosophy in political science than to ever see a true revival of liberal education, if such a thing was ever truly born to the world and is not merely some fantastical hope. If the discipline were somehow subtly aimed towards the realization of liberal education, directing society back to favouring such a programme through esoteric means, the orientation towards the Great Books might make more sense. It would be reasonable, though, to express skepticism at the existence of such a plan, given the current state of affairs. At the very least, it would not be out of hand to question its efficacy, unless Ronald Beiner was wrong in his conclusion to *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*:

⁴⁵ There is an irony to the fact that Leo Strauss' own work avoids this problem, given his willingness to play and think outside of the tradition — even while proclaiming the value of the tradition.

⁴⁶ See: Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, ed. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (1958; repr., London: Chatto & Windus, 1997).

I do not want to suggest that large issues of war and justice were not also in play in the years leading up to 1971, but they are not quite comparable in terms of what was at stake. Nor does one want to be too quick to say that the world should go to hell just so that theory will raise its ambitions.⁴⁷

Perhaps we do want to be precisely that quick — if the subtleties of contemporary political philosophy training are not so much a matter of fiddling while Rome burns, but rather somehow contributing to the blaze. This is, of course, an absurd suggestion.⁴⁸ Yet, if not, then the question remains as to what good is served by a small measure of liberal education.

An easy enough response to my concerns about liberal education is that surely some small measure of liberal education is better than none at all. Yet what good is having crafted (or, for the humble practitioners, stumbled upon) the grandest edifice, if almost no one ever visits it? It is, of course, reasonable enough to ask what number would be sufficient: how well-worn do the steps of what I earlier called a necropolis need to be before it is worthy of having been built? That should be one of the guiding questions of the discipline. As has likely been apparent throughout, I am deeply embedded in a pluralist conception of political philosophy as fundamental to our very nature as human beings, but one need not be to arrive at the same problem: even if there are absolute standards,

⁴⁷ Ronald Beiner, *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 234.

⁴⁸ If for no other reason than that would display an astounding ignorance of the lessons of the twentieth century by those perhaps best suited to remembering them. As Isaiah Berlin reminds us, “when ideas are neglected by those who ought to attend to them — that is to say, those who have been trained to think critically about ideas — they sometimes acquire an unchecked momentum and an irresistible power over multitudes of men that may grow too violent to be affected by rational criticism” (Berlin 1997, 192). Yet again, this privileges political philosophers as particularly (if not uniquely) able to stave off the worst tendencies of human beings. A systematic investigation into this disciplinary hero-complex might be fruitful in understanding why political philosophers have failed to do so.

values, and truths, that there has been a widespread failure for them to take root should be troubling to anyone who is committed to living in the world of others. Not merely troubling in that it is worthy of lamentation, but in a reassessment of disciplinary methods and modes: whether the goal is the realization of a particular truth or political philosophy as a lived practice, the discipline of political philosophy, with its dwindling stature and relevance, is poorly situated for all but the fortunate few who accidentally stumble upon it — and, even then, only those who likewise have the good fortune to have been adequately prepared that happens.⁴⁹

To overcome that, I am ultimately advocating for the discipline of political philosophy to embrace the kind of impropriety that goes back to the Socratic core of the discipline and (re)imagine the political philosopher as a translator of public ideas about political truths. In doing so, we would have to ask serious questions about whether the discipline, as it exists, is sufficient preparation for such a task.⁵⁰ This project suggests that it is not, but that suggestion is not a proof. The hope here is that I have been systematic enough to have arrived at generalizable knowledge, so that we can reorient ourselves and better assess whether the discipline of political philosophy has lost its orbit — and, if so, how to find our way back.

⁴⁹ I strongly suspect that even the most devout advocates of the Great Books would not be *satisfied* with such a situation, but rather have resigned themselves to the fact of it: not knowing how to remedy it, they have resolved themselves do the best with what they find. Of course, it would be obtuse in the extreme to suggest that, say, Allan Bloom *gave up* on the problem: by all accounts, his career was marked by continued thought towards overcoming it.

⁵⁰ Such as whether the status quo prepares our students (or ourselves) to recognize the core that might be lurking behind the public practices of political philosophy — and, further, whether it equips them with the tools necessary to engage in the public world.

APPENDICES

If I ruled the world, or at least a publishing company, all books would contain as much supplementary information as possible. Nonfiction, fiction—doesn't matter. Every work would have an appendix filled with diagrams, background information, digressions and anecdata. And of course, maps. Lots and lots of maps.

- Victoria Johnson, "The Maps We Wandered Into As Kids"¹

APPENDIX 1: Political Philosophy in Political Science

Political science as it is taught both acknowledges and lives within the Canadian context: it would be all but impossible for a student to go through a political science program in Canada without some — and often a great deal of — engagement with the institutions, norms, and social structures of Canadian politics. If the teaching of political philosophy² acknowledges our distinctly local experience, then it would seem difficult to justify a categorical exclusion of Indigenous political philosophy. If, however, that training is rooted in a universal understanding, it becomes a trickier matter of explaining how Indigenous political philosophy fits into that universal.

In 2008, as a result of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to, among other things, produce "a report including recommendations to the Government of Canada concerning the [Indian residential schools] system and experience ... and the ongoing legacy of the

¹ Victoria Johnson, "The Maps We Wandered Into As Kids," *The Awl*, February 7, 2012, <https://www.theawl.com/2012/02/the-maps-we-wandered-into-as-kids/>.

² For consistency with the rest of this project, unless explicitly referencing course titles, I have stuck with the term 'political philosophy' even when individual departments use political theory or thought. Again, while each of these terms are meant to identify distinct concepts — and are contested sites of meaning even within those particular concepts — there is a general agreement that the terms are roughly synonymous *for the purposes of course content*.

residential schools”.³ As part of its final report, the Commission issued a call to “integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into [post-secondary] classrooms” (Truth and Reconciliation Canada 2015, 7). The Canadian Political Science Association struck a reconciliation committee to “develop a plan for responding to the challenges and opportunities the reconciliation process will entail” (Abu-Laban 2016). While the committee released preliminary resources for “Introduction to Politics and Introduction to Canadian Politics courses [because t]hese courses are the gateways to political science for most of our students” in March 2019, there remains work to be done with regards to political theory (Canadian Political Science Association Reconciliation Committee 2018). What might it look like to ‘reconcile’ political theory courses to meet these new challenges and opportunities?⁴

Understanding whether this is desirable — or even possible — requires first understanding the current status of political theory training. Writing in an attempt to understand North America as distinct from the European experience, George Grant suggested that, “[w]hen we go into the Rockies we may have the sense that gods are there. But if so, they cannot manifest themselves to us as ours. They are the gods of another race, and we cannot know them because of what we are, and what we did” (Grant 1991, 17). When we wander into the Acropolis or eavesdrop on the dialogues, whose gods are being manifest? Does political theory in Canada have a uniquely Canadian expression? Can it? If not,

³ Schedule N of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, art. 1(f)

⁴ Although this may be the latest articulation of the question, it is of course not particularly new: critical race and gender scholars have addressed it for decades; there is an increasing consideration for ‘queering’ the canon of late; and the recent Rhodes Must Fall movement is a continuation of these concerns. It all aims away from a list of ‘greats’ and towards a question of whether what we teach meet the needs of the students that we teach — or whether our students feel that it does?

there may be no space for reconciling political theory: it would be a discipline rooted in the idea that to focus on Canada is politics and to focus on Truth is philosophy. Although individual instructors already know the contours of their own political theory pedagogy, it does not necessarily follow that there is knowledge in what is being taught within the broader field. Having a clearer picture of that training would be helpful in defending the subfield against a variety of external influences that may be contrary to the discipline itself — what Matthew J. Moore labels as “effort[s] to pluralize political theory”, which is a reality to consider in contemporary universities beyond simply an adherence to disciplinary principles (Moore 2011, 104). Finally, a snapshot of the wider discipline might be a helpful tool for instructors to use in comparing their own pedagogical practices and would allow, if nothing else, a personal assessment of whether we have fallen into the trap of simply reproducing that which we ourselves were taught.

While political theory comes in many forms, this appendix focuses on it as an academic discipline and a narrow slice of that discipline: that which occurs as a part of undergraduate political science training — and, narrower still, only introductory-level courses.⁵ These introductory courses are important for two reasons: first, many institutions make them a political science degree requirement which is a seeming admission that political theory is a necessary component of political science in a way unlike any other subfield⁶ (although these courses are often the only formal engagement with political

⁵ Political theory can certainly be found elsewhere in academia (and, although well outside the scope of this paper, beyond its walls): most obviously in departments of philosophy, but also, at some institutions, departments of communications, gender studies, sociology, or economics — among many others.

⁶ As Richard G. Stevens notes, this has been something a tradition in political science — particularly in the United States — “as [the] discipline developed at the end of the nineteenth and the

theory that students receive); and, second, these courses are foundational in both a practical and technical sense for understanding what the discipline itself is — and, as important, what it is not. Divisions established at these introductory levels (whether between ancients and moderns or Western theorists and non-Western philosophers, to give two prominent examples) are often replicated in advanced courses, becoming entrenched categories in both training and research; and the thinkers and texts presented in these survey courses return at the upper levels with more depth and nuance. In this way, these courses provide the shape of things to come which inform how (and, in fact, whether) students approach political theory more broadly.

Overview

Each political science department structures their program differently which can make it difficult to directly compare the ways that they approach political theory. Both Dalhousie and McGill universities treat it as simply any other subfield such as comparative, international, or Canadian politics, in that no one is explicitly required for degree completion. Other institutions insist on some form of introductory political theory training, but vary between a single semester, a yearlong course, or multiple individual courses. The University of Ottawa's requirements are the most extensive: at the 2nd year level students take both "Introduction to Political Thought" and "Modern Political Thought I", plus in the 3rd year "Modern Political Thought II". The University of Victoria offers "Introduction to Political Theory" as a 2nd year elective, but the department's required polit-

beginning of the twentieth century, [students were] required also to take a two-semester sequence in the history of political philosophy — or, as it came to be called, 'political theory'" (Stevens 2011, xvi). Likewise, as Andrew Rehfeld reminds us, "Penn State's decision to eliminate political theory set off existential angst about the status of political theory in the discipline" (Rehfeld 2010, 465).

ical theory course is one of three survey courses in 3rd year: "Ancient and Medieval Political Thought"; "Early Modern Political Thought"; and "Post-Enlightenment Political Thought". Further, some departments have 1st year courses that serve as a broad introduction to political science which might include a section on political theory. In some instances, these courses are prerequisites either for degree completion or further study in the department, but they are also often simply electives. Finally, unlike the standard approach across the rest of Canada, the introductory courses in Quebec are available as 1st year offerings — which would appear to be a by-product of the CEGEPs system.⁷

For this examination, I have chosen to focus on the post-secondary institutions

which offer doctoral studies in political

theory and, as such, can claim to have a certain degree of expertise in the subfield.

At these 16 departments⁸ there are a total of 29 courses that fit within this introductory parameter. Table 1 shows the breakdown of

Course Type	Calendar Occurrences	Total Offered	Syllabus Data
Single Semester	6	80	56
Two Semester (Split)	18	114	92
Two Semester (Yearlong)	5	40	39
Total	29	234	187

⁷ While there are important differences between Quebec's post-secondary institutions and those in the rest of Canada, I do not believe the disparity is so great as to merit excluding the former's data from this investigation. As seen below, however, there is clearly a disparity in how political theory is introduced in these regional contexts which may partially be explained by the CEGEPs.

⁸ Carleton University, Concordia University, Dalhousie University, McGill University, Queen's University, Simon Fraser University, Université du Québec à Montréal, Université Laval, University of Alberta, University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, University of Ottawa, University of Toronto, University of Victoria, University of Western Ontario, and York University.

those course offerings in a five year period from 2011 to 2016 and also includes the number of courses for which data was available. By consulting university websites⁹ and contacting individual instructors, I was able to collect the texts used, if not the individual selections, for almost 80% of these courses in this period.¹⁰ This window is not meant to be taken as an exhaustive understanding of the discipline, but rather a brief snapshot of political theory education in the lead-up to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission prior to its call to action. It is still too soon to see if changes have occurred in these classrooms, but this data provides a meaningful foundation upon which to compare and build upon.

TABLE 2: Thinker Occurrences

Rank	Thinker	Unique Occurrences	% of All Courses	Moore's More Rank	Moore's Less Rank
1	Plato	126	67.38	1	8
2	Hobbes	114	60.96	20	5
3	Locke	107	57.22	18	4
4	Machiavelli	101	54.01	11	19
5	Aristotle	96	51.34	2	20
6	Rousseau	92	49.2	17	16
7	Engels, Marx*	88	47.06	---	---
8	Marx	59	31.55	3	2
9	Mill	47	25.13	25	13
10	Augustine	36	19.25	9	15
11	Aquinas	34	18.18	10	14
12	Kant	32	17.11	25	16
12	Nietzsche	32	17.11	5	11

⁹ It is likely that future investigations will not be able to rely on department websites for syllabus data. From when this research was initially undertaken to publication, most of the few departments that kept their syllabi online appear to have ceased the practice.

¹⁰ The remaining 47 syllabi are absent either because instructors did not have copies of their old course outlines or simply because of a failure to respond. There was only one instance where I successfully contacted an instructor who elected not to share their syllabus.

Who Is Being Taught

Table 2 lists the 20 most common thinkers across all of these

14	Hegel	30	16.04	8	16
15	de Tocqueville	26	13.9	4	22
16	Thucydides	25	13.37	28	80
17	Burke	24	12.83	13	26
18	Rawls	22	11.76	12	1
18	Wollstonecraft	22	11.76	22	---
20	Hume	18	9.63	24	42

courses. In 2011, Matthew J. Moore conducted a survey of which thinkers are being taught in American political theory courses and, among other questions, he asked instructors to list five thinkers who should be taught more and five who should be taught less (Moore 2011). While his data comes from a different national context and is not explicitly focused on introductory courses, the comparison is valuable as a measure of intuitions about the discipline and, as such, I have included those rankings on Table 2. It remains a live question, however, whether those intuitions are in accordance with the state of the discipline or merely an imagined version of the same.

Given that some of the courses surveyed are explicitly taught around particular historical periods, some aspects of Table 2 may have the appearance of being more or less common than they are in practice. This is particularly a problem for two semester split courses which frequently use the notions of ancients and moderns as a dividing line for political theory taught as a history. While one might be comfortable locating Machiavelli either at the end of a course on the ancients or at the beginning of a course on the moderns, Plato and Aristotle would be out of place in the latter and Marx similarly so in the former.

Beyond that, there are likely few surprising results in this initial list — although, as Moore's rankings help to illustrate, the relatively high position of Marx could be con-

sidered somewhat controversial (the fact of this controversy is somewhat replicated when we look to where *The Communist Manifesto* fits in the regional breakdown of texts on Table 3). The relative difficulty of either Nietzsche or Hegel might make them somewhat debatable inclusions in introductory courses, but their importance within the canon is undeniable. While neither Rawls nor Wollstonecraft can be said to be widely taught among this sample, it is worth pointing out that the former is the highest ranked of the 20th (and 21st) century and the latter is the highest ranked woman.¹¹ Rawls somewhat contentious for a “history of...” approach, given how recent *A Theory of Justice* was—then again, it was published 47 years ago.

TABLE 3: Text Occurrences

Rank	Text	Thinker	Total Occurrences	ON Rank	QC Rank	RoC Rank	Two Semester (Split) Rank	Two Semester (Year-long) Rank	Singular Rank
1	Leviathan	Hobbes	114	3	2	1	2	2	2
2	Two Treatises of Government	Locke	106	4	1	5	1	5	5
3	The Republic	Plato	105	2	4	3	5	4	1
4	The Prince	Machiavelli	101	5	6	2	3	2	3
5	Politics	Aristotle	96	1	4	7	7	1	3
6	The Communist Manifesto	Engels, Marx	85	13	3	4	4	8	6
7	The Social Contract	Rousseau	68	6	9	7	5	11	7
8	Apology	Plato	63	6	28	6	10	6	8
9	The Second Discourse	Rousseau	55	10	12	10	8	7	16
10	Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts	Marx	45	15	22	11	9	13	21
11	Crito	Plato	44	10	70	7	17	9	10
12	The Discourses	Machiavelli	43	8	7	35	11	13	12

¹¹ At 25th overall with 13 occurrences, Hannah Arendt is the second highest ranking for both categories.

12	Ethics	Aristotle	43	8	18	12	17	9	12
14	On Liberty	Mill	40	15	13	13	11	12	27
15	The City of God	Augustine	35	10	13	35	14	17	15
16	The Summa	Aquinas	31	14	11	---	15	24	12
17	Democracy in America	de Tocqueville	26	49	7	44	13	51	27
18	History of the Peloponnesian War	Thucydides	25	17	13	---	32	16	21
19	Reflections on the Revolution in France	Burke	24	19	18	44	16	22	64
20	On the Genealogy of Morality	Nietzsche	23	21	134	13	23	51	10
20	Philosophy of Right	Hegel	23	27	44	16	23	24	16
22	A Vindication of the Rights of Woman	Wollstonecraft	22	25	9	80	57	22	9
23	Letter Concerning Toleration	Locke	20	18	56	80	35	15	93
24	The German Ideology	Engels,Marx	18	21	---	20	23	24	64
25	On the Liberty of the Moderns...	Constant	15	77	17	28	22	---	36
25	Antigone	Sophocles	15	27	44	22	19	---	93
27	Idea for a Universal History	Kant	14	49	56	18	47	58	16
27	Of the Original Contract	Hume	14	64	18	---	19	---	---
29	On the Commonwealth	Cicero	13	64	13	---	29	---	36
29	What is Enlightenment?	Kant	13	31	18	---	32	27	---
31	Theses on Feuerbach	Marx	12	19	56	---	57	20	---
32	Euthyphro	Plato	11	64	---	13	143	19	93
33	Critique of the Gotha Program	Marx	9	21	---	44	217	20	93
33	Gorgias	Plato	9	77	---	16	---	17	---
35	Politics as a Vocation	Weber	8	---	134	20	47	---	64
36	Where the Wild Things Are	Sendak	7	---	---	18	---	---	16

36	Divine Comedy	Dante	7	---	28	---	---	---	16
----	---------------	-------	---	-----	----	-----	-----	-----	----

Of all assigned readings, 24.60% were written and published¹² after 1900 and only 6.49% are written by women.¹³ One of the common arguments around the exclusion of women in the canon and teaching of political theory is that women have historically made significantly fewer contributions to the discipline (as a result of social, cultural, and political limitations), and thus any historical survey of the discipline is necessarily going to reproduce those exclusions. If these introductory courses are meant solely to be historical surveys, the fact that nearly a quarter of all assigned texts come from the 20th and 21st century is a surprising detail. Even if what is meant by ‘history’ is pushed to the creation of NATO (following the colloquial ‘Plato to NATO’ disciplinary approach) in 1949 and we look only to texts published from then onward, that is still 21.42%.¹⁴ Other justifications can be made for the construction of introductory syllabi that are absent female thinkers, but solely relying on ‘the facts of history’ proves insufficient when tested against training practice.

What Is Being Taught

Table 3 lists the top 20 texts according to number of total occurrences, and includes the relative ranking as distinguished by region (Ontario, Quebec, and the rest of Canada—which consolidates the data from Alberta, British Columbia, and Nova Scotia),

¹² In the cases where texts have misleading publication records, such as Marx and Engel's *The German Ideology* which was written in 1846 but first published in the 1900s, they are excluded from this list.

¹³ Of the assigned readings post-1900, women fair better at 17.31%.

¹⁴ Again, as would be expected, female thinkers are slightly better represented when looking post-1949: 18.22%.

expanding the list to 34 texts. Sorting according to different course types also influences the overall results and Table 3 also ranks them accordingly (Singular, in which there is only one single-semester introductory course; Two Semester Split, in which there are two introductory courses that can be taken independently from each other—or concurrently, in some cases; and Two Semester Yearlong, in which there is a single, continuous course that spreads over two semesters). This expands the list to 37 texts. The full list of 92 texts with at least five occurrences can be found in Appendix 2.

While readings are often drawn from primary sources, there are some instances where anthologies have been assigned. In these cases, I have only listed the original sources, without particular regard for which translations is used. While not all translations are created equal, in many instances that specific data is not readily available—and, in some cases, is explicitly not a concern for the instructor. However, there are instances of texts that are collections of other primary sources which only occurs when the accompanying commentary is substantial and has explicitly been assigned, such as with *Selections from the Major Writings on Skepticism, Man, and God*.¹⁵

With regards to the top five texts, the exact ranking differs somewhat in with regions and course type, but there are few surprises—with the noted exception of *The Communist Manifesto* which drops to 13th in Ontario, while both Quebec and the rest of Canada have it among their top four. It is noteworthy that, despite being ranked 8th overall, Plato's *Apology* falls to 28th in Quebec. In fact, *Crito* similarly falls—and Euthyphro is altogether absent from introductory courses in Quebec. That *On the Genealogy of Mo-*

¹⁵ Hallie's introduction is, in fact, all that has been assigned from that text, without any of the accompanying Empiricus and Sextus writings.

rality is the top Nietzsche text helps explain his high position on Table 2, given that it is perhaps the most accessible of his writings. Single semester courses maintain an approximate similarity with two semester courses—although Mill’s *On Liberty* and Burke’s *Reflections* drop significantly, while Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication* is comparatively higher—but given that the overall occurrences drop-off significantly outside of the top texts, it is suspect to draw too many conclusions from these differences.

What is perhaps most interesting is the percentage of all readings in each region for the accompanying top ranked texts: even when the Quebec rankings are roughly in accordance with Ontario and the rest of Canada, those texts are a significantly smaller portion of the total

TABLE 4: Top Readings as % of Course (Region)

Region	Top 5 %	Top 10 %	Top 15 %	Top 20 %
Canada	20.78	33.36	41.52	46.66
Ontario	28.02	47.53	57.42	64.84
Quebec	14.42	22.9	28.65	33.33
Anglo-	21.93	34.22	42.17	48.43
Franco-	10.8	17.51	23.9	29.46
RoC	28.5	46.33	55.67	61.67

texts assigned for the region as can be seen in Table 4. Looking at the broader list of texts, it is not that Quebec has a more even distribution of readings, but rather that they are assigning more readings than other regional contexts: Table 5 shows this difference most clearly. Looking at the average number of assigned readings per class, Quebec is considerably higher than other regions. This may be explained in part by the CEGEPs system, in which students enroll in pre-university programs to bridge them towards 1st cycle.

TABLE 5: # of Readings (Region)

Region	Average Readings	Median Readings
Canada	13.34	10
Ontario	11.03	9.5
Quebec	20.53	14
Anglo-	15.37	8
Franco-	26.57	23
RoC	9.5	8

While CEGEPs are meant to prepare students for their chosen field, there are general requirements common to all students including philosophy. Departments in Quebec may be

structuring their introductory courses accordingly with the expectation that either the texts or the notion of 'thinking philosophically' are at least passingly familiar.

This explanation is somewhat troubled by the difference in linguistic contexts: if that attitude were broadly the case in introductions to political theory one would expect Anglophone Quebec institutions to behave similarly, but that does not appear to be the case as can be seen in Table 5. However these linguistic differences should be taken with caution as they are drawn from a limited sample. A more thorough investigation into the relationship of CEGEPs to political theory training in Quebec would be a valuable step in understanding whether

there are two solitudes within this aspect of the discipline.

Tables 6 and 7

show that the top results appear to show up in roughly the same way when course types are compared directly, but Two Semester (Split) courses are better understood as half of a yearlong course with regards to content: it is not as meaningful so say that the *Republic* only appears on 36.96% of all Split courses when those courses are structured such that the text would be out of place on half of those syllabi. To that end, Split

Course Type	Top 5 %	Top 10 %	Top 15 %	Top 20 %
All	20.78	33.36	41.52	46.66
Two Semester (Split)	14.6	24.57	31.36	36.71
First Half	25.48	40.93	52.7	59.07
Second Half	15.36	25.06	31.06	36.37
Two Semester (Yearlong)	28.52	48.41	61.54	69.61
Singular	28.74	43.03	50.59	56.47

Course Type	Average Readings	Median Readings
All	13.34	10
Two Semester (Split)	12.14	11
First Half	11.26	9.5
Second Half	18.83	12

courses have been divided into

Two Semester (Yearlong)	13.33	11
Singular	7.44	8.5

First Half and Second Half, because that is what each represents as introductory political theory training regardless the department explicitly labels them as a direct continuation.

While the selected texts are obviously different between the First and Second Half Split courses, there are similar levels of consensus with regards to the top texts for the top results: Table 8 shows this most clearly. In fact, even though Second Half Split courses have a higher average and median number of readings assigned, more of those courses share the top results than First Half Split courses. This would seem to be because there is more agreement over which texts are necessary to include when looking to ancient and medieval political theory, but, as the introduction turns towards the Enlightenment and beyond, there appears to be more disagreement over who to include and what works of theirs are best suited for introductory purposes.

Interestingly, where to mark the break between Split courses does not seem to be at all a settled matter. Although courses tend to travel chronologically through the canon and thus avoid ‘misplacing’ thinkers at the extremes (such as Plato in Second Half courses or Nietzsche in the First Half), *Two Treatises of Government* and *Leviathan* are noteworthy in how high they appear on both lists. While there are some cases where instructors ‘double-up’ on a text that has already been covered, there also appears to be something of an inconsistency as to which Split course will cover what specific material, although the reasons for this variability are not immediately clear simply from examining syllabi. Some departments do not suffer from this confusion, however, because they have

structured their First Split as an ‘Introduction to...’ and the Second Split as ‘Contemporary political theory’.

Rank	First Half Text	%	Second Half Text	%
1	The Republic	73.91	Two Treatises of Government	71.74
2	Politics	67.39	The Communist Manifesto	67.39
3	The Prince	60.87	Leviathan	58.7
4	Apology	45.65	Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts	45.65
5	Leviathan	39.13	The Social Contract	45.65
6	The City of God	36.96	On Liberty	41.3
7	Two Treatises of Government	36.96	Democracy in America	41.3
8	The Summa	34.78	The Second Discourse	41.3
9	Crito	32.61	Reflections on the Revolution in France	34.78
10	Ethics	32.61	Philosophy of Right	23.91

Conclusion

What do these results tell us about the teaching of political theory in Canada? It is perhaps worthwhile to begin with what it does *not* tell us: a raw list of thinkers and texts cannot tell us how they are being taught. Many of these texts are sites of contestation for the broader political theory discipline—debates about whether Machiavelli should be understood as advocating *realpolitik* or an esoteric writer, or what is to be made of the ‘joke’ in Book V of Plato’s *Republic*—and this data misses how (or even whether) those are resolved in the classroom.¹⁶ It also largely avoids considerations of theme and narrative thread that dramatically influence how texts are to be read, both as individual arguments and in relation to each other. Indeed this project starts from the assumption that we can understand the political theory classroom by its canon and, at least implicitly, defines

¹⁶ And, for that matter, in tutorials run by teaching assistants.

political theory as a collection of texts rather than a method (or methods) of engaging with political questions. The fact that textbooks (distinct anthologies) are used so sparingly at the introductory level would seem to support this decision: political theory training appears to be intimately tied to an engagement with primary sources—and without a distinctly Canadian expression.

There appears to be an overall agreement at Canadian institutions that a few texts—*Leviathan*, *Two Treatises of Government*, Plato's *Republic*, Machiavelli's *Prince*, and Aristotle's *Politics*—are essential building blocks in the foundations of political theory education and, accordingly at institutions which require these courses for degree completion, for political science as well. These, however, are dramatically different texts: *Leviathan* is too vast to be exhaustively covered at an introductory level¹⁷ whereas *The Prince* is almost the ideal kind of reading for such a course (only perhaps surpassed in approachability by *The Communist Manifesto*); and while Aristotle follows chronologically from Plato, the style and form of the two authors could be said to represent completely different approaches to the discipline. That we are able to craft a narrative thread that connects these thinkers does not necessarily mean that either political theory or political science are well-served by such storytelling. It does not have to be that case that political theory is 'useful' in the productive sense (although given that universities programs must be justified to administrators, it is certainly helpful when they are), but, given that there are calls to disrupt the reproduction of political theory knowledge as it exists today, those who wish to defend it should likely find stronger grounds than 'tradition' from which to do so.

¹⁷ Indeed how many of us who teach in the discipline can be said to have done that ourselves.

This is especially important given the increasing popularity of the field of comparative political theory as that can be seen an attempt to return to political science those areas of inquiry that had once splintered off. Even as canonical texts themselves are hotly contested sites of meaning, this data seems to suggest widespread agreement that these thinkers and their placement as iconic figures in the discipline are not a subject for negotiation. Critical theory pushes against these barriers in interesting and novel ways, at times, but does it succeed at ungrounding the discourses of the canon? Or does it all too often fall back into the trap of accepting ‘incompatible’ differences and, thus, lead to the siloing of the whole into disciplinary parts? Responding to hegemonies by establishing new ones, rather than overturning and upsetting the structures that already exist? This is not meant to criticize scholars in these silos—such as Gender and Diversity or Indigenous Governance programs. In fact, part of the question that this data raises is whether political theory has impoverished itself by refusing to contest its own boundaries and make room for critical perspectives. When a field becomes entirely fixed and hegemonic such that the ground is hostile to disparate voices, it is of little surprise that thoughtful scholars will find themselves drawn to alternative fields.

If political theory—in Canada or elsewhere—is, as Moore suggests, “an essential part of political science”, are these theorists and texts an essential part of that political theory simply by virtue of their universality (Moore 2011, 125)? Or is their universality the result of some greater truth that cannot be found through critical and alternative lenses? This is not an easy set of concerns to resolve, but, given the context in which education occurs, never has it been more important to engage with these questions. This

kind of investigation is important for those who believe political theory is a search for universal truths or principles, as they should be asking whether these foundations are sufficiently stable (or appropriately unstable, if you prefer) to begin such pursuits; and it is likewise significant for those who oppose the idea of universal political truths, who should be asking whether the foundations speak to the particular context(s) in which they are established. Advocates for both adherence to tradition and a break from it should be able to utilize this research to help articulate their claims.

APPENDIX 2: Full Ranking of Texts Taught

Rank	Text	Thinker	Total Occurrences	ON Rank	QC Rank	RoC Rank	Two Semester (Split) Rank	Two Semester (Yearlong) Rank	Singular Rank
1	Leviathan	Hobbes	114	3	2	1	2	2	2
2	Two Treatises of Government	Locke	106	4	1	5	1	5	5
3	The Republic	Plato	105	2	4	3	5	4	1
4	The Prince	Machiavelli	101	5	6	2	3	2	3
5	Politics	Aristotle	96	1	4	7	7	1	3
6	The Communist Manifesto	Engels, Marx	85	13	3	4	4	8	6
7	The Social Contract	Rousseau	68	6	9	7	5	11	7
8	Apology	Plato	63	6	28	6	10	6	8
9	The Second Discourse	Rousseau	55	10	12	10	8	7	16
10	Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts	Marx	45	15	22	11	9	13	21
11	Crito	Plato	44	10	70	7	17	9	10
12	The Discourses	Machiavelli	43	8	7	35	11	13	12
12	Ethics	Aristotle	43	8	18	12	17	9	12
14	On Liberty	Mill	40	15	13	13	11	12	27
15	The City of God	Augustine	35	10	13	35	14	17	15
16	The Summa	Aquinas	31	14	11	---	15	24	12
17	Democracy in America	de Tocqueville	26	49	7	44	13	51	27
18	History of the Peloponnesian War	Thucydides	25	17	13	---	32	16	21
19	Reflections on the Revolution in France	Burke	24	19	18	44	16	22	64
20	On the Genealogy of Morality	Nietzsche	23	21	134	13	23	51	10
20	Philosophy of Right	Hegel	23	27	44	16	23	24	16
22	A Vindication of the Rights of Woman	Wollstonecraft	22	25	9	80	57	22	9
23	Letter Concerning Toleration	Locke	20	18	56	80	35	15	93
24	The German Ideology	Engels, Marx	18	21	---	20	23	24	64
25	Utilitarianism	Mill	17	77	28	28	21	58	36
26	On the Liberty of the Moderns...	Constant	15	77	17	28	22	---	36
26	Antigone	Sophocles	15	27	44	22	19	---	93
28	Idea for a Universal History	Kant	14	49	56	18	47	58	16

28	On the Jewish Question	Marx	14	27	37	35	35	27	64
28	Of the Original Contract	Hume	14	64	18	---	19	---	---
31	On the Commonwealth	Cicero	13	64	13	---	29	---	36
31	The Wealth of Nations	Smith	13	77	28	80	32	58	36
31	On the Subjection of Women	Mill	13	64	44	44	29	51	93
31	What is Enlightenment?	Kant	13	31	18	---	32	27	---
35	Anarchy, State, and Utopia	Nozick	12	---	22	28	47	---	21
35	A Theory of Justice	Rawls	12	---	28	22	47	---	21
35	Principles of Morals and Legislation	Bentham	12	31	28	80	71	27	32
35	Philosophy of History	Hegel	12	77	44	80	23	58	---
35	Theses on Feuerbach	Marx	12	19	56	---	57	20	---
40	Letter from a Birmingham Jail	King	11	---	22	35	35	---	36
40	Euthyphro	Plato	11	64	---	13	143	19	93
40	The Spirit of the Laws	Montesquieu	11	77	44	---	23	---	---
40	Political Thinkers	Boucher,Kelly	11	77	---	---	23	---	---
40	Beyond Good and Evil	Nietzsche	11	---	44	80	29	58	---
45	The Federalist Papers	Madison, Jay, Hamilton	10	77	28	80	47	---	32
45	A Treatise of Human Nature	Hume	10	31	70	---	47	27	---
47	The Second Sex	de Beauvoir	9	49	44	80	87	---	21
47	Critique of the Gotha Program	Marx	9	21	---	44	217	20	93
47	Gorgias	Plato	9	77	---	16	---	17	---
50	The Six Books of the Republic	Bodin	8	---	22	---	57	---	36
50	Phaedo	Plato	8	49	---	22	143	45	36
50	Politics as a Vocation	Weber	8	---	134	20	47	---	64
50	Declaration of the Rights of Man	Lafayette	8	---	37	44	41	---	93
50	What Is the Third Estate?	Sieyès	8	---	22	---	35	---	---
50	The Histories	Polybius	8	---	22	---	35	---	---
50	Twilight of the Idols	Nietzsche	8	---	70	---	35	---	---
57	Where the Wild Things Are	Sendak	7	---	---	18	---	---	16
57	Divine Comedy	Dante	7	---	28	---	---	---	16
57	Sermons of Augustine	Augustine	7	25	203	---	217	---	21
57	Perpetual Peace	Kant	7	---	134	22	87	---	32

57	Justice as Fairness	Rawls	7	---	37	80	41	---	---
57	Discourse on Voluntary Servitude	La Boétie	7	49	56	---	41	---	---
57	Rights of Man	Paine	7	---	134	---	41	---	---
57	Les Neuf clés de la modernité	Piotte	7	---	28	---	41	---	---
57	Is Patriotism a Virtue?	MacIntyre	7	---	28	---	41	---	---
57	Lives and Opinions	Laërtius	7	21	---	---	71	45	---
57	Capital, Volume 1	Marx	7	49	---	28	71	45	---
57	Mutual Aid	Kropotkin	7	31	70	---	87	27	---
69	The Concept of the Political	Schmitt	6	---	203	22	217	---	27
69	The Human Condition	Arendt	6	31	134	---	87	---	36
69	Welcome to the Monkey House	Vonnegut	6	---	37	---	87	---	36
69	Declaration of the Rights of Woman	de Gouges	6	---	37	---	47	---	---
69	On the Monarchy	Dante	6	---	37	---	47	---	---
69	Political Treatise	Spinoza	6	---	37	---	47	---	---
69	Meditations	Aurelius	6	64	56	---	47	---	---
69	Critique of Political Economy	Marx	6	77	44	---	57	58	---
77	The RoC And Its 'Others'	Parekh	5	---	---	22	---	---	27
77	The Major Writings on Scepticism, Man, and God	Hallie	5	27	---	---	---	---	27
77	The State and Revolution	Lenin	5	---	44	---	143	---	36
77	Orientalism	Said	5	49	---	44	143	---	36
77	Power / Knowledge	Foucault	5	64	---	35	87	---	64
77	On Kingship	Aquinas	5	31	203	---	143	51	93
77	Utopia	More	5	64	70	---	57	---	---
77	On the Law of War and Peace	Grotius	5	---	44	---	57	---	---
77	Speech to the Electors of Bristol	Burke	5	---	---	---	57	---	---
77	On Duties	Cicero	5	77	56	---	57	---	---
77	In Defense of Anarchism	Wolff	5	---	44	---	57	---	---
77	Human, All Too Human	Nietzsche	5	---	---	---	57	---	---
77	Thus Spake Zarathustra	Nietzsche	5	---	---	---	57	---	---
77	Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals	Kant	5	---	203	28	57	---	---
77	What's wrong with negative liberty?	Taylor	5	---	44	---	57	---	---
77	The Wretched of the Earth	Fanon	5	---	56	80	57	---	---

APPENDIX 3: "History of Political Thought" Syllabus

PSCI 2301 (B)
History of Political Thought I
 Wednesday 8:35 a.m. – 11:25 p.m.

Instructor: Steven Orr **Office:** Loeb B642
Email: steven.orr@carleton.ca **Office Hours:** Tue 10:30-12:30

Course Description

The goal of this course, to borrow a phrase from 20th century political thinker Hannah Arendt, “is nothing more than to think what we are doing” – to think *politically* and to carefully engage with political things. In order to do that, we are going to explore some particularly influential texts in the history of political thought from before the European Renaissance, but this is primarily a course about the questions and ideas that have served as foundations for contemporary Western politics and the discipline of political science. The term “explore” is very deliberately chosen: the texts we will be reading have long histories of their own and while there are summaries aplenty that tell you what other people have to say about them, we are interested in developing a philosophical mindset rather than restating other people’s arguments. This is hard to do and we will struggle with it at points, but we will aim to make it as productive a struggle as possible.

Course Texts

- Aristotle. Trans. Carnes Lord. *Aristotle's "Politics"*, University of Chicago Press, 2013 [1984]. (ISBN: 9780226921846)
- Plato. Trans. Allan Bloom. *The Republic of Plato*, Basic Books, 2016 [1968]. (ISBN: 9780465094080)
- Other selections (see links and **cuLearn**)

Evaluation

	Tutorial	15%
26 September	Critical Reflection #1	10%
31 October	Critical Reflection #2	10%
4 December	Final Paper	30%
Exam Period	Final Exam	35%

Tutorial (15%): Attendance and participation in tutorials is an important part of working through the course material. While there will be some opportunity in class for discussion, tutorials are where *everyone* will be expected to contribute at points throughout the term. Participating in these discussions is not about having the right answer, but as a way of thinking through the concepts that you are reading and listening to in class.

Critical Reflection (10% each): Paper copies are due in class on *26 September* and *31 October*. These are 1 page critical reflections that require no outside research or quotations from the text. The goal here is for you to spend a couple hours thinking through a question and carefully writing those thoughts in a clear and coherent manner. For these reflections, avoid broad claims that are difficult to prove (“Since the beginning of time...”) and avoid “I” language (“I feel...”, “I think...”). Instead focus on logically organizing your thoughts around your answer and cutting anything that gets in the way of expressing it. Further guidelines to be discussed in class.

A Note on Formatting: The assignment calls for 1 page of *content* (approximately 300 words). There is no need for a title page, but you should include your name and student number in the header – and both the course code and TA name should appear at the top of the page. While most academic assignments (including your final paper) require a bibliography, these critical reflections do not. Additionally, please double space your papers and use 12 point Times New Roman with ½ inch margins.

Final Paper (30%): 7 pages (of *content*). Paper copies are due in class on *4 December*. These are direct engagements with the texts involved and will include an argument of some sort about them. Further guidelines to be discussed in class.

Another Note on Formatting: Follow the formatting requirements from the reflections, except a bibliography **is** required and you may have a title page.

Late Assignments: If an assignment is not submitted to class on the due date, without valid *prior* arrangements, it will receive a 5% penalty per day that it is late for up to 7 days – after which assignments will not be accepted. If you submit a copy to the department mailbox on the due date instead of coming to class, it will be considered late and penalized accordingly.

Final Exam: (35%): The exam will take place during the official exam period between 9-21 December. It will cover all aspects of the course material from assigned readings (and listenings), lecture, and class discussion. You will also have the opportunity to draw on your tutorials and incorporate that material into your answers.

Schedule

5 September

Introduction

- 12 September** **Christine de Pizan**
- *The Book of the City of Ladies*: Selections (cuLearn)
 - Listening: Run the World (Girls) – Beyoncé
- 19 September** **Thomas Aquinas**
- *Summa Theologiae*: Part II, Section I (Q's 90-92, 96)
 - Listening: I Shot the Sheriff – Eric Clapton
- 26 September** **Thomas Aquinas**
- **Critical Reflection #1 Due**
 - *On Kingship*: Book I, Chapters I-VII, XI
 - Listening: Earthly Justice - Western Centuries
- 3 October** **Augustine of Hippo**
- *City of God*: Book 14, Chapters 27-28
 - *City of God*: Book 19, Chapters 5-17
 - Listening: No Church in the Wild - Kanye West and Jay-Z
- 10 October** **Cicero**
- *De Officiis*: Selections (cuLearn)
- 17 October** **Sophocles**
- *Antigone* (cuLearn)
 - Listening: Cleaning Out My Closet – Eminem
- 24 October** **No Class – Reading Week**
- 31 October** **Aristotle**
- **Critical Reflection #2 Due**
 - **Guest Lecture: Leonard Halladay**
 - *Nicomachean Ethics*: Book 10, Chapter 9 (cuLearn)
 - *The Politics*: Book 1, Chapters 1-7; Book 3, Chapters 1-4, 6-9; Book 4, Chapters 1-2, 8, 11-12
- 7 November** **Aristotle**
- *The Politics*: Book 5, Chapters 8-9; Book 6, Chapters 1-5; Book 7, Chapters 1-3, 13-15
 - Listening: Let It Go - Frozen
- 14 November** **Plato**
- **Guest Lecture: John Ryan**
 - *The Republic*, Books I – II, III (Selections)
 - Listening: Masters of War – Bob Dylan

21 November**Plato**

- *The Republic*, Books IV – V
- Listening: The Sound of Silence - Simon and Garfunkel

28 November**Plato**

- *The Republic*, Books VI – VII
- Listening: The Cave - Mumford & Sons

5 December**Conclusion and Exam Prep**

- **Final Paper Due**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “A Theory of Justice — John Rawls | Harvard University Press.” Accessed July 2, 2018. <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674000780&content=reviews>
- Abbott, Philip. “With Equality & Virtue for All: John Rawls & the Liberal Tradition.” *Polity* 8, no. 3 (Spring 1976): 339–57.
- Abu-Laban, Yasmeen. “The CPSA and Reconciliation.” Presented at *Canadian Political Science Association*, 2016. <https://cpsa-acsp.ca/news11.php>.
- Adcock, Robert, and Mark Bevir. “The Remaking of Political Theory.” In *Modern Political Science: Anglo-American Exchanges since 1880*, edited by Robert Adcock, Mark Bevir, and Shannon c. Stimson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Adler, Mortimer. “Great Books, Democracy, and Truth.” *Educational Studies* 19, no. 3–4 (1988): 290–302.
- Aiken, Henry David. *The Age of Ideology*. Freeport: New American Library, 1956.
- . “The Revolt Against Ideology.” *Commentary* 37, no. 4 (April 1, 1964): 29–39.
- Akehurst, Thomas L. “British Analytic Philosophy: The Politics of an Apolitical Culture.” *History of Political Thought* 30, no. 4 (2009): 678–92.
- Alexander, James. “A Genealogy of Political Theory: A Polemic.” *Contemporary Political Theory*, November 20, 2018, 1–22.
- Almond, Gabriel A. *A Discipline Divided: Schools and Sects in Political Science*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990.
- . “Political Science: The History of the Discipline.” In *A New Handbook of Political Science*, 50–96. 1996. Reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Amdur, Robert. “Review: Rawls’ Theory of Justice: Domestic and International Perspectives.” *World Politics* 29, no. 3 (April 1977): 438–61.
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. 1958. Reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- . *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1985.
- . “‘What Remains? The Language Remains’: A Conversation with Günter Gaus.” In *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, 1–23. New York: Schocken Books, 2005.
- Arrow, Kenneth J. “Some Ordinalist-Utilitarian Notes on Rawls’s Theory of Justice by John Rawls.” *The Journal of Philosophy* 70, no. 9 (May 10, 1973): 245–63.
- Ashcraft, Richard. “Latitudinarianism and Toleration: Historical Myth versus Political History.” edited by Richard Zroll, Richard Ashcraft, and Perez Zagorin, 151–77. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . “On the Problem of Methodology and the Nature of Political Theory.” *Political Theory* 3, no. 1 (1975): 5–25.
- . “Political Theory and the Problem of Ideology.” *The Journal of Politics* 42, no. 3 (August 1980): 687–705.
- Aubery, Pierre. “The Anarchism of the Literati of the Symbolist Period.” *The French Review* 42, no. 1 (October 1968): 39–47.
- Audard, Catherine. “Rawls in France.” *European Journal of Political Theory* 1, no. 2 (2002): 215–227.

- Baise, Bryan Edward. “Reiding Rawls’: A Critical Assessment of Thomas Reid’s Common Sense Philosophy as a Response to John Rawls’s Doctrine of Public Reason.” Dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016.
- Ball, Terrence. “Discordant Voices: American Histories of Political Thought.” In *The History of Political Thought in National Contexts*, edited by Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk. Ideas in Context 61. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- . *Reappraising Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- . “Whither Political Theory.” In *Political Science: Looking to the Future*, edited by William J. Crotty, 57–76. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991.
- Balzacq, Thierry, and Stéphane J. Baele. “The Third Debate and Postpositivism.” In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. 2014. Reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Barber, Benjamin. “Justifying Justice: Problems of Psychology, Measurement, and Politics in Rawls.” *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): 663–74.
- . “The Politics of Political Science: ‘Value-Free’ Theory and the Wolin-Strauss Dust-Up of 1963.” *The American Political Science Review* 100, no. 4 (2006): 539–45.
- Barber, Matthew. “Freedom and Uncertainty: Contemporary Liberal Theory Examined from the Perspective of Moral Uncertainty.” Dissertation, University of Canterbury, 2008.
- Barry, Brian. “Liberalism and Want-Satisfaction: A Critique of John Rawls.” *Political Theory* 1, no. 2 (May 1973): 134–53.
- . *Political Argument: A Reissue with a New Introduction*. 1965. Reprint, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990.
- . “Political Theory: Old and New.” In *A New Handbook of Political Science*, edited by Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, 531–48. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- . “The Strange Death of Political Philosophy.” *Government and Opposition* 15, no. 3–4 (July 1980): 276–88.
- Barry, Norman P. *An Introduction to Modern Political Theory*. Third. 1981. Reprint, London: Macmillan, 1995.
- Barthes, Roland. “The Death of the Author.” *Aspen*, 1967.
- Batnitzky, Leora. *Leo Strauss and Emmanuel Levinas: Philosophy and the Politics of Revelation*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Beckett, Samuel. *Nohow On*. 1989. Reprint, New York: Grove Press, 1996.
- Beiner, Ronald. *Dangerous Minds: Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Return of the Far Right*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.
- . “Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: The Uncommenced Dialogue.” *Political Theory* 18, no. 2 (1990): 238–54.
- . *Political Philosophy: What It Is and Why It Matters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

- Beiner, Ronald, and Wayne Norman. *Canadian Political Philosophy: Contemporary Reflections*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Bell, Daniel. *Beyond Liberal Democracy: Political Thinking for an East Asian Context*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- . “The Cultural Wars: American Intellectual Life, 1965-1992.” *The Wilson Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1992): 74–107.
- . *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (1960; repr., Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1988).
- Bell, Daniel, and Henry David Aiken. “Ideology-A Debate.” *Commentary* 38, no. 4 (October 1, 1964): 69–76.
- Bellow, Saul. “Forward.” In *Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today’s Students*, 11–18. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987.
- Benhabib, Seyla. “High Liberalism: John Rawls and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy.” *The Nation*, October 29, 2019. <https://www.thenation.com/article/john-rawls-liberal-philosophy-review/>.
- . “The Strange Silence of Political Theory: Response.” *Political Theory* 23, no. 4 (1995): 674–81.
- Berkenpas, Joshua R. “The Ongoing Revolution in American Political Science.” Thesis, Western Michigan University, 2009.
- Berlin, Isaiah. *Affirming: Letters 1975-1997*. Edited by Henry Hardy and Mark Pottle. Chatto & Windus, 2015.
- . “Alleged Relativism in Eighteenth-Century European Thought.” In *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, edited by Henry Hardy, 70–90. 1980. Reprint, London: John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1990.
- . “Does Political Theory Still Exist.” In *The Proper Study of Mankind*, edited by Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer. 1962. Reprint, London: Chatto & Windus, 1997.
- . *Enlightening: Letters 1946 - 1960*. Edited by Henry Hardy and Jennifer Holmes. Chatto & Windus, 2009.
- . “Logical Translation.” In *Concepts and Categories: Philosophical Essays*, edited by Henry Hardy, 56–80. 1949. Reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- . “The Hedgehog and the Fox.” In *The Proper Study of Mankind*, edited by Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer. London: Chatto & Windus, 1997.
- . “The Originality of Machiavelli.” In *The Proper Study of Mankind*, edited by Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer. 1953. Reprint, London: Chatto & Windus, 1997.
- . “The Pursuit of the Ideal.” In *The Proper Study of Mankind*, edited by Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer. 1988. Reprint, London: Chatto & Windus, 1997.
- Berry, Wendell. *The Loss of the University*. 1987. Reprint, Trinity Forum Readings, 2013.
- Bilgin, Pinar. *The International in Security, Security in the International*. London: Routledge, 2016.

- Birnbacher, Dieter. "A Priority Rule for Environmental Ethics." *Environmental Ethics* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 3–16.
- Blakely, Jason William. "Three Political Philosophers Debate Social Science: Leo Strauss, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Charles Taylor." Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2013.
- Bloom, Allan. *Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987.
- . "Justice: John Rawls Vs. The Tradition of Political Philosophy." *American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): 648–62.
- . *Love and Friendship*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.
- . "Political Philosophy and Poetry." *American Political Science Review* 54, no. 2 (June 1960): 457–64.
- . "Political Philosophy and Poetry: A Restatement." *American Political Science Review* 54, no. 2 (June 1960): 471–73.
- . "Response to Hall." *Political Theory* 5, no. 3 (1977): 315–30.
- Bloom, Allan, and Harry V. Jaffa. *Shakespeare's Politics*. 1964. Reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Blumler, J.G. "Politics, Poetry, and Practice." *Political Studies* 12, no. 3 (1964): 355–61.
- Bond, Doug, and Park Jong-Chul. "An Empirical Test of Rawls's Theory of Justice: A Second Approach, in Korea and the United States." *Simulation & Gaming* 22, no. 4 (1991): 443–62.
- Boudou, Benjamin. "What Is Political Theory For?" *Raisons Politiques* 64, no. 4 (2016): 7–27.
- Braybrooke, David. "The Expanding Universe of Political Philosophy." *The Review of Metaphysics* 11, no. 4 (June 1958): 648–72.
- Brecht, Arnold. *Political Theory: The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Political Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Brown, Wendy. "At the Edge." *Political Theory* 30, no. 4 (August 2002): 556–76.
- . *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. New York: Zone Books, 2015.
- Browning, Gary K. *A History of Modern Political Thought: The Question of Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Brumbaugh, Robert S. "A New Interpretation of Plato's Republic." *The Journal of Philosophy* 64, no. 20 (October 26, 1967): 661–70.
- Bryant, John H. "Principles of Justice as a Basis for Conceptualizing a Health Care System." *International Journal of Health Services* 7, no. 4 (1977): 707–19.
- Buchanan, James. "John Rawls, Justice as Fairness: A Restatement." *Public Choice* 113, no. 3 (December 2002): 488–90.
- . "Rawls on Justice as Fairness." *Public Choice* 13, no. 1 (September 1972): 123–28.
- . "The Justice of Natural Liberty." *The Journal of Legal Studies* 5, no. 1 (January 1976): 1–16.

- Bufacchi, Vittorio. "Review Article: Why Political Philosophy Matters: Reading Brian Barry on Social Justice." *European Journal of Political Theory* 7, no. 2 (April 1, 2008): 255–64.
- Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Buzan, Barry, and George Lawson. "Rethinking Benchmark Dates in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations* 20, no. 2 (2012): 437–62.
- . "The Global Transformation: The Nineteenth Century and the Making of Modern International Relations." *International Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2013): 620–34.
- Campbell, T.D. "A Theory of Justice by John Rawls." *The Political Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (October 1972): 510–12.
- Canadian Political Science Association Reconciliation Committee. "Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials: A Resource for Political Science Instructors in Canada." Canadian Political Science Association, September 24, 2018. [https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/documents/committees/Indigenous%20Content%20Syllabus%20Materials%20Sept%2024%202018\[27\].pdf](https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/documents/committees/Indigenous%20Content%20Syllabus%20Materials%20Sept%2024%202018[27].pdf).
- Capan, Zeynep Gulsah. "Decolonising International Relations?" *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2017): 1–15.
- Carlsson, F., G. Gupta, and O. Johansson-Stenman. "Choosing from behind a Veil of Ignorance in India." *Applied Economics Letters* 10 (2003): 825–827.
- Carlyle, Thomas. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History*. 1840. Reprint, New York: Wiley & Halsted, 1857.
- Carvalho, Benjamin de, Halvard Leira, and John M. Hobson. "The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths That Your Teachers Still Tell You about 1648 and 1919." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 3 (2011): 735–758.
- Casement, William. "Whither the Great Books?" *Academic Questions* 15, no. 4 (December 2002): 36–51.
- Catlin, George. "Political Theory: What Is It?" *Political Science Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (1957): 1–29.
- Caws, Peter. "Changing Our Habits." *New Republic*, May 13, 1972.
- Chamberlin, J. Edward. *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?* Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2004.
- Chambers, Samuel A. "Philosophy, Politics, and User Interface: The Medium Is Still the Message. A Response to Carver." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 4, no. 4 (December 2007): 426–29.
- . "Politics and Practice of Fugitive Theory." *Contemporary Political Theory* 5, no. 1 (February 2006): 9–32.
- . "Working on the Democratic Imagination and the Limits of Deliberative Democracy." *Political Research Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (December 2005): 619–23.
- Chambers, Simone. "Navigating Pluralism: Beiner on Habermas." *The Review of Politics* 78 (2016): 299–302.
- Chapman, John W. "Rawls's Theory of Justice." *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): 588–93.

- Christian, William. "Reviewed Work: A Theory of Justice by John Rawls." *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 5, no. 4 (December 1972): 600–601.
- Clinton, Bill. "Remarks By The President." presented at the Presentation Of The National Medal Of The Arts And The National Humanities Medal, Constitution Hall, Washington, D.C., September 29, 1999.
<https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/html/19990929.html>.
- Cobban, Alfred. *In Search of Humanity: The Role of the Enlightenment in Modern History*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1960.
- . "The Decline of Political Theory." *Political Science Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (1953): 321–37.
- Cohen, Gerald Allan. "Isaiah's Marx, and Mine." In *Finding Oneself in the Other*, edited by Michael Otsuka, 1–15. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Cohen, Marshall. "Berlin and the Liberal Tradition." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 10, no. 40 (July 1960): 216–27.
- Cohen, Michael. "The Social Contract Explained and Defended." *New York Times*. July 16, 1972.
- Coleman, James S., Boris Frankel, and Derek L. Phillips. "Review Symposium: Robert Nozick's Anarchy, State, and Utopia." *Theory and Society* 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1976): 437–58.
- Collini, Stefan. "Postscript. Disciplines, Canons, and Publics: The History of 'The History of Political Thought' in Comparative Perspective." In *The History of Political Thought in National Contexts*, edited by Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk, 280–302. Ideas in Context 61. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Collini, Stefan, Donald Winch, and John Burrow. *The Noble Science of Politics*. 2003. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Condren, Conal. "The Death of Political Theory: The Importance of Historiographical Myth." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 9, no. 2 (1974): 146–49.
- . *The Status and Appraisal of Classic Texts: An Essay in Political Theory, Its Inheritance, and the History of Ideas*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- Connolly, William E. "Politics and Vision." In *Democracy and Vision: Sheldon Wolin and the Vicissitudes of the Political*, edited by Aryeh Botwinick and William E. Connolly, 1–22. Princeton University Press, 2001.
- . "The 'New Materialism' and the Fragility of Things." *Millennium* 41, no. 3 (June 1, 2013): 399–412.
- . "The Uncertain Condition of the Critical Intellectual: A Response." *Political Theory* 23, no. 4 (1995): 653–57.
- Cooke, Sam. "It's Been A Long Time Coming." Recorded February 1963 - January 1964. Track 7 on *Ain't That Good News*. RCA Victor, 1964.
- Cooper, Barry. "Reason & Interpretation in Contemporary Political Theory." *Polity* 11, no. 3 (Spring 1979): 387–99.
- Crimp, Donald. "The End of Painting." *October* 16 (Spring 1981): 69–86.

- Crowder, George. "Berlin and Rawls." In *Australasian Political Studies Association Annual Conference 2011*. Canberra: Australian National University., 2011.
- Dahl, Robert A. Review of *Political Theory: Truth and Consequences*, by Bertrand de Jouvenel. *World Politics* 11, no. 1 (1958): 89–102.
- Dalgarno, M.T. "A Theory of Justice." *Analytical Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (January 1973): 26–28.
- Dallmayr, Fred. "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory." *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 2 (June 2004): 249–57.
- . *Polis and Praxis: Exercises in Contemporary Political Theory*. Boston: MIT Press, 1987.
- Daniels, Norman. *Just Health Care*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- , ed. *Reading Rawls: Critical Studies on Rawls' A Theory of Justice*. 1975. Reprint, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989.
- Danto, Arthur C. *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*. 1997. Reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Davidson, Donald. "What Metaphors Mean." *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 31–47.
- Donnelly, J.M. "A Theory of Justice, Judicial Methodology, and the Constitutionality of Capital Punishment: Rawls, Dworkin, and a Theory of Criminal Responsibility." *Syracuse Law Review* 29 (1978): 1109–74.
- Dossa, Shiraz. "Human Status and Politics: Hannah Arendt on the Holocaust." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 13, no. 2 (June 1980): 309–23.
- Douglass, R. Bruce. "John Rawls and the Revival of Political Philosophy: Where Does He Leave Us?" *Theoria*, 2012, 81–97.
- Drabble, Margaret. *The Witch of Exmoor*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996.
- Dreben, Burton. "On Rawls and Political Liberalism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, edited by Samuel Freeman, 316–46. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Dugger, William M. "The Reform Method of John R. Commons." *Journal of Economic Issues* 13, no. 2 (June 1, 1979): 369–81.
- Dunn, John. "The Identity of the History of Ideas." *Philosophy* 43, no. 164 (April 1968): 85–104.
- Easton, David. "The Decline of Modern Political Theory." *The Journal of Politics* 13, no. 1 (1951): 36–58.
- Easton, David, and John G. Gunnell. "David Easton." In *Political Science in America: Oral Histories of a Discipline*, edited by Michael A. Baer, Malcolm E. Jewell, and Lee Sigelman, 195–214. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991.
- Elshtain, Jean Bethke. "The Feminist Movement & the Question of Equality." *Polity* 7, no. 4 (Summer 1975): 452–77.
- Emberley, Peter C., and Waller R. Newell. *Bankrupt Education: The Decline of Liberal Education in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.
- Epstein, Joseph. "Who Killed Poetry." *Commentary* 86, no. 2 (1988): 13–20.
- Estlund, David. "What Good Is It? Unrealistic Political Theory and the Value of Intellectual Work." *Analyse & Kritik* 33, no. 2 (2011): 396–416.

- Farmbry, Kyle. "Justice as "Fairness" Reified: Lessons from the South African Constitutional Court." *Public Administration Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (2014): 521–43.
- Faulkner. "Reason and Revelation in Hooker's Ethics." *American Political Science Review* 59, no. 3 (1965): 680–90.
- Feinberg, Joel. "Justice, Fairness and Rationality." *Yale Law Journal* 81, no. 4 (April 1972): 1004–31.
- Feldman, Joe. "Some Features of Justice and 'A Theory of Justice.'" *California Law Review* 61, no. 6 (December 1973): 1463–78.
- Field, G.C. "What Is Political Theory?" In *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 145–66. London: Wiley, 1953.
- Fishkin, James. "Justice and Rationality: Some Objections to the Central Argument in Rawls's Theory." *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): 615–29.
- . "Moral Principles and Public Policy." *Daedalus* 108, no. 4 (Fall 1979): 55–67.
- . "RE: Philosophy, Politics and Society Question," June 15, 2018.
- Fitzpatrick, Kathleen. *The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006.
- Flew, Antony. "A Theory of Justice." *Journal of Social Policy* 2, no. 4 (October 1973): 357–59.
- Flynn, Bernard. *The Philosophy of Claude Lefort: Interpreting the Political*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005.
- Forbes, H.D., ed. *Canadian Political Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Ford, Andrew. "The Beginnings of Dialogue: Socratic Discourses and Fourth-Century Prose." In *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity*, edited by Simon Goldhill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Forrester, Katrina. "Hope and Memory in the Thought of Judith Shklar." *Modern Intellectual History* 8, no. 3 (2011): 591–620.
- Fowler, Robert Booth. "Does Political Theory Have A Future?" In *What Should Political Theory Be Now?*, edited by John S. Nelson, 549–80. SUNY Press, 1984.
- Frank, Jason A., and John Tamborino. "Introduction." In *Vocations of Political Theory*, edited by Jason A. Frank and John Tamborino. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
- Frankel, Charles. "The Jurisprudence of Liberty The University of Mississippi School of Law Memorial Lectures." *Mississippi Law Journal* 46 (1975): 561–624.
- Freedman, Michael. "What Should the 'Political' in Political Theory Explore?" *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 13, no. 2 (June 2005): 113–34.
- Fried, Charles. "Distributive Justice." *Social Philosophy and Policy* 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1983): 45–59.
- . "Reviewed Work: A Theory of Justice by John Rawls." *Harvard Law Review* 85, no. 8 (June 1972): 1691–97.
- Friedmann, Wolfgang G. "A Theory of Justice: A Lawyer's Critique." *The Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* 11, no. 3 (October 1972): 369–79.

- Friedrich, Carl J. "Instruction and Research: Political Science in the United States in Wartime." *The American Political Science Review* 41, no. 5 (October 1947): 978–89.
- . "Reviewed Work: A Theory of Justice by John Rawls." *Harvard Law Review* 85, no. 8 (June 1972): 1691–97.
- "Political Philosophy and the 'Science' of Politics." In *Approaches to the Study of Politics*, edited by Roland Young, 172–88. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1958.
- Frohlich, Norman, and Joe A. Oppenheimer. *Choosing Justice: An Experimental Approach to Ethical Theory*. Oakland: University of California Press, 1993.
- Fukuma, Satoshi. "Rawls in Japan: A Brief Sketch of the Reception of John Rawls' Philosophy." *Philosophy East and West* 64, no. 4 (October 2014): 887–901.
- Fuller, Buckminster. *Critical Path*. New York: St Martins Press, 1981.
- . *Intuition*. 1972. Reprint, Oakland: Impact Publishers, 1983.
- Fullinwider, Robert K. "A Chronological Bibliography of Works on John Rawls' A Theory of Justice." *Political Theory* 5, no. 4 (1977): 561–70.
- Gaarder, Jostein. *Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy*. Translated by Paulette Møller. 1991. Reprint, London: Phoenix House, 1995.
- Galipeau, Claude J. *Isaiah Berlin's Liberalism*. Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- Garnett, John C. "Normative Theory." In *Commonsense and the Theory of International Politics*, 76–101. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984.
- Gaus, Gerald. "Liberalism at the End of the Century." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 5, no. 2 (2000): 179–99.
- . *The Modern Liberal Theory of Man*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.
- Gauthier, David. "The Social Contract as Ideology." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 6, no. 2 (1977): 130–64.
- Gellner, Ernest. "Gellner on Grey on Berlin." 1995. Reprint, The Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library, October 9, 2018.
<http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/lists/onib/gellner/gellner-on-gray-on-berlin.pdf>.
- . "Sauce for the Liberal Goose." *Prospect*, November 29, 1995.
<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/saucefortheliberongoose-isaiah-berlin>.
- Geoghegan, Vincent. "Political Theory, Utopia, Post-Secularism." edited by Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini, 69–86. Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academy Publishers, 2007.
- Germino, Dante. "Some Observations on Recent Political Philosophy and Theory." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 400 (March 1972): 140–48.
- . "The Revival of Political Theory." *The Journal of Politics* 25, no. 3 (1963): 437–60.
- Gerrig, Richard. *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*. Yale University Press, 1993.
- Glaser, William A. "The Types and Uses of Political Theory." *Social Research* 22, no. 3 (1955).

- Goldman, Samuel. "Beyond the Markers of Certainty: Thoughts on Claude Lefort and Leo Strauss." *Perspectives on Political Science* 40, no. 1 (2011): 27–34.
- Goodin, Robert E., and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds. *A New Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Gough, Ian, and Len Doyal. "Human Needs and Socialist Welfare." *Praxis International* 6, no. 1 (1986): 43–69.
- Grant, George. *English-Speaking Justice*. 1974. Reprint, Toronto: Anansi, 1998.
- . "In Defense of North America." In *Technology and Empire: Perspectives on North America*, 13–40. 1969. Reprint, Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1991.
- Grant, Ruth W. "Political Theory, Political Science, and Politics." *Political Theory* 30, no. 4 (2002): 577–95.
- Graves, Alex. "Red Haven's on Fire." *The West Wing*. NBC, February 26, 2003.
- Gray, John. "Mill's and Other Liberalisms." *Critical Review* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 12–35.
- Greaves, H.R.G. "Political Theory Today." *Political Science Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (1960): 1–16.
- Grever, Maria, and Siep Stuurman, eds. *Beyond the Canon: History for the Twenty-First Century*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2007.
- Grey, Thomas. "The First Virtue." *Stanford Law Review* 25, no. 2 (January 1973): 286–327.
- Griffin, Stephen M. "Political Philosophy Versus Political Theory: The Case of Rawls." *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 69, no. 1 (1994): 691–707.
- Gunnell, John G. "American Political Science, Liberalism, and the Invention of Political Theory." *The American Political Science Review* 82, no. 1 (1988).
- . *Between Philosophy and Politics: The Alienation of Political Theory*. University of Massachusetts Press, 1986.
- . "Dislocated Rhetoric: The Anomaly of Political Theory." *The Journal of Politics* 68, no. 4 (November 1, 2006): 771–82.
- . "History of Political Philosophy as a Discipline." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, edited by George Klosko, 60–74. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- . *Imagining the American Polity: American Political Science and the Discourse of Democracy*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.
- . "Political Theory and Politics: The Case of Leo Strauss." *Political Theory* 13, no. 3 (1985): 339–61.
- . *Political Theory: Tradition and Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- . "Professing Political Theory." *Political Research Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (August 4, 2010): 674–79.
- . *The Descent of Political Theory: The Genealogy of an American Vocation*. University of Michigan Press, 1995.
- . "The Myth of the Tradition." *American Political Science Review* 72, no. 1 (March 1978): 122–34.

- Gunnell, John G., and David Easton. "Introduction." In *The Development of Political Science: A Comparative Survey*, edited by David Easton, John G. Gunnell, and Luigi Graziano. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Gurjar, Leela Ram. "Trends of Contemporary Political Theory." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 58, no. 4 (December 2007): 827–34.
- Gutmann, Amy. "The Central Role of Rawls's Theory." *Dissent* 36 (1989): 338–42.
- Haas, Michael. *Political Science Revitalized: Filling the Jigsaw Puzzle with Metatheory*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017.
- Hacker, Andrew. "Capital and Carbuncles: The 'Great Books' Reappraised." *American Political Science Review* 48, no. 3 (September 1954): 775–86.
- . *Political Theory: Philosophy, Ideology, Science*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961.
- Hampsher-Monk, Iain. "The History of Political Thought and the Political History of Thought." In *The History of Political Thought in National Contexts*, edited by Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk, 159–74. Ideas in Context 61. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Hampshire, Stuart. "A Special Supplement: A New Philosophy of the Just Society." *The New York Review of Books*, February 24, 1972.
- Hare, R.M. "Review: Rawls' Theory of Justice--I." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 23, no. 91 (April 1973): 144–55.
- . "Review: Rawls' Theory of Justice--II." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 23, no. 92 (July 1973): 241–52.
- Harsanyi, John C. "Can the Maximin Principle Serve as a Basis for Morality? A Critique of John Rawls's Theory." *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): 594–606.
- Hart, H.L.A. "Rawls on Liberty and Its Priority." *The University of Chicago Law Review* 40, no. 3 (Spring 1973): 534–55.
- Hartley, Leslie Poles. *The Go-Between*. 1953. Reprint, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1997.
- Hassanzadeh, Navid. "Race, Internationalism, and Comparative Political Theory." *Polity* 50, no. 4 (October 2018): 519–46.
- . "The Canon and Comparative Political Thought." *Journal of International Political Theory* 11, no. 2 (2015): 184–202.
- Hauptmann, Emily. "Defining 'Theory' in Postwar Political Science." In *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences: Positivism and Its Epistemological Others*, edited by George Steinmetz, 207–32. London: Duke University Press, 2005.
- . "From Opposition to Accommodation: How Rockefeller Foundation Grants Redefined Relations between Political Theory and Social Science in the 1950s." *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 4 (November 2006): 643–49.
- . "The Evolution of Political Theory in Berkeley in a Climate of Experiment and Secession." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 3 (July 2017): 792–96.
- . "The Ford Foundation and the Rise of Behavioralism in Political Science." *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 48, no. 2 (2012): 154–73.
- Havelock, Eric. "Plato's Politics and the American Constitution." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 93 (1990): 1–24.

- Havers, Grant. "George Grant and Leo Strauss: Modernist and Postmodernist Conservatism." *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 8 (2002).
- Haworth, Alan. "In Theory's Wake." In *Understanding the Political Philosophers*, Second., 279–86. 2004. Reprint, London: Routledge, 2012.
- . "Political Philosophy." In *The Encyclopedia of British Philosophy*, edited by A.C. Grayling, Naomi Goulder, and Andrew Pyle, 2537–43. Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2006.
- . "Rawls: Through Reason to Justice." In *Understanding the Political Philosophers*, Second., 254–78. 2004. Reprint, London: Routledge, 2012.
- Hayward, Jack. "Cultural and Contextual Constraints upon the Development of Political Science in Great Britain." In *The Development of Political Science: A Comparative Survey*, edited by David Easton, John G. Gunnell, and Luigi Graziano, 93–107. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Edited by Allen W. Wood. Translated by H.B. Nisbet. 1820. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Herbert, Frank. *Dune*. 1965. Reprint, New York: Ace Books, 2005.
- Herring, Pendleton. "On the Study of Government." *The American Political Science Review* 47, no. 4 (December 1953): 961–74.
- Hirono, Miwa, and Shogo Suzuki. "Why Do We Need 'Myth-Busting' in the Study of Sino–African Relations?" *New Perspectives on China's Foreign Relations* 23, no. 87 (2014): 443–61.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962.
- Hobson, John M. *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760–2010*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Hodges, Donald Clark. "And the Withering Away of Social Philosophy." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 25, no. 4 (June 1965): 463–76.
- . "The End of 'The End of Ideology.'" *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 26, no. 2 (1967): 135–46.
- Hoerber, Robert G. "Plato's 'Euthyphro.'" *Phronesis* 3, no. 2 (1958): 95–107.
- Hoffman, John, and Paul Graham. *Introduction to Political Theory*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2015.
- Hoffman, Stanley. "Judith Shklar as Political Thinker." *Political Theory* 21, no. 2 (May 1993): 172–80.
- Holton, James. "Is Political Philosophy Dead?" *The Western Political Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1961): 75–77.
- Honig, Bonnie. "Difference, Dilemmas, and the Politics of Home." In *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, edited by Seyla Benhabib, 67–94. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Horton, John. "Rawls in Britain." *European Journal of Political Theory* 1, no. 2 (2002): 147–161.
- Hurka, Thomas. *Perfectionism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Hurran, Nick. "The Day of the Doctor." *Doctor Who*. BBC One, November 23, 2013.

- Hutchins, Robert M. "The Great Conversation." In *Great Books of the Western World*, edited by Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler, 1:xi–xxvii. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952.
- Huxen, Keith. "The Value of Historical Study and the Clash of Civilizations." *Forum on Public Policy: A Journal of the Oxford Round Table* 2, no. 3 (2007).
- Idris, Murad. "Political Theory and the Politics of Comparison." *Political Theory*, July 26, 2016.
- Isaac, Jeffrey C. "Rejoinder by Isaac." *Political Theory* 23, no. 4 (1995): 681–88.
- . "The Strange Silence of Political Theory." *Political Theory* 23, no. 4 (1995): 636–52.
- Jackson, Michael, and Peter Hill. "A Fair Share." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 7, no. 2 (1995): 169–79.
- Jackson, Michael W. "Justice & Heroism." *Polity* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1983): 201–13.
- Jacobson, Norman. "The Unity of Political Theory: Science, Morals, and Politics." In *Approaches to the Study of Politics*, edited by Roland Young. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1958.
- Jacoby, Russell. *The End Of Utopia: Politics And Culture In An Age Of Apathy*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- Jaffa, Harry V. "The Case Against Political Theory." *The Journal of Politics* 22, no. 2 (May 1960): 259–75.
- Jhulka, K.L. "Empirical Political Theory an Appraisal." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 3 (September 1981): 35–47.
- Johnson, Victoria. "The Maps We Wandered Into As Kids." *The Awl*, February 7, 2012. <https://www.theawl.com/2012/02/the-maps-we-wandered-into-as-kids/>.
- Jose, Jim, and Sara C. Motta. "Reoccupying the Political: Transforming Political Science." *Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* 23, no. 6 (February 24, 2017): 651–60.
- Jost, John T. "The End of the End of Ideology." *American Psychology* 61, no. 7 (2006): 651–70.
- Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. 1916. Reprint, Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1992.
- Kahler, Erich. "The Transformation of Modern Fiction." *Comparative Literature* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1955): 121–28.
- Kahn, Charles H. *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Kariel, Henry S., ed. *Sources in Twentieth-Century Political Thought*. New York: The Free Press, 1964.
- Kateb, George. "The Adequacy of the Canon." *Political Theory* 30, no. 4 (2002): 482–505.
- Katznelson, Ira. "Isaiah Berlin's Modernity." *Social Research* 66, no. 4 (1999): 1079–1101.
- Kaufman, Herbert. "Organization Theory and Political Theory." *American Political Science Review* 58 (March 1964): 5–14.

- Kaufman-Osborn, Timothy V. "Political Theory as Profession and as Subfield?" *Political Research Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2010): 655–673.
- Keat, Russell, and David Miller. "Understanding Justice." *Political Theory* 2, no. 1 (February 1974): 3–31.
- Kelbley, Charles A. "Are There Limits to Constitutional Change? Rawls on Comprehensive Doctrines, Unconstitutional Amendments, and the Basis of Equality." *Fordham Law Review* 72, no. 5 (2004): 1487–1536.
- Kelleher, Paul. Twitter Post. January 22, 2020, 8:41 AM. https://twitter.com/kelleher_/status/1219978459977605121.
- Kenny, Michael. "Isaiah Berlin's Contribution to Modern Political Theory." *Political Studies* 48 (2000): 1026–1039.
- Kerber, Hannes. "Strauss and Schleiermacher." In *Reorientation: Leo Strauss in the 1930s*, edited by Martin D. Yaffe and Richard S. Ruderman, 214. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Kettler, David. "The Political Theory Question in Political Science, 1956-1967." *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 4 (November 2006): 531–37.
- Kimball, Roger. "Retaking the University: A Battle Plan." *The New Criterion*, May 2005. <https://www.newcriterion.com/issues/2005/5/retaking-the-university-a-battle-plan>.
- . *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Higher Education*. New York: Harper & Row, 1990.
- Kindervater, Garnet. "Interference: Between Political Science and Political Philosophy." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 13, no. 4 (December 2010): 452–72.
- King, Richard. "Old Problems/New Departures: American Political Thought since 1960." *The History Teacher* 24, no. 1 (November 1990): 99–112.
- Kiss, Elizabeth. "The Strange Silence of Political Theory: Response." *Political Theory* 23, no. 4 (November 1995): 664–69.
- Kloppenber, James T. *Reading Obama: Dreams, Hope, and the American Political Tradition*. Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Klosko, George. "Contemporary Anglo-American Political Philosophy." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, edited by George Klosko, 456–79. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- . "The Insufficiency of Reason in Plato's Gorgias." *The Western Political Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (December 1983): 579–95.
- Knight, Kelvin. "After Tradition?: Heidegger or MacIntyre, Aristotle and Marx." *Analyse & Kritik* 30, no. 1 (2008): 33–52.
- Koikkalainen, Petri. "Contextualist Dilemmas: Methodology of the History of Political Theory in Two Stages." *History of European Ideas* 37, no. 3 (2011): 315–24.
- . "Peter Laslett and the Contested Concept of Political Philosophy." *History of Political Thought* 30, no. 2 (January 1, 2009): 336–59.
- Konow, James. "Which Is the Fairest One of All? A Positive Analysis of Justice Theories." *Journal of Economic Literature* 41, no. 4 (December 2003): 1188–1239.

- Korzybski, Alfred. *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*. The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Company, 1933.
- Krislov, Samuel. "Justice as Formal Theory." *Polity* 6, no. 4 (Summer 1974): 574–78.
- Kukathas, Chandran, and Philip Pettit. *Rawls: A Theory of Justice and Its Critics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- La Dœuff, Michèle. *Hipparchia's Choice: An Essay Concerning Women, Philosophy, Etc.* Translated by Trista Selous. 1989. Reprint, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Laborde, Cécile. "The Reception of John Rawls in Europe." *European Journal of Political Theory* 1, no. 2 (2002): 133–146.
- Lachs, John. "The Future of Philosophy." *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 78, no. 2 (November 2004): 5–14.
- Langan, John P. "Rawls, Nozick, and the Search for Social Justice." *Theological Studies* 38, no. 2 (1977): 346–58.
- LaPalombara, Joseph. "Decline of Ideology: A Dissent and an Interpretation." *The American Political Science Review* 60, no. 1 (1966): 5–16.
- Laslett, Peter. "Introduction." In *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, vii–xv. Philosophy, Politics and Society 1. Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1956.
- , ed. *Philosophy, Politics and Society*. Philosophy, Politics and Society 1. Oxford: Blackwell, 1956.
- . "The Face to Face Society." In *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*, 157–84. Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1956.
- Laslett, Peter, and Philip W. Cummings. "History of Political Philosophy." In *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Paul Edwards. New York: Macmillan, 1967.
- Laslett, Peter, and James Fishkin. "Introduction." In *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, ??? Philosophy, Politics and Society 5. Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1979.
- , eds. *Philosophy, Politics and Society*. Philosophy, Politics and Society 5. Oxford: Blackwell, 1979.
- Laslett, Peter, and W.G. Runciman. "Introduction." In *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, vii–x. Philosophy, Politics and Society 2. Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1962.
- . "Introduction." In *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, 1–5. Philosophy, Politics and Society 3. Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1967.
- , eds. *Philosophy, Politics and Society*. Philosophy, Politics and Society 2. Oxford: Blackwell, 1962.
- Laslett, Peter, W.G. Runciman, and Quentin Skinner. "Introduction." In *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, 1–7. Philosophy, Politics and Society 4. Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1972.
- , eds. *Philosophy, Politics and Society*. Philosophy, Politics and Society 4. Oxford: Blackwell, 1972.
- Lassman, Peter. "Isaiah Berlin: Liberty and Pluralism." *Contemporary Political Theory* 5 (2006): 358–60.
- . "Pluralism and Liberalism in the Political Thought of Isaiah Berlin." In *Politics at the Edge*, 119–31. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.

- Lawrence, Michael A. "Justice-as-Fairness as Judicial Guiding Principle: Remembering John Rawls and the Warren Court." *Brook Legislative Review* 81 (2016): 673–731.
- Leff, Arthur A. "Unspeakable Ethics, Unnatural Law." *Duke Law Journal* 1979, no. 6 (December 1979): 1229–50.
- Lefort, Claude. *Democracy and Political Theory*. Translated by David Macey. 1986. Reprint, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988.
- Lehning, Percy. "Social Contract and Property Rights: A Comparison between John Rawls and James M. Buchanan." In *Democracy, Consensus and Social Contract*, edited by Pierre Birnbaum, Jack Lively, and Geraint Parry, Vol. 2. SAGE Modern Politics. London: Sage Publications, 1978.
- Lessnoff, Michael H. "John Rawls' Theory of Justice." *Political Studies* XIX, no. 1 (March 1971): 63–80.
- . *Political Philosophers of the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.
- Levine, Lawrence W. *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.
- Levy, Jacob. "Political Theory and Political Philosophy." McGill University, April 2003. <http://profs-polisci.mcgill.ca/levy/theory-philosophy.html>.
- Lewis, H.D. "Is There a Social Contract? I." *Philosophy* 15, no. 57 (January 1940): 64–79.
- Liebowitz, Nathan. *Daniel Bell and the Agony of Modern Liberalism*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. "Some Further Comments on 'The End of Ideology.'" *The American Political Science Review* 60, no. 1 (1966): 17–18.
- Lissowski, Grzegorz, Tadeusz Tyszka, and Włodzimierz Okrasa. "Principles of Distributive Justice: Experiments in Poland and America." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, no. 1 (1991): 98–119.
- Louis, L'Amour. *Lonely on the Mountain*. 1980. Reprint, New York: Bantam Books, 2010.
- Lowi, Theodore J. "The State in Political Science: How We Become What We Study." *The American Political Science Review* 86, no. 1 (March 1992): 1–7.
- Lukes, Steven. "An Archimedean Point." *Observer Review*, June 4, 1972, 32.
- . "The Singular and the Plural: On the Distinctive Liberalism of Isaiah Berlin." *Social Research* 61, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 687–717.
- Lukes, Steven, and Isaiah Berlin. "Isaiah Berlin: In Conversation with Steven Lukes." *Salmagundi* 120 (Fall 1998): 52–134.
- Lynch, Jeffrey. "The Boy Who Knew Too Much." *The Simpsons*. Fox, May 5, 1994.
- Lynd, Robert. *Knowledge For What?* 1939. Reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.
- MacDonald, Margaret. "The Language of Political Theory." In *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 41:91–112. St. Hilda's College, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 1971.

- . “Justice: A New Theory and Some Old Questions.” *Boston University Law Review* 52, no. 4 (April 1972): 330–34.
- . “The Essential Contestability of Some Social Concepts.” *Ethics* 84, no. 1 (October 1973): 1–9.
- Macpherson, C.B. “Introduction.” In *Second Treatise of Government*, by John Locke, edited by C.B. Macpherson. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980.
- Major, Rafael. “The Cambridge School and Leo Strauss: Texts and Context of American Political Science.” *Political Research Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (2005): 477–85.
- . “Thinking Through Strauss’s Legacy.” In *Leo Strauss’s Defense of the Philosophic Life: Reading “What Is Political Philosophy?”*, edited by Rafael Major, 1–21. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Makarenko, Jay. “Fair Opportunity to Participate: The Charter and the Regulation of Electoral Speech.” *Canadian Political Science Review* 3, no. 2 (2009): 38–51.
- Malook, Saad. “The Post-Rawlsian Political Philosophy: A Critique of the Realist Standpoint.” *Al-Hikmat* 37 (2017): 45–60.
- Mandelbaum, Maurice. “A Theory of Justice.” *History and Theory* 12, no. 2 (1973): 240–50.
- Manent, Pierre. “The Return of Political Philosophy.” *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion & Public Life* 103 (2000): 15–22.
- Manning, Russ. “Environmental Ethics and Rawls’ Theory of Justice.” *Environmental Ethics* 3, no. 2 (1981): 155–65.
- Mara, Gerald M. “Virtue & Pluralism: The Problem of the One & the Many.” *Polity* 22, no. 1 (Autumn 1989): 25–48.
- March, Andrew. “What Is Comparative Political Theory?” *The Review of Politics* 71, no. 4 (2009): 531–65.
- Martin, Bill. *Politics in the Impasse: Explorations in Postsecular Social Theory*. New York: SUNY Press, 1996.
- Martin, Paul. *Sanctioned Ignorance*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2013.
- Marx, Karl. “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon.” In *Marx: Later Political Writings*, translated by Terrell Carver, 31–127. 1852. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- . “Theses on Feuerbach.” In *Selected Writings*, edited by Lawrence H. Simon, translated by Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat, 98–101. 1888. Reprint, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994.
- Masala, Antonio. “The Moral Order of Classical Liberalism.” In *Re-Inventing Western Civilisation: Transnational Reconstructions of Liberalism in Europe in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Niklas Olsen and Hagen Schulz-Forberg, 69–94. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.
- Matravers, Matt. “Twentieth-Century Political Philosophy.” In *The Routledge Companion to Twentieth Century Philosophy*, edited by Dermot Moran, 883–912. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Mazie, Steven. “Obama’s Rawlsian Vision.” *The Economist*, February 19, 2013. <https://www.economist.com/democracy-in-america/2013/02/19/obamas-rawlsian-vision#comments>.

- McBride, William L. "Social Theory Sub Specie Aeternitatis: A New Perspective." *Yale Law Journal* 81, no. 4 (April 1972): 980–1003.
- McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. New York: Knopf, 2006.
- McCracken, David. "Godwin's Literary Theory: The Alliance Between Fiction and Political Theory." *Philological Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (January 1, 1970): 113–33.
- McDonald, Neil A., and James N. Rosenau. "Political Theory as Academic Field and Intellectual Activity." *The Journal of Politics* 30, no. 2 (May 1968): 311–44.
- Meehan, Eugene J. *Contemporary Political Thought: A Critical Study*. Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1967.
- Meier, Heinrich. "Why Political Philosophy?" *The Review of Metaphysics* 56, no. 2 (2002): 385–407.
- Melzer, Arthur. *Philosophy Between the Lines: The Lost History of Esoteric Writing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.
- Michelbach, Philip A., John T. Scott, Richard E. Matland, and Brian H. Bornstein. "Doing Rawls Justice: An Experimental Study of Income Distribution Norms." *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (July 2003): 523–39.
- Michelman, Frank I. "Our Liberalism." *Texas Law Review* 89 (2011): 1409–14.
- Midlarsky, Manus I. "The Balance of Power as a 'Just' Historical System." *Polity* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1983): 181–200.
- Miller, Char R. "Drawing Out Theory: Art and the Teaching of Political Theory." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 33, no. 2 (2000): 213–18.
- Miller, David. "In What Sense Must Political Philosophy Be Political?" *Social Philosophy and Policy* 33, no. 1–2 (2016): 155–74.
- . *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- . "Political Philosophy for Earthlings." In *Justice for Earthlings: Essays in Political Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- . "The Resurgence of Political Theory." *Political Studies* 38, no. 3 (1990): 421–37.
- Miller, Eugene F. "Metaphor and Political Knowledge." *American Political Science Review* 73, no. 1 (March 1979): 155–70.
- Mills, Charles W. "Decolonizing Western Political Philosophy." *New Political Science* 37, no. 1 (2015): 1–24.
- Minogue, Kenneth. "Oakeshott and Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (2004): 227–46.
- Mohan, Robert Paul. "Moral Values Rationally Affirmed." *The Washington Post*. September 3, 1972, sec. Book World.
- Mohler, Corey. "In Which John Rawls Is a Bad Tipper." Webcomic. Existential Comics, February 15, 2016. <http://existentialcomics.com/comic/119>.
- Momigliano, Arnaldo. *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987.
- Morgenthau, Hans J. "Reflections on the State of Political Science." *The Review of Politics* 17, no. 4 (October 1955): 431–60.

- Monroe, Kristen, Gabriel A. Almond, John G. Gunnell, Ian Shapiro, George Graham, Benjamin Barber, Kenneth Shepsle, and Joseph Cropsey. "The Nature of Contemporary Political Science: A Roundtable Discussion." *The Nature of Contemporary Political Science: A Roundtable Discussion* 23, no. 1 (March 1990): 34–43.
- Moon, J. Donald. "The Current State of Political Theory: Pluralism and Reconciliation." In *What Is Political Theory*, edited by Stephen K. White and J. Donald Moon, 12–29. London: Sage Publications, 2004.
- Moore, Matthew J. "How (and What) Political Theorists Teach: Results of a National Survey." *Journal of Political Science Education* 7, no. 1 (2011): 95–128.
- . "Political Theory Today: Results of a National Survey." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 43, no. 2 (2010): 265–72.
- . "Teaching Political Theory." In *Handbook on Teaching and Learning in Political Science and International Relations*, edited by John Ishiyama, William J. Miller, and Eszter Simon. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015.
- . "Textbooks and the Dilemma of Teaching Political Theory." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 2 (2017): 531–35.
- Morrice, David. *Philosophy, Science and Ideology in Political Thought*. 1996. Reprint, Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998.
- Moskop, John C. "Rawlsian Justice and a Human Right to Health Care." *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 8, no. 4 (1983): 329–38.
- Moss, Jessica. "The Doctor and the Pastry Chef: Pleasure and Persuasion in Plato's *Gorgias*." *Ancient Philosophy* 27, no. 2 (2007): 229–49.
- Mouffe, Chantal. "Rawls: Political Philosophy Without Politics." *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 13, no. 2 (1987): 105–23.
- Müller, Jan-Werner. "Fear and Freedom: On 'Cold War Liberalism'" 7, no. 1 (2008): 45–64.
- . "Rawls in Germany." *European Journal of Political Theory* 1, no. 2 (2002): 163–179.
- Nagel, Thomas. "John Rawls and Affirmative Action." *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 39 (Spring 2003): 82–84.
- Nehamas, Alexander. "What Did Socrates Teach and to Whom Did He Teach It?" *The Review of Metaphysics* 46, no. 2 (1992): 279–306.
- Neill, Edmund. "Varieties of Positivism in Western European Political Thought, c. 1945–1970: An Introduction." *History of European Ideas* 39, no. 1 (May 23, 2012): 1–18.
- Nell, Onora, Kenneth E. Boulding, and Stephen T. Worland. "Review: Three Reviews of John Rawls: 'A Theory of Justice.'" *Journal of Economic Issues* 7, no. 4 (December 1973): 665–77.
- Nelson, John S. "Natures and Futures of Political Theory." In *What Should Political Theory Be Now?*, edited by John S. Nelson, 3–24. SUNY Press, 1984.
- Newey, Glen. *After Politics: The Rejection of Politics in Contemporary Liberal Philosophy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

- Nicgorski, Walter. "Theory Redivivus." *The Political Science Reviewer* 25 (1996): 74–100.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Translated by Walter Kaufman. 1886. Reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1989.
- . "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense." In *Philosophy and Truth*, edited by Daniel Breazeale, 79–91. 1896. Reprint, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979.
- Nisbet, Robert. "The Pursuit of Equality." *The Public Interest* 35 (Spring 1974): 103–20.
- Northrop, F.S.C. "Reviewed Work(s): Sovereignty: An Inquiry into the Political Good. by Bertrand de Jouvenel and J. F. Huntington." *The Yale Law Journal* 67, no. 7 (June 1958): 1300–1316.
- Norton, Anne. *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Nowak, John E. "Foreword: Evaluating the Work of the New Libertarian Supreme Court." *Hastings Constitutional Law Quarterly* 7 (1980): 263–314.
- Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. 1974. Reprint, Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 1999.
- Nussbaum, Martha. "The Enduring Significance of John Rawls." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 47, no. 45 (2001): B7.
- . "Undemocratic Vistas." In *Philosophical Interventions: Reviews 1986-2011*, 36–52. 1987. Reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Oakeshott, Michael. *Experience and Its Modes*. 1933. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- . "The Idea of a University." *Academic Questions* 17, no. 1 (March 2004): 23–30.
- . "The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind." In *Rationalism and Politics*, 197–247. 1960. Reprint, London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1962.
- Oberdiek, Hans. "A Theory of Justice by John Rawls." *New York University Law Review* 47, no. 5 (November 1972): 1012–28.
- Okin, Susan Moller. *Women in Western Political Thought*. 1979. Reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Okolo, Mary Stella Chika. *African Literature as Political Philosophy*. London: Zed Books, 2007.
- Oleson, Paul Eugene. "An Experimental Examination of Alternative Theories of Distributive Justice and Economic Fairness." Dissertation, University of Arizona., 2001.
- Ondaatje, Michael. *The English Patient*. 1992. Reprint, New York: Random House, 1993.
- Orr, Steven. "The Problem with a Pitiably Rump: On Impropriety and Political Philosophy." In *Flattering the Demos: Fiction and Democratic Education*, edited by Marlene K. Sokolon and Travis D. Smith. London: Lexington Books, 2018.
- Orsi, Davide. "Oakeshott on Practice, Normative Thought and Political Philosophy." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 23, no. 5 (2015): 545–68.
- Orwell, George. "Politics and the English Language." *Concepts in Composition: Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Writing*, 1946, 221–31.
- O'Sullivan, Noel, ed. *Political Theory In Transition*. London: Routledge, 2000.

- Palonen, Kari. *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003.
- Panchishkin, Alekseï Alekseevich, and Yuri Ivanovic Manin. "Introduction to Modern Number Theory." In *Encyclopedia of Mathematical Sciences*, 2nd ed. 1990. Reprint, New York: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2007.
- Panikkar, Raimundo. "What Is Comparative Philosophy Comparing?" In *Interpreting Across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy*, edited by Gerald J. Larson and Eliot Deutsch, 116–36. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Parekh, Bhikku. *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*. London: Macmillan, 2000.
- . "Theorizing Political Theory." In *Political Theory in Transition*, edited by Noël O'Sullivan, 242–59. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Partridge, Ernest. *Responsibilities to Future Generations*. Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1981.
- Partridge, P.H. "Political Philosophy and Political Sociology." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 1, no. 1 (1965): 3–20.
- . "Politics, Philosophy, Ideology." *Political Studies* 9, no. 3 (October 1961): 217–35.
- Patell, Cyrus R.K. *Negative Liberties: Morrison, Pynchon, and the Problem of Liberal Ideology*. Duke University Press, 2001.
- Pen, Jan. "Review: A Theory of Justice by John Rawls." *Challenge* 17, no. 1 (1974): 59–63.
- Pennock, J. Roland. "Political Science and Political Philosophy." *American Political Science Review* 45, no. 4 (December 1951): 1081–85.
- Perreau-Saussine, Emile. "Quentin Skinner in Context." *The Review of Politics* 69, no. 1 (2007): 106–22.
- Petrović, Gajo. "Why Praxis?" Translated by Zdravko Saveski. *Praxis* 1, no. 1 (1964). <https://www.marxists.org/subject/praxis/issue-01/why-praxis.htm>.
- Pettit, Philip. "Analytical Philosophy." In *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, edited by Robert E. Goodin, Philip Pettit, and Thomas W. Pogge, 2nd ed., 1:5–35. Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Pirie, G.H. "Political Philosophy and Political Geography." In *Political Geography: Recent Advances and Future Directions*, edited by Peter James Taylor and John William House, 227–. Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1984.
- Piven, Frances Fox. "Reflections on Scholarship and Activism." *Antipode* 42, no. 4 (September 1, 2010): 806–10.
- Plamenatz, John. "The Use of Political Theory." *Political Studies* 8, no. 1 (1960): 37–47.
- Plattner, Marc F. "The New Political Theory." *The Public Interest* 40 (Summer 1975): 119–28.
- Plato. *Plato in Twelve Volumes*. Translated by Harold Fowler. 12 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925.
- Pocock, J.G.A. "Political Ideas as Historical Events: Political Philosophers as Historical Actors." In *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*, 51–66. 1980. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

- . “Reviewed Work(s): Political Theory: Tradition and Interpretation by John G. Gunnell.” *Political Theory* 8, no. 4 (November 1980): 563–67.
- Posner, Richard A. *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline*. Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Pozas-Loyo, Andrea. “The Veil of Particular Ignorance and General Omniscience An Epistemic Critique to Rawls? Theory of Justice.” In *Annual Meeting*. Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, Illinois, 2005. http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p85664_index.html.
- Pritchard, William H. “Review: On Politics.” *The Hudson Review* 66, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 233–38.
- Prokhovnik, Raia. “An Interview with Quentin Skinner.” *Contemporary Political Theory* 10, no. 2 (2011): 273–85.
- Putnam, Robert D. “Studying Elite Political Culture: The Case of ‘Ideology.’” *The American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 651–81.
- Rae, Douglas. “Political Theory and the Division of Labor in Society: Asleep Aboard the Titanic and Steaming into Halifax.” *Political Theory* 9, no. 3 (1981): 369–78.
- . “Review: Maximin Justice and an Alternative Principle of General Advantage.” *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (June 1975): 630–47.
- Rathore, L.S. “In Defence of Political Theory.” *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 36, no. 4 (December 1975): 327–43.
- . “The Centre-Periphery Controversy in Political Theory.” *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 1 (March 1987): 12–30.
- Rawls, John. *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*. Edited by Samuel Freeman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- . *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Rees, J.C. “The Limitations of Political Theory.” *Political Studies* 2, no. 3 (1954): 242–57.
- Rehfeld, Andrew. 2010. “Offensive Political Theory.” *Perspectives on Politics* 8(2): 465–486.
- Reid, Herbert. “Contemporary American Political Science in the Crisis of Industrial Society.” *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 16, no. 3 (August 1972): 339–66.
- Reiff, Mark R. “Twenty-One Statements About Political Philosophy: An Introduction and Commentary on the State of the Profession.” *Teaching Philosophy* 41, no. 1 (2018): 65–115.
- Rengger, N.J. “Trust, Prudence and History: John Dunn and the Tasks of Political Theory.” *History of Political Thought* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 416–37.
- “Reservations.” *The Antioch Review* 32, no. 3 (Autumn 1972): 496–511.
- Rheinstein, Max. “A Theory of Justice.” *Columbia Law Review* 73, no. 7 (November 1973): 1515–21.
- Ricciardi, Mario. “Berlin on Liberty.” In *The One and the Many: Reading Isaiah Berlin*, edited by George Crowder and Henry Hardy, 119–39. Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2007.
- . “Rawls in Italy.” *European Journal of Political Theory* 1, no. 2 (2002): 229–241.

- Richardson, Henry, ed. *Development and Main Outlines of Rawls' Theory of Justice*. The Philosophy of Rawls 1. Garland Publishing, 1999.
- , ed. *Opponents and Implications of A Theory of Justice*. The Philosophy of Rawls 3. Garland Publishing, 1999.
- , ed. *The Two Principles and Their Justification*. The Philosophy of Rawls 2. Garland Publishing, 1999.
- Richter, Melvin. *Political Theory and Political Education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- . *Political Theory and Political Education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- . "Reviewed Work(s): Sovereignty: An Inquiry into the Political Good. by Bertrand de Jouvenel and J. F. Huntington." *American Sociological Review* 23, no. 2 (April 1958): 215–17.
- Riley, Patrick. "How Coherent Is the Social Contract Tradition?" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34, no. 4 (1973): 543–62.
- Roberts, Peter. "Bloom on Books, Reading, and the Determination of Greatness: A Critique and an Alternative." *Interchange* 29, no. 3 (1998): 245–60.
- Rothman, Stanley. "The Revival of Classical Political Philosophy: A Critique." *The American Political Science Review* 56, no. 2 (June 1962): 341–52.
- Rubin, Louis D. *The Curious Death of the Novel*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967.
- Rukeyser, Muriel. *Out of Silence: Selected Poems*. Edited by Kate Daniels. 1992. Reprint, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000.
- Ryan, John. "The Possibility of Politics: Hannah Arendt, The Public, and the Fragility of the Common World." Thesis, Carleton University, 2019.
- Ryan, Marie-Laure. "The Principle of Minimal Departure." *Poetics* 9 (1980): 403–22.
- Sabia, Daniel R. "Political Education and the History of Political Thought." *American Journal of Political Science* 78, no. 4 (December 1984): 985–99.
- Sabine, George H. "What Is a Political Theory?" *The Journal of Politics* 1, no. 1 (February 1, 1939): 1–16.
- Salkever, Stephen G. "Rousseau & the Concept of Happiness." *Polity* 11, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 27–45.
- . "Virtue, Obligation and Politics." *American Political Science Review* 68, no. 1 (March 1974): 78–92.
- Sandoz, Ellis. "The Philosopher's Vocation: The Voegelinian Paradigm." *The Review of Politics* 71, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 54–67.
- Saward, Michael. "Veil of Influence: The Legacy of John Rawls." *Soundings* 24 (2003): 117–24.
- Schaar, John. "Reflections on Rawls' Theory of Justice." *Social Theory and Practice* 3, no. 1 (April 1, 1974): 75–100.
- Schacter, Jane S. "Lawrence v. Texas and the Fourteenth Amendment's Democratic Aspirations." *Temple Political & Civil Rights Law Review* 13 (2004): 733–68.
- Schaefer, David Lewis. *Illiberal Justice: John Rawls vs. the American Political Tradition*. University of Missouri Press, 2007.

- . *Justice or Tyranny? A Critique of John Rawls's A Theory of Justice*. Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1979.
- . "‘Moral Theory’ versus Political Philosophy: Two Approaches to Justice." *The Review of Politics* 39, no. 2 (April 1977): 192–219.
- . "The ‘Sense’ and Non-Sense of Justice: An Examination of John Rawls' A Theory of Justice." *The Political Science Reviewer* 3 (Fall 1973): 1–41.
- Schall, James V. *At the Limits of Political Philosophy: From “Brilliant Errors” to Things of Uncommon Importance*. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996.
- Scherer, Matthew. "Saint John: The Miracle of Secular Reason." In *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, 341–64. New York: Fordham University Press, 2006.
- Schiff, James A. "Contemporary Retellings: A Thousand Acres as the Latest Lear." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 39, no. 4 (1998): 367–81.
- Schmidt, Brian C., ed. *International Relations and the First Great Debate*. London: Routledge, 2012.
- . "Introduction." In *International Relations and the First Great Debate*, edited by Brian C. Schmidt, 1–15. London: Routledge, 2012.
- . "On the History and Historiography of International Relations." In *Handbooks of International Relations*, edited by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, 2nd ed., 3–28. 2002. Reprint, London: Sage, 2013.
- Schramme, Thomas. "On the Relationship between Political Philosophy and Empirical Sciences." *Analyse & Kritik* 30, no. 2 (2008): 613–26.
- Schultz, Bart. "John Rawls's Last Word." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 39, no. 1 (2009): 107–14.
- Schwab, Elmo. "The Quest for the Reasonable Man." *Texas Bar Journal* 45 (February 1982): 178.
- Searle, John R. "The Storm Over the University." *The New York Review of Books*, December 6, 1990. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1990/12/06/the-storm-over-the-university/>.
- Seaton, James, and William K. Buckley, eds. *Beyond Cheering and Bashing: New Perspectives on The Closing of the American Mind*. Bowling Green: Popular Press, 1992.
- Seidelman, Raymond, and Edward Harpham. *Disenchanted Realists: Political Science and the American Crisis, 1884-1984*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1985.
- Shalit, Avner de-. "Political Philosophy and Empirical Political Science: From Foes to Friends?" *European Political Science* 8 (2009): 37–46.
- . "Political Philosophy and Empowering Citizens." *Political Studies* 52 (2004): 802–18.
- . *Power to the People: Teaching Political Philosophy in Skeptical Times*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006.
- Shapiro, Ian. *Political Criticism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

- . “Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What’s Wrong with Political Science and What to Do about It.” *Political Theory* 30, no. 4 (2002): 596–619.
- Sharpe, Matthew. “Uncovering Euthyphro’s Treasure Reading Plato’s Euthyphro with Lacan.” *Helios* 37, no. 1 (2010): 23–48.
- Sheppard, Eugene R. *Leo Strauss and the Politics of Exile: The Making of a Political Philosopher*. Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2006.
- Shevory, Thomas C. “Applying Rawls to Medical Cases: An Investigation into the Usages of Analytical Philosophy.” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 10, no. 4 (1986): 749–64.
- Shibasaki, Atshushi. “Myths in a Discipline: IR and ‘the Peace of Westphalia.’” *Journal of Global Media Studies* 14, no. 1 (2013): 41–52.
- Shils, Edward. “The End of Ideology?” *Encounter* 5, no. 5 (1955): 52–58.
- Shklar, Judith. *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith*. 1957. Reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- . “Injustice, Injury, and Inequality: An Introduction.” In *Justice and Equality Here and Now*, edited by Frank S. Lucash, 13–33. New York: Cornell University Press, 1986.
- . “Redeeming American Political Theory.” *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (March 1991): 3–15.
- . “The Political Theory of Utopia: From Melancholy to Nostalgia.” *Daedalus* 94, no. 2 (Spring 1965): 367–81.
- . “The Work of Michael Walzer.” In *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, edited by Stanley Hoffman, 376–85. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- . “What Is the Use of Utopia?” In *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, edited by Stanley Hoffman, 175–91. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Shrader-Frechette, K.S. “Ecological Justice and Low-Level Radiation: Public Policy and Nuclear Technology.” *Journal of American Culture* 3, no. 3 (1980): 501–13.
- Simhony, Avital, and David Weinstein, eds. *The New Liberalism: Reconciling Liberty and Community*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Skinner, Quentin, ed. “John Rawls.” In *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*. 1985. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- . *Liberty Before Liberalism*. 1998. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- , ed. *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*. 1985. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Skinner, Quentin, Partha Dasgupta, Raymond Geuss, Melissa Lane, Peter Laslett, Onora O’Neill, W.G. Runciman, and Andrew Kuper. “Political Philosophy: The View from Cambridge.” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 10, no. 1 (2002): 1–19.
- Skodo, Admir. “The Political Thought of Revisionism.” In *The Afterlife of Idealism: The Impact of New Idealism on British Historical and Political Thought, 1945–1980*, 181–239. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- Smith, David G. “Political Science and Political Theory.” *American Political Science Review* 51, no. 3 (September 1957): 734–46.

- Smith, Graham M. "Through a Glass, Darkly: The Vision and Visions of Political Theory." *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 11 (2009): 360–75.
- Smith, Rogers M. "Reconnecting Political Theory to Empirical Inquiry, or, A Return to the Cave." In *Theory and Inquiry in American Politics*, edited by Edward D. Mansfield and Richard Sisson, 60–88. Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2004.
- . "Still Blowing in the Wind: The American Quest for a Democratic, Scientific Political Science." *Daedalus* 126, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 253–87.
- Smith, Steven B. "Philosophy as a Way of Life: The Case of Leo Strauss." *The Review of Politics* 71, no. 1 (2009): 37–53.
- . *Reading Leo Strauss: Politics, Philosophy, Judaism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- Smith, Stuart L. "Report: Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education." Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1991.
- Solum, Lawrence B. "Situating Political Liberalism." *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 69 (1994): 549–88.
- Spann, R.N. "Cliches and Other Bad Habits in Political Science." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 1 (1966): 1–16.
- Spegele, Roger D. "Fiction and Political Theory." *Social Research* 38, no. 1 (1971): 108–38.
- . "Fiction as Political Theory: Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness.'" *British Journal of Political Science* 2, no. 3 (1972): 319–37.
- Spence, Larry D. "Against Teaching." *The Educational Forum* 66, no. 4 (2002): 330–39.
- . "Political Theory as a Vacation." *Polity* 12, no. 4 (Summer 1980): 697–710.
- Stark, Andrew. "Why Political Scientists Aren't Public Intellectuals." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35, no. 3 (2002): 577–79.
- Stears, Marc. *Demanding Democracy: American Radicals in Search of a New Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- . "The Vocation of Political Theory: Principles, Empirical Inquiry and the Politics of Opportunity." *European Journal of Political Theory* 4, no. 4 (2005): 325–50.
- Stephen K. White. "Pluralism, Platitudes, and Paradoxes: Fifty Years of Western Political Thought." *Political Theory* 30, no. 4 (August 2002): 472–81.
- Stevens, David. "Review: The New Liberalism: Reconciling Liberty and Community." *Contemporary Political Theory* 2 (2003): 117–119.
- Stevens, Richard G. *Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Stow, Simon. *Republic of Readers?: The Literary Turn in Political Thought and Analysis*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007.
- Strand, Mark. *The Continuous Life: Poems*. New York: Knopf, 2007.
- Strauss, Leo. "An Epilogue." In *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, edited by Hilail Gildin, 125–55. 1962. Reprint, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- . *An Introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays*. Wayne State University Press, 1989a.
- . "Introduction." In *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, edited by Hilail Gildin, vii–xxiv. 1945. Reprint, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.

- . “Liberal Education and Responsibility.” In *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, edited by Hilail Gildin, 321–45. 1962. Reprint, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- . “Maimonides’ Statement on Political Science.” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 22 (1953): 115–30.
- . *Natural Right and History*. 1953. Reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.
- . “Natural Right and the Historical Approach.” In *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, edited by Hilail Gildin, 99–124. 1950. Reprint, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- . “On Classical Political Philosophy.” In *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, edited by Hilail Gildin, 59–80. 1945. Reprint, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- . *On Plato’s Symposium*. Edited by Seth Benardete. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- . *Persecution and the Art of Writing*. 1952. Reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- . “Philosophy as Rigorous Science and Political Philosophy.” *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 2, no. 1 (1971): 1–9.
- . “Plato.” In *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, edited by Hilail Gildin, 167–245. 1963. Reprint, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- . “Political Philosophy and History.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 10, no. 1 (1949): 30–50.
- . “Progress or Return? The Contemporary Crisis in Western Civilization.” In *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, edited by Hilail Gildin, 249–310. 1981. Reprint, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- . *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*. Edited by Thomas L. Pangle. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989b.
- . *The City and Man*. 1964. Reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- . “Three Waves of Modernity.” In *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, edited by Hilail Gildin, 99–124. 1975. Reprint, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- . “What Can We Learn from Political Theory?” *The Review of Politics* 69, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 515–29.
- . “What Is Liberal Education?” In *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, edited by Hilail Gildin, 311–20. 1961. Reprint, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- . “What Is Political Philosophy?” In *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, edited by Hilail Gildin, 3–58. 1959. Reprint, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005.
- Strong, Tracy B. “In Defense of Rhetoric: Or How Hard It Is to Take a Writer Seriously: The Case of Nietzsche.” *Political Theory* 41, no. 4 (2013): 507–532.

- Stuurman, Siep. "The Canon of the History of Political Thought: Its Critique and a Proposed Alternative." *History and Theory* 39, no. 2 (2000): 147–66.
- Swope, Kurtis, John Cadigan, Pamela Schmitt, and Robert Shupp. "Social Position and Distributive Justice: Experimental Evidence." *Southern Economic Journal* 74, no. 3 (2008): 811–18.
- "Taking Ideas Seriously." Accessed December 3, 2017. <http://bostonreview.net/archives/BR27.6/benhabib.html>.
- Tanenhaus, Joseph, and Albert Somit. *The Development of Political Science: From Burgess to Behaviorism*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967.
- Tarcov, Nathan. "Leo Strauss's 'On Classical Political Philosophy.'" In *Leo Strauss's Defense of the Philosophic Life: Reading "What Is Political Philosophy?"*, edited by Rafael Major, 65–79. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Taylor, Charles. "Growth, Legitimacy and the Modern Identity." *Praxis International* 2, no. 1 (1981): 111–25.
- . "On Social Justice." *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 1, no. 3 (1977): 89–96.
- Taylor, Michael. "Mathematical Political Theory." *British Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 3 (July 1971): 339–82.
- Taylor, Robert S. *Reconstructing Rawls: The Kantian Foundations of Justice as Fairness*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011.
- Teitelman, Michael. "The Limits of Individualism." *The Journal of Philosophy* 69, no. 18 (October 5, 1972): 545–56.
- "The Good of Justice as Fairness." *Times Literary Supplement*, May 5, 1972.
- Thies, Cameron G. "Myth, Half-Truth, Reality, or Strategy?: Managing Disciplinary Identity and the Origins of the First Great Debate." In *International Relations and the First Great Debate*, edited by Brian C. Schmidt, 118–32. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Thorne, Nicholas Robert. "The Unity of the Gorgias." Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2013.
- Tinder, Glenn. "Liberalism and the Death of Political Philosophy." *Polity* 3, no. 2 (Winter 1970): 272–79.
- Tribe, Laurence H. "Ways Not to Think about Plastic Trees: New Foundations for Environmental Law." *The Yale Law Journal* 83, no. 7 (June 1974): 1315–48.
- Trivedi, Sonu. "State of the Discipline." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 67, no. 1 (March 2006): 21–30.
- Trotta, Margarethe von. *Hannah Arendt*. Biographical Drama. Zeitgeist Films, 2013.
- Truth and Reconciliation Canada. "Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada." Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015.
- Tuck, Richard. "History." In *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, edited by Robert E. Goodin, Philip Pettit, and Thomas W. Pogge, 2nd ed., 1:69–87. Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Tully, James, ed. "A Reply to My Critics." In *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, 231–88. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

- , ed. “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas.” In *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, 29–67. 1969. Reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- . “Philosophy as Critical Activity.” In *What Is Political Theory*, edited by Stephen K. White and J. Donald Moon, 80–111. London: Sage Publications, 2004.
- Turner, Frederick. *The Culture of Hope: A New Birth of the Classical Spirit*. New York: Free Press, 1995.
- Uhr, John. *Performing Political Theory: Pedagogy in Modern Political Theory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Urbinati, Nadia. “The Historian and the Ideologist.” *Political Theory* 33, no. 1 (2005): 89–95.
- Valle, Carlos Martínez. “Using Quentin Skinner in History and Philosophy of Education.” *Encounters on Education; Kingston* 15 (2014): 81–12.
- Van Den Haag, Ernest. “Is Liberalism Just?” *Public Interest*, no. 113 (1993): 122–27.
- . “Tortured Search for the Cause of Inequality.” *National Review*, February 16, 1973.
- Vázquez-Arroyo, Antonio Y. “Sheldon S. Wolin and the Historicity of Political Thought.” *The Good Society* 24, no. 2 (2015): 146–63.
- Vega, Facundo. “‘God Is Death’: The Oblivion of Esotericism and Stimmungen in Leo Strauss’s Heidegger.” *Philosophy Today* 62, no. 3 (Summer 2018): 823–45.
- Vieira, Fátima. “The Concept of Utopia.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, edited by Gregory Claeys. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Vincent, Andrew. “Introduction.” In *Political Theory: Tradition and Diversity*, 1–27. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- . *The Nature of Political Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Voegelin, Eric. *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*. 1952. Reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Wallach, John. “Liberals, Communitarians, and the Tasks of Political Theory.” *Political Theory* 15, no. 4 (November 1987): 581–611.
- Walzer, Michael. “‘Are There Limits to Liberalism? Review of John Gray, Isaiah Berlin.’” *New York Times Review of Books*, October 1995.
- . “Philosophy and Democracy.” *Political Theory* 9, no. 3 (1981): 379–99.
- . *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality*. 1984. Reprint, New York: Basic Books, 2010.
- Ward, Ian. “Helping the Dead Speak: Leo Strauss, Quentin Skinner and the Arts of Interpretation in Political Thought.” *Polity* 41, no. 2 (2009): 235–55.
- Waxman, Chaim Isaac. *The End of Ideology Debate*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968.
- Webb, Phyllis. “There Are the Poems.” In *Hanging Fire*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1990.
- Weinstein, David. “British Idealism: A History by W. J. Mander (Review).” *Victorian Studies* 56, no. 2 (Winter 2014): 355–57.
- Weiss, Penny A. *Canon Fodder: Historical Women Political Thinkers*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009.

- Weithman, Paul. "John Rawls: A Remembrance." *The Review of Politics* 65, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 5–10.
- . "John Rawls and the Task of Political Philosophy." *The Review of Politics* 71 (2009): 113–25.
- Western Addition Community Organization v. N.L.R.B, No. 71–1656 (United States Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit June 29, 1973).
- White, Stephen K. "Pluralism, Platitudes, and Paradoxes: Fifty Years of Western Political Thought." In *What Is Political Theory*, edited by Stephen K. White and J. Donald Moon, 1–11. London: Sage Publications, 2004.
- White, Stephen K., and J. Donald Moon, eds. *What Is Political Theory?* London: Sage Publications, 2004.
- Whitebrook, Maureen. "Politics and Literature?" *Politics* 15, no. 1 (1995): 55–62.
- . "Taking the Narrative Turn: What the Novel Has to Offer Political Theory." In *Literature and the Political Imagination*, edited by Andrea T. Baumeister and John Horton. 1996. Reprint, London: Routledge, 2003.
- Whitehead, Alfred North. *Process and Reality*. Edited by David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne. New York: The Free Press, 1985.
- Wiley, James. *Politics and the Concept of the Political: The Political Imagination*. London: Routledge, 2016.
- . "Sheldon Wolin on Theory and the Political." *Polity* 38, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 211–34.
- Wilhoit, Frank. March 3 2018. Comment on Henry Farrell, "The Travesty of Liberalism," Blog, *Crooked Timber*, March 21, 2018. Accessed 6 November 2019. <http://crookedtimber.org/2018/03/21/liberals-against-progressives/#comment-729288>.
- Williams, Bernard. "Bernard Williams on Rawls's Principles and the Demands of Justice." *The Spectator*, no. 228 (June 24, 1972): 972–73.
- . *Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Williams, George G. "D.H. Lawrence's Philosophy As Expressed In His Poetry." *Rice Institute Pamphlet-Rice University Studies* 38, no. 1 (1951).
- Williams, Susan. 2015. "Teaching Political Theory as a Vocation." *The Good Society* 24(2): 191-197.
- Willoughby, Westel Woodbury. "The Value of Political Philosophy." *Political Science Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1900): 75–95.
- Wilson, Harlan. "Sheldon Wolin: From Oberlin to Berkeley and Beyond." *The Good Society* 24, no. 2 (2015): 198–209.
- Winfield, Richard Dien. "Capital, Civil Society and the Deformation of Politics." *History of Political Thought* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 111–55.
- Winham, Ilya P. "After Totalitarianism: Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin, and the Realization and Defeat of the Western Tradition." Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2015.
- Winterson, Jeanette. *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*. 1985. Reprint, London: Vintage Books, 2014.

- Withers, Glen A. "Hobbes and Halfpenny: Reflections on Social Justice and Industrial Disruption." *The Australian Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (1976): 88–101.
- Wolff, Robert Paul. *Understanding Rawls: A Reconstruction and Critique of A Theory of Justice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Wolin, Sheldon. "Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political." In *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, edited by Seyla Benhabib, 31–45. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- . "Hannah Arendt and the Ordinance of Time." *Social Research* 44, no. 1 (1977): 91–105.
- . "Hannah Arendt: Democracy and The Political." *Salmagundi* 60 (Spring-Summer 1983): 3–19.
- . *Politics and Vision*. Expanded. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- . "Review: After Utopia. The Decline of Political Faith. By Judith N. Shklar." *099Natural Law Forum* 5, no. 1 (1960): 173–77.
- . "Review: The Liberal/Democratic Divide. On Rawl's Political Liberalism." *Political Theory* 24, no. 1 (February 1996): 97–119.
- Wollheim, Richard Arthur. "A Hundred Years After." *Times Literary Supplement*, February 20, 1959.
- Wood, Neal. "Reviewed Work(s): Sovereignty: An Inquiry into the Political Good. by Bertrand de Jouvenel and J. F. Huntington." *Political Science Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (June 1958): 291–93.
- . "The Social History of Political Theory." *Political Theory* 6, no. 3 (August 1978): 345–67.
- Yeh, Hao. "History, Method, and Pluralism: A Re-Interpretation of Isaiah Berlin's Political Thought." London School of Economics and Political Science, 2005.
- Young, Iris Marion. "On the Politization of The Social in Recent Western Political Theory." *Filozofski Vestnik* XVIII, no. 2 (1997): 153–76.
- . "Political Theory: An Overview." In *A New Handbook of Political Science*, edited by Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, 479–502. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Zakaras, Alex. "Isaiah Berlin's Cosmopolitan Ethics." *Political Theory* 32, no. 4 (2003): 495–518.
- Zerby, Chuck. *The Devil's Details: A History of Footnotes*. 2001. Reprint, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002.
- Zerilli, Linda. "Feminist Theory and the Canon of Political Thought." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, edited by John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig, and Anne Phillips, 106–24. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Zoll, Donald Atwell. *Twentieth Century Political Philosophy*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974.
- Zuckert, Catherine H. "Introduction: Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century." In *Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: Authors and Arguments*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- . *Natural Right and the American Imagination: Political Philosophy in Novel Form*. Savage: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1990.

- . *Plato's Philosophers: The Coherence of the Dialogues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- . "Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century." *The Review of Politics* 71, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 1–6.
- . "Why Political Scientists Want to Study Literature." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 28, no. 2 (June 1995): 189–90.
- Zuckert, Michael P. "Justice Deserted: A Critique of Rawls' 'A Theory of Justice.'" *Polity* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1981): 466–83.
- Zuckert, Michael P., and Catherine H. Zuckert. *Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.