

Chapter 35

Neutrality in Political Science

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I

A few years ago one heard it frequently said that political philosophy was dead, that it had been killed by the growth of science, the growth of positivism, the end of ideology, or some combination of these forces, but that, whatever the cause, it was dead.

It is not my intention to rake over the coals of this old issue once more. I am simply using this as a starting point for a reflection on the relation between political science and political philosophy. For behind the view that political philosophy was dead, behind any view which holds that it *can* die, lies the belief that its fate can be separated from that of political science; for no one would claim that the science of politics is dead, however one might disapprove of this or that manner of carrying it on. It remains a perpetually possible, and indeed important enterprise.

The view was indeed that political science has come of age in freeing itself finally of the incubus of political philosophy. No more would its scope be narrowed and its work prejudiced by some value position which operated as an initial weight holding back the whole enterprise. The belief was that political science had freed itself from philosophy in becoming value free and in adopting the scientific method. These two moves were felt to be closely connected; indeed, the second contains the first. For scientific method is, if nothing else, a dispassionate study of the facts as they are, without metaphysical presuppositions, and without value biases.

As Vernon van Dyke puts it:

science and *scientific*, then, are words that relate to only one kind of knowledge, i.e., to knowledge of what is observable, and not to any other kinds of knowledge that may exist. They do not relate to alleged knowledge of the normative—knowledge of what ought to be. Science concerns what has been, is, or will be, regardless of the “oughts” of the situation (*Political Science*. Stanford and London: Stanford University Press, 1960, p. 192).

Those who could hold that political philosophy was dead, therefore, were those who held to a conception of the social sciences as *wertfrei*; like natural science, political science must dispassionately study the facts. This position received support from the views of the logical empiricists who had, for philosophers, an extraordinarily wide influence among scientists in general, and among the sciences of man in particular. Emboldened by their teaching, some orthodox political scientists tended to claim that the business of normative theory, making recommendations and evaluating different courses of action, could be entirely separated from the study of the facts, from the theoretical attempt to account for them.

Many, of course, had doubts; and these doubts seem to be growing today among political scientists. But they do not touch the thesis of the logical separation between fact and value. They center rather around the possibility of setting one's values to one side when one undertakes the study of politics. The relation between factual study and normative beliefs is therefore thought of in the same traditional positivist way: that the relationship if any is from value to fact, not from fact to value. Thus, scientific findings are held to be neutral: that is, the facts as we discover them do not help to establish or give support to any set of values; we cannot move from fact to value. It is, however, often admitted that our values can influence our findings. This can be thought of as a vicious interference, as when we approach our work with bias which obscures the truth, or as something anodyne and inevitable, as when our values select for us the area of research on which we wish to embark. Or it can be thought of as a factor whose ill effects can be compensated by a clear consciousness of it: thus many theorists today recommend that one set out one's value position in detail at the beginning of a work so as to set the reader (and perhaps also the writer) on guard.

Value beliefs remain therefore as unfounded on scientific fact for the new generation of more cautious theorists as they were for the thinkers of the hey-day of "value-freedom." They arise, as it were, from outside factual study; they spring from deep choices which are independent of the facts. Thus David Easton, who goes on to attempt to show that "whatever effort is exerted, in undertaking research we cannot shed our values in the way we remove our coats" (*The Political System*, New York: Knopf, 1953, p. 225), nevertheless states his acceptance at the outset of the "working assumption" which is "generally adopted today in the social sciences," and which "holds that values can ultimately be reduced to emotional responses conditioned by the individual's total life-experiences" (p.221). Thus there is no question of founding values on scientific findings. Emotional responses can be explained by life-experience, but not justified or shown to be appropriate by the facts about society:

The moral aspect of a proposition ... expresses only the emotional response of an individual to a state of real or presumed facts. ... Although we can say that the aspect of a proposition referring to a fact can be true or false, it is meaningless to characterize the value aspect of a proposition in this way. (ibid.)

The import of these words is clear. For, if value positions could be supported or undermined by the findings of science, then they could not simply be characterized as emotional responses, and we could not say simply that it was *meaningless* (although it might be misleading) to speak of them as true or false.

Political philosophy, therefore, as reasoned argument about fundamental political values, can be entirely separated from political science, even on the mitigated positivist view which is now gaining ground among political scientists. "Values" steer, as it were, the process of discovery, but they do not gain or lose plausibility by it. Thus, although values may be somehow ineradicable from political science, reasoned argument concerning them would seem easily separable (though theorists may differ as to whether this is wise or not: cf. Easton, *op. cit.*). Indeed, it is hard to see in what such reasoned argument could consist. The findings of science will be relevant to our values, of course, in this sense, that they will tell us how to realize the goals we set ourselves. We can reconstruct political science in the mold of a "policy science," like engineering and medicine, which shows us how to attain our goals. But the goals and values still come from somewhere else; they are founded on choices whose basis remains obscure.

The aim of this chapter is to call into question this notion of the relation of factual findings in politics to value positions, and thus the implied relation between political science and political philosophy. In particular my aim is to call into question the view that the findings of political science leave us, as it were, as free as before, that they do not go some way to establishing particular sets of values and undermining others. If this view is shown to be mistaken, then we will have to recognize a convergence between science and normative theory in the field of politics.

It is usual for philosophers, when discussing this question, to leave the realms of the sciences of man and launch into a study of "good," or commending, or emotive meaning, and so on. I propose to follow another course here, and to discuss the question first in connection with the disciplines in terms of which I have raised it, namely, political philosophy and political science. When we have some understanding of the relations between these two on the ground, as it were, it will be time to see if these are considered possible in the heavens of philosophy.

II

The thesis that political science is value neutral has maximum plausibility when we look at some of its detailed findings. That French workers tend to vote Communist may be judged deplorable or encouraging, but it does not itself determine us to accept either of these judgments. It stands as a fact, neutral between them.

If this were all there is to political science, the debate would end here. But it is no more capable than any other science of proceeding by the random collection of facts. At one time it was believed that science was just concerned with the correlation of observable phenomena—the observables concerned being presumed to lie unproblematically before our gaze. But this position, the offshoot of a more primitive empiricism, is abandoned now by almost everyone, even those in the empiricist tradition.

For the number of features which any given range of phenomena may exhibit, and which can thus figure in correlations, is indefinite; and this because the phenomena themselves can be classified in an indefinite number of ways. Any physical object can be classified according to shape, color, size, function, aesthetic properties, relation to some process, etc.; when we come to realities as complex as political society, the case is no different. But among these features only a limited range will yield correlations which have some explanatory force.

Nor are these necessarily the most obtrusive. The crucial features, laws or correlations concerning which will explain or help to explain phenomena of the range in question, may at a given stage of the science concerned be only vaguely discerned if not frankly unsuspected. The conceptual resources necessary to pick them out may not yet have been elaborated. It is said, for instance, that the modern physical concept of mass was unknown to the ancients, and only slowly and painfully evolved through the searchings of the later Middle Ages. And yet it is an essential variable in the modern science. A number of more obtrusive features may be irrelevant; that is, they may not be such that they can be linked in functions explanatory of the phenomena. Obvious distinctions may be irrelevant, or have an entirely different relevance from that attributed to them, such as the distinction between Aristotle's "light" and "heavy" bodies.

Thus when we wish to go beyond certain immediate low-level correlations whose relevance to the political process is fairly evident, such as the one mentioned above;

when we want to explain why French workers vote Communist, or why McCarthyism arises in the United States in the late 1940s, or why the level of abstentionism varies from election to election, or why new African regimes are liable to military take-over, the features by reference to which we can explain these results are not immediately in evidence. Not only is there a wider difference of opinion about them, but we are not even sure that we have as yet the conceptual resources necessary to pick them out. We may easily argue that certain more obtrusive features, those pertaining, say, to the institutional structure, are not relevant, while others less obtrusive, say, the character structure prevalent in certain strata of the society, will yield the real explanation. We may, for instance, refuse to account for McCarthyism in terms of the struggle between executive and legislature, and look rather to the development of a certain personality structure among certain sections of the American population. Or else we may reject both these explanations and look to the role of a new status group in American society, newly rich but excluded from the eastern establishment. Or we may reject this, and see it as a result of the new position of the United States in the world.

The task of theory in political science, one which cannot be forgone if we are to elaborate any explanations worth the name, is to discover what are the kinds of features to which we should look for explanations of this kind. In which of the above dimensions are we to find an explanation for McCarthyism? Or rather, since all of these dimensions obviously have relevance, how are we to relate them in explaining the political phenomena? The task of theory is to delineate the relevant features in the different dimensions and their relation so that we have some idea of what can be the cause of what, of how character affects political process, or social structure affects character, or economic relations affect social structure, or political process affects economic relations, or vice versa; how ideological divisions affect party systems, or history affects ideological divisions, or culture affects history, or party systems affect culture, or vice versa. Before we have made some at least tentative steps in this direction we don't even have an idea where to look for our explanations; we don't know which facts to gather.

It is not surprising, then, that political science should be the field in which a great and growing number of "theoretical frameworks" compete to answer these questions. Besides the Marxist approach, and the interest-group theory associated with the name of Bentley, we have seen the recent growth of "structural-functional" approaches under the influence of systems theory; there have been approaches which have attempted to relate the psychological dimension to political behavior (e.g., Lasswell), different applications of sociological concepts and methods (e.g., Lipset and Almond), applications of game theory (e.g., Downs and Riker), and so on.

These different approaches are frequently rivals, since they offer different accounts of the features crucial for explanation and the causal relations which hold. We can speak of them, along with their analogues in other sciences, as "conceptual structures" or "theoretical frameworks," because they claim to delimit the area in which scientific inquiry will be fruitful. A framework does not give us at once all the variables which will be relevant and the laws which will be true, but it tells us what needs to be explained, and roughly by what kinds of factors. For instance, if we accept the principle of Inertia, certain ways of conceiving bodies and therefore certain questions are beyond the pale. To pursue them is fruitless, as was the search for what kept the cannon ball moving in pre-Galilean physics. Similarly an orthodox Marxist approach

cannot allow that McCarthyism can be explained in terms of early upbringing and the resultant personality structure.

But we can also see a theoretical framework as setting the crucial dimensions through which the phenomena can vary. For it sets out the essential functional relations by which they can be explained, while at the same time ruling out other functional relations belonging to other, rival frameworks. But the given set of functional relations defines certain dimensions in which the phenomena can vary; a given framework therefore affirms some dimensions of variation and denies others. Thus, for a Marxist, capitalist societies do not vary as to who wields power, no matter what the constitution or the party in office; supposed variations in these dimensions, which are central to a great many theories, are sham; the crucial dimension is that concerning class structure.

In the more exact sciences theoretical discovery may be couched in the form of laws and be called principles, such as, e.g., of inertia, or the rectilinear propagation of light. But in the less exact, such as politics, it may consist simply of a general description of the phenomena couched in the crucial concepts. Or it may be implicit in a series of distinctions which a given theory makes (e.g., Aristotle's classification of the types of polity), or in a story of how the phenomena came to be (e.g., the myth of the social contract), or in a general statement of causal relations (e.g., Marx's Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*).

But, however expressed, theoretical discovery can be seen as the delineating of the important dimensions of variation for the range of phenomena concerned.

III

Theoretical discovery of this kind is thus one of the concerns of modern political science, as we have seen. But it also is a traditional concern of what we call political philosophy, that is, normative political theory. It is not hard to see why. Normative theorists of the tradition have also been concerned with delineating crucial dimensions of variation—of course, they were looking for the dimensions which were significant for judging of the value of polities and policies rather than for explaining them. But the two types of research were in fact closely interwoven so that in pursuing the first they were also led to pursue the second.

Aristotle, for instance, is credited with a revision of Plato's threefold classification of political society which enhanced its explanatory value. He substituted for the number criterion a class criterion which gives a more revealing classification of the differences, and allows us to account for more: it made clear what was at stake between democracy and oligarchy; it opened up the whole range of explanations based on class composition, including the one for which Aristotle is known in history, the balancing role of the middle class.

But this revision was not unconnected with differences in the normative theory of the two thinkers. Plato attempted to achieve a society devoid of class struggle, either in the perfect harmony of the *Republic*, or in the single class state of the *Laws*. Aristotle is not above weaving the dream of the ideal state in one section of the *Politics*, but there is little connection between this and the political theory of the rest of the work. This latter is solidly based on the understanding that class differences, and hence divergence of interest and tension, are here to stay. In the light of this theory, Plato's idea in the *Republic* of overcoming class tension by discipline, education, a superior

constitution, and so on, is so much pie-in-the-sky (not even very tasty pie in Aristotle's view, as he makes clear in Book II, but that is for other reasons).

Aristotle's insight in political science is incompatible with Plato's normative theory, at least in the *Republic*, and the *Politics* therefore takes a quite different line (for other reasons as well, of course). The difference on this score might perhaps be expressed in this way: both Plato and Aristotle held that social harmony was of crucial importance as a value. But Plato saw this harmony as achieved in the ending of all class conflict; Aristotle saw it as arising from the domestication of this conflict. But crucial to this dispute is the question of the causal relevance of class tension: is it an eradicable blot on social harmony, in the sense that one can say, for instance, that the violent forms of this conflict are? Or is it ineradicable and ever-present, only varying in its forms? In the first case one of the crucial dimensions of variation of our explanatory theory is that concerning the presence or absence of class conflict. In the second case, this dimension is not even recognized as having a basis in fact. If this is so, then the normative theory collapses, or rather is shifted from the realm of political philosophy to that we call utopia building. For the idea of a society without class conflict would be one to which we cannot even approach. Moreover, the attempt to approach it would have all the dangerous consequences attendant on large-scale political changes based on illusory hopes.

Thus Plato's theory of the *Republic*, considered as the thesis that a certain dimension of variation is normatively significant, contains claims concerning the dimensions of variation which are relevant for explanation, for it is only compatible with those frameworks which concede the reality of the normatively crucial dimension. It is incompatible with any view of politics as the striving of different classes, or interest groups, or individuals against one another.

It is clear that this is true of any normative theory, that it is linked with certain explanatory theory or theories, and incompatible with others. Aristotle's dimension whereby different constitutions were seen as expressing and molding different forms of life disappears in the atomistic conception of Hobbes. Rousseau's crucial dimension of the *Social Contract*, marking a sharp discontinuity between popular sovereignty and states of dependence of one form or another, could not survive the validation of the theories of Mosca, or Michels, or Pareto.

Traditional political philosophy was thus forced to engage in the theoretical function that we have seen to be essential to modern political science; and the more elaborate and comprehensive the normative theory, the more complete and defined the conceptual framework which accompanied it. That is why political science can learn something still from the works of Aristotle, Hobbes, Hegel, Marx, and so on. In the tradition one form of inquiry is virtually inseparable from the other.

2

I

This is not a surprising result. Everyone recognized that political philosophers of the tradition were engaged in elaborating on, at least embryonic, political science. But, one might say, that is just the trouble; that is why political science was so long in getting started. Its framework was always set in the interests of some normative theory. In order to progress science must be liberated from all *parti pris* and be value neutral. Thus, if normative theory requires political science and cannot be carried on without

it, the reverse is not the case; political science can and should be separated from the older discipline. Let us examine some modern attempts to elaborate a science of politics to see if this is true.

Let us look first at S. M. Lipset's *Political Man* (New York: Doubleday, 1959). In this work Lipset sets out the conditions for modern democracy. He sees societies as existing in two dimensions—conflict and consensus. Both are equally necessary for democracy. They are not mere opposites as a simple-minded view might assume. Conflict here is not seen as a simple divergence of interest, or the existence of objective relations of exploitation, but as the actual working out of these through the struggle for power and over policy.

Surprising as it may sound, a stable democracy requires the manifestation of conflict or cleavage so that there will be struggle over ruling positions, challenges to parties in power, and shifts of parties in office; but without consensus—a political system allowing the peaceful “play” of power, the adherence of the “outs” to decisions made by the “ins,” and the recognition by the “ins” of the rights of the “outs”—there can be no democracy. The study of the conditions encouraging democracy must therefore focus on the sources of both cleavage and consensus. (*Political Man*, p. 21).

And again, “Cleavage—where it is legitimate—contributes to the integration of societies and organizations” (*ibid.*). The absence of such conflict, such as where a given group has taken over, or an all-powerful state can produce unanimity, or at least prevent diversity from expressing itself, is a sign that the society is not a free one. De Tocqueville feared (*Political Man*, p. 27) that the power of the state would produce apathy and thus do away even with consensus.

Democracy in a complex society may be defined as a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office. (*ibid.*, p. 45)

Such a society requires the organization of group interests to fight for their own goals—provided that this is done in a peaceful way, within the rules of the game, and with the acceptance of the arbiter in the form of elections by universal suffrage. If groups are not organized, they have no real part, their interests are neglected, and they cannot have their share of power; they become alienated from the system.

Now this view can at once be seen to conflict with a Rousseauian view which disapproves of the organization of “faction,” and which sees consensus as arising out of isolated individuals. It also goes against the modern conservative view that to organize people on a class basis gratuitously divides the society. In face of Rousseau, Lipset holds that the absence of close agreement among all concerning the general will is not a sign that something has gone wrong. There are ineradicable basic divergences of interest; they have to be adjusted. If we get to some kind of conflictless state, this can only be because some of the parties have been somehow done down and prevented from competing. For Lipset, absence of conflict is a sure sign that some groups are being excluded from the public thing.

This difference closely parallels the one mentioned above between Plato and Aristotle. Indeed, Lipset points out on several occasions the similarity between his

position and that of Aristotle. And it is clear that it is a difference of the same kind, one in which a normative theory is undermined because the reality of its crucial dimension of variation is challenged. A similar point can be made concerning the difference with conservatives who allow for divergence in the state, but resist class parties. Here the belief is that the divergence is gratuitous, that the real differences lie elsewhere, either in narrower or in broader interests, and that these are obfuscated and made more difficult of rational adjustment by class divisions. More, the state can be torn apart if these divisions are played up. Conservatives tend to feel about class in politics as liberals do about race in politics. Once again, Lipset's view would undermine the position, for he holds that class differences are at the center of politics, and cannot be removed except by reducing the number of players, as it were. They are therefore the very stuff of democratic politics, provided they are moderately and peacefully expressed. The struggle between rich and poor is ineradicable; it can take different forms, that's all.

Attempts to break outside of this range are thus irrational and dysfunctional. Irrational, because based on false premises; and dysfunctional, because the goal of conflictlessness or absence of class tension can only be achieved at the expense of features of the system which most will accept as valuable; by oppressing some segment of the population, or by its apathy and lack of organization. That is, of course, the usual fate of theories with a false base in politics; as was remarked above, they are not just erroneous, but positively dangerous.

It can be seen that the value consequences of Lipset's theory are fairly widespread even restricting ourselves to the alternatives which it negates or undermines. An examination of some of the factors which tend to strengthen democracy according to the theory will increase this list of rejected alternatives. Lipset holds that economic development is conducive to the health of democracy, in that, inter alia, it narrows gaps in wealth and living standards, tends to create a large middle class, and increases the "cross-pressures" working to damp down class conflict. For a society cannot function properly as a democracy unless, along with an articulation of class differences, there is some consensus which straddles them. Now Lipset's "cross-pressures"—typically exercised by religious affiliation, for instance, which cuts across class barriers—are the "opiates" of a strict Marxist. For they are integrators which prevent the system's coming apart at the social seam, and thus prevent the class war from coming to a head. But we are not dealing here simply with two value-judgments about the same facts understood in the same way. The crucial difference is that for Lipset the stage beyond the class struggle does not and cannot exist; the abolition of the conflict in unanimity is impossible; his view is "the rich ye have always with you." But in this case the integrating factors cease to be "opiates," breeding false consciousness and hiding the great revolutionary potentiality. There is nothing there to hide. Lipset's view therefore negates revolutionary Marxism in a direct way—in the same way as it negates the views above—by denying that the crucial dimensions of variation have reality.

But if we examine this last example a little more closely, we can see even wider normative consequences of Lipset's view. For if we rule out the transformation to the classless society, then we are left with the choice between different kinds of class conflict: a violent kind which so divides society that it can only survive under some form of tyranny, or one which can reach accommodations in peace. This choice, set out in these terms, virtually makes itself for us. We may point out that this does

not cover the range of possibility, since there are also cases in which the class conflict is latent, owing to the relative absence of one party. But this is the result of underdevelopment, of a lack of education, or knowledge, or initiative on the part of the underprivileged. Moreover, it unfailingly leads to a worsening of their position relative to the privileged. As Lipset says in the statement of his political position which forms the introduction to the Anchor Edition of *Political Man*, "I believe with Marx that all privileged classes seek to maintain and *enhance* their advantages against the desire of the underprivileged to reduce them" (Anchor Edition, p. xxii, emphasis in original).

Thus, for Lipset, the important dimension of variation for political societies can be seen as L-shaped, as it were. On the one end lie societies where the divisions are articulated but are so deep that they cannot be contained without violence, suppression of liberty, and despotic rule; on the other end lie societies which are peaceful but oligarchic and which are therefore run to secure the good of a minority ruling group. At the angle are the societies whose differences are articulated but which are capable of accommodating them in a peaceful way, and which therefore are characterized by a high degree of individual liberty and political organization.

Faced with this choice, it is hard to opt for anywhere else but the angle. For to do so is either to choose violence and despotism and suppression over peace, rule by consent, and liberty, or to choose a society run more for the benefit of a minority over a society run more for the benefit of all, a society which exploits and/or manipulates over a society which tends to secure the common good as determined by the majority. Only in the angle can we have a society really run for the common good, for at one end is oligarchy based on an unorganized mass, at the other despotism.

Lipset himself makes this option explicit:

A basic premise of this book is that democracy is not only or even primarily a means through which different groups can attain their ends or seek the good society; it is the good society itself in operation. Only the give-and-take of a free society's internal struggles offers some guarantee that the products of the society will not accumulate in the hands of a few power-holders, and that men may develop and bring up their children without fear of persecution. (p. 403)

This is a succinct statement of the value position implicit in *Political Man*, but it is wrongly characterized as a "premise." The use of this term shows the influence of the theory of value-neutrality, but it is misplaced. It would be less misleading to say "upshot," for the value position flows out of the analysis of the book. Once we accept Lipset's analysis concerning the fundamental role of class in politics, that it always operates even when division is not overt, and that it can never be surmounted in unanimity, then we have no choice but to accept democracy as he defines it, as a society in which most men are doers, take their fate in their own hands, or have a hand in determining it, and at least reduce the degree to which injustice is done to them, or their interests are unfavourably handled by others, as the good society.

II

But now we have gone far beyond the merely negative consequences noted above for Marxism, conservatism, or Rousseau's general will. We are saying that the crucial dimensions of variation of Lipset's theory not only negate dimensions crucial to other normative theories but support one of their own, which is implicit in the theory itself. But this conclusion, if true, goes against the supposed neutrality of scientific fact. Let us examine it a bit more closely.

We have said above that faced with the choice between a regime based on violence and suppression, and one based on consent, between regimes which serve the interests more or less of all versus regimes which serve the interests only of a minority, the choice is clear. Is this simply a rhetorical flourish, playing on generally accepted values among readers? Or is the connection more solid?

Granted that we wish to apply "better" and "worse" to regimes characterized along this dimension, can one conceive of reversing what seemed above to be the only possible judgment? Can one say: yes, a regime based on minority rule with violent suppression of the majority is better than one based on general consensus, where all have a chance to have their interests looked to? Certainly this is not a logically absurd position in itself. But if someone accepted the framework of Lipset and proceeded to make this judgment, surely we would expect him to go on and mention some other considerations which led him to this astounding conclusion. We might expect him to say that only minorities are creative, that violence is necessary to keep men from stagnating, or something of this kind. But supposing he said nothing of the sort? Supposing he just maintained that violence was better than its opposite, not qua stimulus to creativity, or essential element in progress, but just qua violence; that it was better that only the minority interest be served, not because the minority would be more creative but just because it was a minority? A position of this kind would be unintelligible. We could understand that the man was dedicating himself to the furtherance of such a society, but the use of the words "good" or "better" would be totally inappropriate here, for there would be no visible grounds for applying them. The question would remain open whether the man had understood these terms, whether, e.g., he had not confused "good" with "something which gives me a kick," or "aesthetically pleasing."

But, it might be argued, this is not a fair example. Supposing our unorthodox thinker did adduce other grounds for preferring violence and majority rule? Surely, then, he would be permitted to differ from us? Yes, but then it is very dubious whether he could still accept Lipset's framework. Suppose, for instance, that one believed (as Hegel did about war) that violence was morally necessary from time to time for the well-being of the state. This would not be without effect on one's conception of political science; the range of possible regimes would be different from that which Lipset gives us; for peaceful democratic regimes would suffer a process of stagnation which would render them less viable; they would not in fact be able to maintain themselves, and thus the spectrum of possible regimes would be different from the one Lipset presents us with; the most viable regime would be one which was able to ration violence and maintain it at a nondisruptive level without falling over into stagnation and decay.

But why need this change of values bring along with it a change in explanatory framework? We seem to be assuming that the evils of internal peace must be such as to have a political effect, to undermine the viability of the political society. Is this assumption justified? Normally, of course, we would expect someone putting forward a theory of this kind to hold that inner violence is good because it contributes to the dynamism, or creativity of people, or progress of the society, or something of the kind which would make peaceful societies less viable. But supposing he chose some other benefits of violence which had nothing to do with the survival or health of political society? Let us say that he held that violence was good for art, that only in societies rent by internal violence could great literature, music, painting be produced? The position, for instance, of Harry Lime in *The Third Man*?

This certainly is a possible case. But let us examine it more closely. Our hypothetical objector has totally forsaken the ground of politics, and is making his judgment on extraneous (here aesthetic) grounds. He cannot deny that, setting these grounds aside, the normal order of preference is valid. He is saying in effect that, although it is better abstracting from aesthetic considerations that society be peaceful, nevertheless this must be overridden in the interests of art.

This distinction is important. We must distinguish between two kinds of objection to a given valuation. It may be that the valuation is accepted, but that its verdict for our actual choices is overridden, as it were, by other more important valuations. Thus we may think that freedom of speech is always a good, while reluctantly conceding that it must be curtailed in an emergency because of the great risks it would entail here. We are in this case self-consciously curtailing a good. The other kind of objection is the one which undermines the valuation itself, seeks to deprive the putative good of its status. This is what Lipset does, for instance, to spiritual followers of Rousseau in showing that their harmony can only be the silence of minority rule.¹ In one case we are conceding that the thing in question does really have the properties which its proponents attribute to it (e.g., that free speech does contribute to justice, progress, human development, or whatever), but we are adding that it also has other properties which force us to proceed against it (e.g., it is potentially disruptive) temporarily or permanently. In the other case, we are denying the condition in question the very properties by which it is judged good (e.g., that the legislation of the society without cleavage emanates from the free conscious will of all its citizens). Let us call these two objections respectively overriding and undermining.

Now what is being claimed here is that an objection which undermines the values which seem to arise out of a given framework must alter the framework; that in this sense the framework is inextricably connected to a certain set of values; and that if we can reverse the valuation without touching the framework, then we are dealing with an overriding.

To go back to the example above. In order to undermine the judgment against violence we would have to show that it does not have the property claimed for it. Now obviously violence has the property of killing and maiming which goes some way toward putting it in the list of undesirables, one might think irrevocably; so that it could only be overridden. But here we are not dealing with a judgment about violence per se, but rather with one concerning the alternative of peace and violence; and the judgment rests on the ground that violence has properties which peace has not, that the evils obviously attributed to violence are effectively avoided by peace. But if one can show that peace leads to stagnation, and thus to breakdown (and hence eventual chaos or violence) or foreign conquest, then the supposed gap between the two narrows. On the contrary, one is presented with a new alternative, that between more or less controlled violence and the destructive uncontrolled kind associated with internal breakdown or foreign conquest. What the undermining job has done is to destroy the alternative on which the original judgment was based, and thus deprive the previously preferred alternative of its differential property for which it was valued.

But any undermining of this kind is bound to alter the explanatory framework of which the original alternative was an essential part. If we cannot maintain a peaceful polity, then the gamut of possibilities is very different, and Lipset is guilty of neglecting a whole host of factors, to do with the gamut tension-stagnation.

To take the other example, let our objector make a case for rule by the minority. Let him claim that only the minority are creative, that if they are not given preference, then they will not produce, and then everyone will suffer. Thus the supposed difference between rule for the minority and that for all, viz. that the ordinary bloke gets something out of the second that he does not out of the first, is set aside; rather the opposite turns out to be the case. The value is undermined. But so is the political framework altered, for now we have an elitist thesis about the importance of minority rule; another variable has entered the picture which was not present in the previous framework and which cuts across it, insofar as the previous framework presented the possibility of good progressive societies run for all.

Let us hold, however, that violence or elite rule is good for painting, and we have an overruling; for it remains the case that it would be better to have no violence and everybody getting a square deal, but alas. . . .

Thus the framework does secrete a certain value position, albeit one that can be overridden. In general we can see this arising in the following way: the framework gives us as it were the geography of the range of phenomena in question, it tells us how they can vary, what are the major dimensions of variation. But since we are dealing with matters which are of great importance to human beings, a given map will have, as it were, its own built-in value slope. That is to say, a given dimension of variation will usually determine for itself how we are to judge of good and bad, because of its relation to obvious human wants and needs.

Now this may seem a somewhat startling result, since it is well known that there are wide differences over what human needs, desires, and purposes are. Not that there is not a wide area of agreement over basic things like life; but this clearly breaks down when one tries to extend the list. There can thus be great disagreement over the putative human need for self-expression or for autonomous development, both of which can and do play important parts in debates and conflicts over political theory.

Does this mean, therefore, that we can reject the previous result and imagine a state of affairs where we could accept the framework of explanation of a given theory, and yet refuse the value judgments it secretes, because we took a different view of the schedule of human needs?² Or, to put it another way, does this mean that the step between accepting a framework of explanation and accepting a certain notion of the political good is mediated by a premise concerning human needs, which may be widely enough held to go unnoticed, but which nevertheless can be challenged, thus breaking the connection?

The answer is no. For the connection between a given framework of explanation and a certain notion of the schedule of needs, wants, and purposes which seems to mediate the inference to value theory is not fortuitous. If one adopted a quite different view of human need, one would upset the framework. Thus to pursue another example from Lipset, stable democracies are judged better than stable oligarchies, since the latter can only exist where the majority is so uneducated and tradition bound or narrowed that it has not yet learned to demand its rights. But suppose we tried to upset this judgment by holding that underdevelopment is good for men, that they are happier when they are led by some unquestioned norms, do not have to think for themselves, and so on? One would then be reversing the value-judgment. But at the same time one would be changing the framework. For we are introducing a notion of anomie here, and we cannot suppose this factor to exist without having some important effect on the working of political society. If anomie is the result of the

development of education and the breakdown of tradition, then it will affect the stability of the societies which promote this kind of development. They will be subject to constant danger of being undermined as their citizens, suffering from anomie, look for havens of certainty. If men are made unhappy by democracy, then undoubtedly it is not as good as its protagonists make out, but it is not so viable either.

The view above that we could accept the framework of explanation and reject the value conclusion by positing a different schedule of needs cannot be sustained. For a given framework is linked to a given conception of the schedule of human needs, wants, and purposes, such that, if the schedule turns out to have been mistaken in some significant way, the framework itself cannot be maintained. This is for the fairly obvious reason that human needs, wants, and purposes have an important bearing on the way people act, and that therefore one has to have a notion of the schedule which is not too wildly inaccurate if one is to establish the framework for any science of human behavior, that of politics not excepted. A conception of human needs thus enters into a given political theory, and cannot be considered something extraneous which we later add to the framework to yield a set of value judgments.

This is not to say that there cannot be needs or purposes which we might add to those implicit in any framework, and which would not alter the framework since their effect on political events might be marginal. But this would at most give us the ground of an overruling, not for an undermining. In order to undermine the valuation we would have to show that the putative need fulfilled was not a need, or that what looked like fulfilling a need, or a want, or a human purpose was really not so, or really did the opposite. Now even an overruling might destroy the framework, if a new need were introduced which was important enough motivationally to dictate quite different behavior. But certainly an undermining, which implies that one has misidentified the schedule of needs, would do so.

III

It would appear from the above example that the adoption of a framework of explanation carries with it the adoption of the "value slope" implicit in it, although the valuations can be overruled by considerations of an extra-political kind. But it might be objected that the study of one example is not a wide enough base for such a far-reaching conclusion. The example might even be thought to be peculiarly inappropriate because of Lipset's closeness to the tradition of political philosophy, and particularly his esteem for Aristotle.

If we wish, however, to extend the range of examples, we can see immediately that Lipset's theory is not exceptional. There is, for instance, a whole range of theories in which the connection between factual base and valuation is built in, as it were, to the conceptual structure. Such is the case of many theories which make use of the notion of function. To fulfill a function is to meet a requirement of some kind, and when the term is used in social theory, the requirement concerned is generally connected with human needs, wants, and purposes. The requirement or end concerned may be the maintenance of the political system which is seen as essential to man, or the securing of some of the benefits which political systems are in a position to attain for men—stability, security, peace, fulfilment of some wants, and so on. Since politics is largely made up of human purposeful activity a characterization of political societies in terms of function is not implausible. But insofar as we characterize societies in terms of their fulfilling in different ways and to different degrees the same set of functions, the crucial

dimension of variation for explanatory purposes is also a normatively significant one. Those societies which fulfill the functions more completely are *pro tanto* better.

We can take as an example the "structural-functional" theory of Gabriel Almond as outlined in his *Politics of the Developing Areas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963). Among the functions Almond outlines that all polities must fulfill is that of "interest articulation." It is an essential part of the process by which the demands, interests, and claims of members of a society can be brought to bear on government and produce some result. Almond sees four main types of structures as involved in interest articulation.³ Of three of these (institutional, nonassociational, and anomic interest groups), he says that a prominent role for them in interest articulation tends to indicate poor "boundary maintenance" between society and polity. Only the fourth (associational interest groups) can carry the main burden of interest articulation in such a way as to maintain a smooth-running system "by virtue of the regulatory role associational interest groups in processing raw claims or interest articulations occurring elsewhere in the society and the political system, and directing them in an orderly way and in aggregable form through the party system, legislature, and bureaucracy."⁴

The view here is of a flow of raw demands which have to be processed by the system before satisfaction can be meted out. If the processing is inefficient, then the satisfaction will be less, the system will increase frustration, uncertainty, and often as a consequence instability. In this context boundary maintenance between society and polity is important for clarity and efficiency. Speaking of the functions of articulation and aggregation together, Almond says:

Thus, to attain a maximum flow of inputs of raw claims from the society, a low level of processing into a common language of claims is required which is performed by associated interest groups. To assimilate and transform these interests into a relatively small number of alternatives of policy and personnel, a middle range of processing is necessary. If these two functions are performed in substantial part before the authoritative governmental structures are reached, then the output functions of rule-making and rule application are facilitated, and the political and governmental processes become calculable and responsible. The outputs may be related to and controlled by the inputs, and thus circulation becomes relatively free by virtue of good boundary maintenance or division of labor.⁵

Thus in characterizing different institutions by the way they articulate or aggregate interests, Almond is also evaluating them. For obviously a society with the above characteristics is preferable to one without, where, that is, there is less free circulation, where "outputs" correspond less to "inputs" (what people want, claim, or demand), where government is less responsible, and so on. The characterization of the system in terms of function contains the criteria of "eufunction" and "dysfunction," as they are sometimes called. The dimension of variation leaves only one answer to the question, Which is better? because of the clear relation in which it stands to men's wants and needs.

Theories of this kind include not only those which make explicit use of "function" but also other derivatives of systems theory and frameworks which build on the analogy with organisms. This might be thought to include, for instance, David Easton (cf. *A Framework for Political Analysis*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965, and *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*, New York: Wiley, 1965) and Karl Deutsch (*The Nerves of Government*, Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press, 1963). For the requirements by which we will judge the performance of different political systems are explicit in the theory.

But what about theories which set out explicitly to separate fact from evaluations, to "state conditions" without in any way "justifying preferences"? What about a theory of the "behavioral" type, like that of Harold Lasswell?

IV

Harold Lasswell is clearly a believer in the neutrality of scientific findings. Lasswell is openly committed to certain values, notably those of the democratic society as he defines it, a society "in which human dignity is realized in theory and fact."⁶ He believes that scientific findings can be brought to bear on the realization of these goals. A science so oriented is what he calls a "policy science." But this does not affect the neutrality of the findings: a policy science simply determines a certain grouping and selection of findings which help us to encompass the goal we have set. It follows that if there are policy sciences of democracy, "there can also be a 'policy science of tyranny.'"⁷

In Lasswell's "configurative analysis," then, both fact and valuation enter; but they remain entirely separable. The following passage from the introduction of *Power and Society* makes the point unambiguously:

The present conception conforms ... to the philosophical tradition in which politics and ethics have always been closely associated. But it deviates from the tradition in giving full recognition to the existence of two distinct components in political theory—the empirical propositions of political science and the value judgments of political doctrine. Only statements of the first kind are formulated in the present work. (p. xiii)

Yet the implied separation between factual analysis and evaluation is belied by the text itself. In the sections dealing with different types of polity,⁸ the authors introduce a number of dimensions of variation of political society. Polities vary (1) as to the allocation of power (between autocracy, oligarchy, republic), (2) as to the scope of power (society either undergoes greater regimentation or liberalization), (3) as to the concentration or dispersion of power (taking in questions concerning the separation of powers, or federalism), (4) as to the degree to which a rule is egalitarian (the degree of equality in power potential), (5) the degree to which it is libertarian or authoritarian, (6) the degree to which it is impartial, (7) and the degree to which it is juridical or tyrannical. Democracy is defined as a rule which is libertarian, juridical, and impartial.

It is not surprising to find one's sympathies growing toward democracy as one ploughs through this list of definitions. For they leave us little choice. Dimension (5) clearly determines our preference. Liberty is defined not just in terms of an absence of coercion, but of genuine responsibility to self. "A rule is libertarian where initiative, individuality and choice are widespread; authoritarian, if obedience, conformity and coercion are characteristic."⁹ Quoting Spinoza with approval, Lasswell and Kaplan come down in favor of a notion of liberty as the capacity to "live by ... free reason." "On this conception, there is liberty in a state only where each individual has sufficient self-respect to respect others."¹⁰

Thus it is clear that liberty is preferable to its opposite. Many thinkers of the orthodox school, while agreeing with this verdict, might attribute it simply to careless wording on the author's part, to a temporary relaxation of that perpetual vigil which must be maintained against creeping value bias. It is important to point out therefore that the value force here is more than a question of wording. It lies in the type of

alternative which is presented to us: on the one hand, a man can be manipulated by others, obeying a law and standards set up by others which he cannot judge; on the other hand, he is developed to the point where he can judge for himself, exercise reason, and apply his own standards; he comes to respect himself and is more capable of respecting others. If this is really the alternative before us, how can we fail to judge freedom better (whether or not we believe there are overriding considerations)?

Dimension (6) also determines our choice. "Impartiality" is said to "correspond in certain ways to the concepts of 'justice' in the classical tradition,"¹¹ and an impartial rule is called a "commonwealth," "enhancing the value position of all members of the society impartially, rather than that of some restricted class,"¹² Now if the choice is simply between a regime which works for the common good and a regime which works for the good of some smaller group, there is no doubt which is better in the absence of any overriding considerations.

Similarly dimension (7) is value-determinate. "Juridical" is opposed to "tyrannical" and is defined as a state of affairs where "decisions are made in accord with specified rules . . . rather than arbitrarily"¹³ or where a "decision is challenged by an appraisal of it in terms of . . . conditions, which must be met by rulers as well as ruled." Since the alternative presented here is *arbitrary* decision, and one which cannot be checked by any due process, there is no question which is preferable. If we had wanted to present a justification of rule outside law (such as Plato did), we would never accept the adjective "arbitrary" in our description of the alternative to "juridical."

As far as the other dimensions are concerned, the authors relate them to these three key ones, so that they too cannot be seen as neutral, although their value relevance is derivative. Thus voluntarization is better for liberty than regimentation, and the dispersion of power can be seen as conducive to juridicalness. In short we come out with a full-dress justification of democracy, and this in a work which claims neutrality. The work, we are told in the introduction, "contains no elaborations of political doctrine, of what the state and society *ought* to be."¹⁴ Even during the very exposition of the section on democracy, there are ritual disclaimers: for instance, when the term "justice" is mentioned, a parenthesis is inserted: "the present term, however, is to be understood altogether in a descriptive, non-normative sense";¹⁵ and at the end of the chapter: "the formulations throughout are descriptive rather than normatively ambiguous."¹⁶

But neutral they are not, as we have seen: we cannot accept these descriptions and fail to agree that democracy is a better form of government than its opposite (a "tyrannical," "exploitative," "authoritarian" rule: you can take your choice). Only the hold of the neutrality myth can hide this truth from the authors.

Of course these sections do not represent adequately Lasswell's total work. Indeed, one of the problems in discussing Lasswell is that he has espoused a bewildering variety of conceptual frameworks of explanation. This is evident from a perusal of *Power and Society* alone, quite apart from his numerous other works. These may all cohere in some unified system, but if this is the case, it is far from obvious. Yet the link between factual analysis and evaluation reappears in each of the different approaches. There is not space to cover them all; one further example will have to suffice here.

In the later psychiatrically oriented works, such as *Power and Personality*, or "The Democratic Character,"¹⁷ the goal explicitly set for policy science is democracy. But the implication that this is a goal chosen independently of what is discovered to be true about politics is belied all along the line. For the alternative to a society where people have a "self-system" which suits the democratic character is one in which

various pathologies, often of a dangerous kind, are rampant. The problem of democracy is to create, among other things, a self-system which is "multivalued, rather than single-valued, and . . . disposed to share rather than to hoard or to monopolize."¹⁸ One might have some quarrel with this: perhaps single-minded people are an asset to society. But after seeing the alternative to multi-valuedness as set out in the "Democratic Character,"¹⁹ one can understand why Lasswell holds this view. Lasswell lays out for us a series of what he describes frankly at one point as "character deformations."²⁰ In talking about the *homo politicus* who concentrates on the pursuit of power, he remarks, "The psychiatrist feels at home in the study of ardent seekers after power in the arena of politics because the physician recognizes the extreme egocentricity and sly ruthlessness of some of the paranoid patients with whom he has come in contact in the clinic" (p. 498).

The point here is not that Lasswell introduces valuation illegitimately by the use of subtly weighted language, or unnecessarily pejorative terms. Perhaps politicians do tend to approximate to unbalanced personalities seeking to make up deprivation by any means. The point is that, if this is true, then some important judgments follow about political psychiatry. And these are not, as it were, suspended on some independent value judgment, but arise from the fact themselves. There *could* be a policy science of tyranny, but then there could also be a medical science aimed at producing disease (as when nations do research into bacteriological warfare). But we could not say that the second was more worthy of pursuit than the first, unless we advanced some very powerful overriding reasons (which is what proponents of bacteriological warfare try—unsuccessfully—to do). The science of health, however, needs no such special justification.

3

I

The thesis we have been defending, however plausible it may appear in the context of a discussion of the different theories of political science, is unacceptable to an important school of philosophy today. Throughout the foregoing analysis, philosophers will have felt uneasy. For this conclusion tells against the well-entrenched doctrine according to which questions of value are independent of questions of fact: the view which holds that before any set of facts we are free to adopt an indefinite number of value positions. According to the view defended here, on the other hand, a given framework of explanation in political science tends to support an associated value position, secretes its own norms for the assessment of politics and policies.

It is, of course, this philosophical belief which, because of its immense influence among scientists in general and political scientists as well, has contributed to the cult of neutrality in political science, and the belief that genuine science gives no guidance as to right and wrong. It is time, therefore, to come to grips with this philosophical view.

There are two points about the use of "good" which are overlooked or negated by the standard "nonnaturalist" view: (1) to apply "good" may or may not be to commend, but it is always to claim that there are reasons for commending whatever it is applied to, (2) to say of something that it fulfills human needs, wants, or purposes always constitutes a *prima facie* reason for calling it "good," that is, for applying the term in the absence of overriding considerations.²¹

Now the nonnaturalist view, as expressed, for instance, by Hare or Stevenson, denies both these propositions. Its starting point is the casting of moral argument in deductive form—all the arguments against the so-called naturalistic fallacy have turned on the validity of deductive inference. The ordinary man may think that he is moving from a factual consideration about something to a judgment that it is good or bad, but in fact one cannot deduce a statement concerning the goodness or badness of something from a statement attributing some descriptive property to it. Thus the ordinary man's argument is really an enthymeme: he is assuming some major premise: when he moves from "X will make men happy" to "X is good," he is operating with the suppressed premise, "What makes men happy is good," for only by adding this can one derive the conclusion by valid inference.

To put the point in another way: the ordinary man sees "X will make men happy" as the reason for his favorable verdict on it. But on the nonnaturalist view, it is a reason only because he accepts the suppressed major premise. For one could, logically, reject this premise, and then the conclusion would not follow at all. Hence, that something is a reason for judging X good depends on what values the man who judges holds. Of course, one can find reasons for holding these values. That is, facts from which we could derive the major premise, but only by adopting a higher major which would allow us to derive our first major as a valid conclusion. Ultimately, we have to decide beyond all reasons, as it were, what our values are. For at each stage where we adduce a reason, we have already to have accepted some value (enshrined in a major premise) in virtue of which this reason is valid. But then our ultimate major premises stand without reasons; they are the fruit of a pure choice.

Proposition (1) above, then, is immediately denied by nonnaturalism. For in the highest major premises "good" is applied to commend without the claim that there are reasons for this commendation. And (2) also is rejected, for nothing can claim always to constitute a reason for calling something good. Whether it does or not depends on the decisions a man has made about his values, and it is not logically impossible that he should decide to consider human needs, wants, and purposes irrelevant to judgments about good and bad. A reason is always a reason-for-somebody, and has this status because of the values he has accepted.

The question at issue, then, is first whether "good" can be used where there are no reasons, either evident or which can be cited for its application.²² Consider the following case:²³ There are two segregationists who disapprove of miscegenation. The first claims that mixing races will produce general unhappiness, a decline in the intellectual capacity and moral standards of the race, the abolition of a creative tension, and so on. The second, however, refuses to assent to any of these beliefs; the race will not deteriorate, men may even be happier; in any case they will be just as intelligent, moral, etc. But, he insists, miscegenation is bad. When challenged to produce some substitute reason for this judgment, he simply replies: "I have no reasons; everyone is entitled, indeed has to accept some higher major premise and stop the search for reasons somewhere. I have chosen to stop here, rather than seeking grounds in such fashionable quarters as human happiness, moral stature, etc." Or supposing he looked at us in puzzlement and said: "Reasons? why do you ask for reasons? Miscegenation is just bad."

Now no one would question that the first segregationist was making the judgment "miscegenation is bad." But in the case of the second, a difficulty arises. This can be seen as soon as we ask the question: how can we tell whether the man is really making

a judgment about the badness of miscegenation and not just, say, giving vent to a strongly felt repulsion, or a neurotic phobia against sexual relations between people of different races? Now it is essential to the notions "good" and "bad" as we use them in judgments that there be a distinction of this kind between these judgments and expressions of horror, delight, liking, disliking, and so on. It is essential that we be able, e.g., to correct a speaker by saying: "What you want to say would be better put as 'miscegenation horrifies me' or 'miscegenation makes me go all creepy inside'" Because it is an essential part of the grammar of "good" and "bad" that they claim more than is claimed by expressions of delight, horror, etc. For we set aside someone's judgment that X is good when we say: "All you are saying is that you *like* X." To which the man can hotly reply: "I do not like X any more than you do, but I recognize that it is good."

There must therefore be criteria of distinction between these two cases if "good" and "bad" are to have the grammar that they have. But if we allow that our second segregationist is making the judgment "miscegenation is bad," then no such distinction can be made. A judgment that I like something does not need grounds. That is, the absence of grounds does not undermine the claim "I like X" (though other things, e.g., in my behavior, may undermine it). But unless we adduce reasons for it (and moreover reasons of a certain kind as we shall see below) we cannot show that our claim that X is good says more than "I like X." Thus a man can only defend himself against the charge that all he is saying is that he likes X by giving his grounds. If there are no grounds, then judgment becomes indistinguishable from expression; which means that there are no more judgments of good and bad, since the distinction is essential to them as we have seen.

Those who believe in the fact-value dichotomy have naturally tried to avoid this conclusion; they have tried to distinguish the two cases by fastening on the use made of judgments of good and bad in commending, prescribing, expressing approval, and so on. Thus, no matter what a man's grounds, if any, we could know that he was making a judgment of good and bad by the fact that he was commending, prescribing, or committing himself to pursue the thing in question, or something of the kind. But this begs the question, for we can raise the query: what constitutes commending, or prescribing, or committing myself, or expressing approval, or whatever? How does one tell whether a man is doing one of these things as against just giving vent to his feelings?

If we can say that we can tell by what the man accepts as following from his stand—whether he accepts that he should strive to realize the thing in question—then the same problem breaks out afresh: how do we distinguish his accepting the proposition that he should seek the end and his just being hell-bent on seeking this end? Presumably, both our segregationists would agree that they should fight miscegenation, but this would still leave us just as puzzled and uncertain about the position of the second. Perhaps we can tell by whether they are willing to universalize their prescription? But here again we have no touchstone, for both segregationists would assent that everyone should seek racial purity, but the question would remain open whether this had a different meaning in the two cases. Perhaps the second one just means that he cannot stand interracial mating, whether done by himself or by anyone else. Similarly, a compulsive may keep his hands scrupulously clean and feel disgust at the uncleanness of others, even plead with them to follow his example; but we still want to distinguish his case from one who had judged that cleanliness was good.

Can we fall back on behavioral criteria, meaning by "behavior" what a man does in contrast to how he thinks about what he does? But there is no reason why a man with a neurotic phobia against X should not do all the things which the man who judges X is bad does, i.e., avoiding X himself, trying to stop others from doing it, and so on.

Thus the nonnaturalists would leave us with no criteria except what the man was willing to say. But then we would have no way of knowing whether the words were correctly applied or not, which is to say that they would have no meaning. All that we achieve by trying to mark the distinction by what follows from the judgment is that the same question which we raise about "X is bad" as against "X makes me shudder" can be raised about the complex "X is bad, I/you should not do X" as against the complex "X makes me shudder, please I/you do not do X." We simply appeal from what the man is willing to say on the first question to what he is willing to say on the second. The distinction can only be properly drawn if we look to the reasons for the judgment, and this is why a judgment without reasons cannot be allowed, for it can no longer be distinguished from an expression of feeling.²⁴

II

This analysis may sound plausible for "miscegenation is bad," but how about, "anything conducive to human happiness is good"? What can we say here, if asked to give grounds for this affirmation? The answer is that we can say nothing, but also we need say nothing. For that something conduces to human happiness is already an adequate ground for judging it good—adequate, that is, in the absence of countervailing considerations. We come, then, to the second point at issue, the claim that to say of something that it fulfills human needs, wants, or purposes always constitutes a *prima facie* reason for calling it "good."

For in fact it is not just necessary that there be grounds for the affirmation if we are to take it at its face value as an attribution of good or bad; they must also be grounds of a certain kind. They must be grounds which relate in some intelligible way to what men need, desire, or seek after. This may become clearer if we look at another example. Suppose a man says: "To make medical care available to more people is good"; suppose, then, that another man wishes to deny this. We could, of course, imagine reasons for this: world population will grow too fast, there are other more urgent claims on scarce resources, the goal can only be obtained by objectionable social policies, such as socialized medicine, and so on. The espousal of any of these would make the opposition to the above judgment intelligible, even if not acceptable, and make it clear that it was *this* judgment that was being denied, and not just, say, an emotional reaction which was being countered with another. If, however, our objector said nothing, and claimed to have nothing to say, his position would be unintelligible, as we have seen; or else we would construe his words as expressing some feeling of distaste or horror or sadness at the thought.

But supposing he was willing to give grounds for his position, but none of the above or their like, saying instead, for instance, "There would be too many doctors," or "Too many people would be dressed in white"? We would remain in doubt as to how to take his opposition, for we would be led to ask of his opposition to the increase of doctors, say, whether he was making a judgment concerning good and bad or simply expressing a dislike. And we would decide this question by looking at the grounds he adduced for *this* position. And if he claimed to have nothing to say, his position would be unintelligible in exactly the same way as if he had decided to remain

silent at the outset and leave his original statement unsupported. "What is this?" we would say, "You are against an increase in medical services, because it would increase the number of doctors? But are you just expressing the feelings of dislike that doctors evoke in you or are you really trying to tell us that the increase is bad?" In the absence of any defense on his part, we would take the first interpretation.

It is clear that the problem would remain unsolved, if our opponent grounded his opposition to doctors on the fact that they generally wore dark suits or washed their hands frequently. We might at this point suspect him of having us on. So that the length or elaboration of the reasoning has nothing to do with the question one way or another.

What would make his position intelligible, and intelligible as a judgment of good and bad, would be his telling some story about the evil influence doctors exercise on society, or the sinister plot they were hatching to take over and exploit the rest of mankind, or something of the kind. For this would relate the increase of doctors in an intelligible way to the interests, needs, or purposes of men. In the absence of such a relation, we remain in the dark, and are tempted to assume the worst.

What is meant by "intelligibility" here is that we can understand the judgment as a use of "good" and "bad." It is now widely agreed that a word gets its meaning from its place in the skein of discourse; we can give its meaning, for instance, by making clear its relations to other words. But this is not to say that we can give the meaning in a set of logical relations of equivalence, entailment, and so on, that an earlier positivism saw as the content of philosophical endeavor. For the relation to other terms may pass through a certain context. Thus, there is a relation between "good" and commending, expressing approval, and so on. But this is not to say that we can construe "X is good," for instance, as *meaning* "I commend X."²⁵ Rather, we can say that "good" can be used for commending, that to apply the word involves being ready to commend in certain circumstances, for if you are not then you are shown to have been unserious in your application of it, and so on.²⁶

The relation between "good" and commending, expressing approval, persuading, and so on has been stressed by nonnaturalist theorists of ethics (though not always adequately understood, because of the narrow concentration on logical relations), but the term has another set of relations, to the grounds of its predication, as we have tried to show. These two aspects correspond respectively to what has often been called the evaluative, emotive, or prescriptive meaning on one hand (depending on the theory) and the "descriptive" meaning on the other. For half a century an immense barrage of dialectical artillery has been trained on the so-called naturalistic fallacy in an effort to pry "good" loose from any set range of descriptive meanings. But this immense effort has been beside the point, for it has concentrated on the nonexistence of logical relations between descriptive predicates and evaluative terms. But the fact that one cannot find equivalences, make valid deductive argument, and so on, may show nothing about the relation between a given concept and others.

Just as with the "evaluative" meaning above, so with the "descriptive" meaning: "good" does not *mean* "conducive to the fulfillment of human wants, needs, or purposes"; but its use is unintelligible outside of any relationship to wants, needs, and purposes, as we saw above. For if we abstract from this relation, then we cannot tell whether a man is using "good" to make a judgment, or simply express some feeling; and it is an essential part of the meaning of the term that such a distinction can be made. The "descriptive"²⁷ aspects of "good's" meaning can rather be shown in this

way: "good" is used in evaluating, commending, persuading, and so on by a race of beings who are such that through their needs, desires, and so on, they are not indifferent to the various outcomes of the world process. A race of inactive, godless angels, as really disinterested spectators, would have no use for it, could not make use of it, except in the context of cultural anthropology, just as human anthropologists use "mana." It is because "good" has this use, and can only have meaning because there is this role to fill in human life, that it becomes unintelligible when abstracted from this role. Because its having a use arises from the fact that we are not indifferent, its use cannot be understood where we cannot see what there is to be not-indifferent about, as in the strange "grounds" quoted by our imaginary opponent above. Moreover, its role is such that it is supposed to be predicated on general grounds, and not just according to the likes and dislikes or feelings of individuals. This distinction is essential since (among other things) the race concerned spends a great deal of effort achieving and maintaining consensus within larger or smaller groups, without which it would not survive. But where we cannot see what the grounds could be, we are tempted to go on treating the use of "good" as an expression of partiality, only of the more trivial, individual kind.

We can thus see why, for instance, "anything conducive to human happiness is good" does not need any further grounds to be adduced on its behalf. In human happiness, which by definition men desire, we have an adequate ground. This does not mean that all argument is foreclosed. We can try to show that men degenerate in various ways if they seek only happiness, and that certain things which also make men unhappy are necessary for their development. Or we can try to show that there is a higher and a lower happiness, that most men seek under this title only pleasure, and that this turns them away from genuine fulfillment; and so on. But unless we can bring up some countervailing consideration, we cannot deny a thesis of this kind. The fact that we can always bring up such countervailing considerations means that we can never say that "good" means "conducive to human happiness," as Moore saw. But that something is conducive to human happiness, or in general to the fulfillment of human needs, wants, and purposes, is a *prima facie* reason for calling it good, which stands unless countered.

Thus the nonneutrality of the theoretical findings of political science need not surprise us. In setting out a given framework, a theorist is also setting out the gamut of possible polities and policies. But a *political* framework cannot fail to contain some, even implicit, conception of human needs, wants, and purposes. The context of this conception will determine the value slope of the gamut, unless we can introduce countervailing considerations. If these countervailing factors are motivationally marginal enough not to have too much relevance to political behavior, then we can speak of the original valuation as being only overridden. For that part of the gamut of possibilities which we originally valued still has the property we attributed to it and thus remains valuable for us in one aspect, even if we have to give it low marks in another. For instance, we still will believe that having a peaceful polity is good, even if it results in bad art. But if the countervailing factor is significant for political behavior, then it will lead us to revise our framework and hence our views about the gamut of possible polities and policies; this in turn will lead to new valuations. The basis of the old values will be undermined. Thus, if we believe that an absence of violence will lead to stagnation and foreign conquest or breakdown, then we change the gamut of possibility: the choice no longer lies between peace and violence, but between, say,

controlled violence and greater uncontrolled violence. Peace ceases to figure on the register: it is not a good we can attain.

Of course, the countervailing factor may not revise our gamut of choices so dramatically. It may simply show that the values of our originally preferred regime cannot be integrally fulfilled or that they will be under threat from a previously unsuspected quarter, or that they will be attended with dangers or disadvantages or disvalues not previously taken into account, so that we have to make a choice as in the peace-versus-good-art case above. Thus not all alterations of the framework will undermine the original values. But we can see that the converse does hold, and all undermining will involve a change in the framework. For if we leave the original framework standing, then the values of its preferred regime will remain as fully realizable goods, even if they are attended with certain evils which force on us a difficult choice, such as that between peace and good art, or progress and psychic harmony, or whatever.

In this sense we can say that a given explanatory framework secretes a notion of good, and a set of valuations, which cannot be done away with—though they can be overridden—unless we do away with the framework. Of course, because the values can be overridden, we can only say that the framework tends to support them, not that it establishes their validity. But this is enough to show that the neutrality of the findings of political science is not what it was thought to be. For establishing a given framework restricts the range of value positions which can be defensibly adopted. For in the light of the framework certain goods can be accepted as such without further argument, whereas other rival ones cannot be adopted without adducing overriding considerations. The framework can be said to distribute the onus of argument in a certain way. It is thus not neutral.

The only way to avoid this while doing political science would be to stick to the narrow-gauge discoveries which, just because they are, taken alone, compatible with a great number of political frameworks, can bathe in an atmosphere of value neutrality. That Catholics in Detroit tend to vote Democrat and can consort with almost anyone's conceptual scheme, and thus with almost anyone's set of political values. But to the extent that political science cannot dispense with theory, with the search for a framework, to that extent it cannot stop developing normative theory.

Nor need this have the vicious results usually attributed to it. There is nothing to stop us making the greatest attempts to avoid bias and achieve objectivity. Of course, it is hard, almost impossible, and precisely because our values are also at stake. But it helps, rather than hinders, the cause to be aware of this.

Notes

1. Of course, Rousseau's general will may remain a value in the hypothetical world he casts for it, but that concerns utopia building, not political philosophy.
2. This could involve either an undermining or an overriding of the value judgment. For we can deny something, a condition or outcome, the property by which it is judged good not only by denying it a property by which it fulfills certain human needs, wants, or purposes, but also by denying that these needs, wants, or purposes exist. And we can override the judgment that it is good by pointing to other needs, wants, or purposes that it frustrates.
3. *Politics of the Developing Areas*, p. 33.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 35–6.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
6. "The Democratic Character," in *Political Writings* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1951), p. 473.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 471n.

8. *Power and Society* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1952), Ch. 9, sections 3 and 4.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 232.
14. *Ibid.*, p. xi.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
17. *Political Writings*.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 497–8.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 497–502.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 500.
21. We might also speak of “interests” here, but this can be seen as included in “wants” and “needs.” Interest may deviate from want, but can only be explicated in terms of such concepts as “satisfaction,” “happiness,” “unhappiness,” etc., the criteria for whose application are ultimately to be found in what we want.
22. In what follows I am indebted to the arguments of Mrs. P. Foot, e.g., to her “When Is a Principle a Moral Principle?” in *Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Vol.* xxviii (1954), and her “Moral Arguments” in *Mind*, A.S.S.V. lxxvii (1958), although I do not know whether she would agree with the conclusions I draw from them.
23. Borrowed with changes from Hare’s *Freedom and Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).
24. We may use behavior, of course, to judge which of the two constructions to put on a man’s words, but the two are not distinguished by behavioral criteria alone, but also by what a man thinks and feels. It is possible, of course, to challenge a man’s even sincere belief that he is judging of good and bad, and to disvalue it on the grounds that one holds it to be based largely on irrational prejudice or unavowed ambitions or fears. Thus our first segregationist may be judged as not too different from our second. For there is some evidence that segregationist ideas can at least partly be assimilated to neurotic phobias in their psychological roots. But this is just why many people look on the judgments of segregationists as self-deception and unconscious sham. “Really,” they are just expressions of horror. But this respects the logic of “good” as we have outlined it: for it concludes that if the rational base is mere show, then the judgment is mere show. Segregationists, for their part, rarely are of the second type, and pay homage to the logic of “good” by casting about for all sorts of specious reasons of the correct form.
25. Cf. John Searle’s “Meaning and Speech Acts,” *Philosophical Review*, lxxi (1962) 423–32.
26. Thus, if I say, “This is a good car,” and then my friend comes along and says, “Help me choose a car,” I have to eat my words if I am not willing to commend the car to him, *unless* I can adduce some other countervailing factor such as price, my friend’s proclivity to dangerous driving, or whatever. But this complex relationship cannot be expressed in an equivalence, e.g., “This is a good car” entails, “If you are choosing a car, take this.”
27. The terms “descriptive meaning” and “evaluative meaning” can be seen to be seriously misleading, as is evident from the discussion. For they carry the implication that the meaning is “contained” in the word, and can be “unpacked” in statements of logical equivalence. There is rather a descriptive aspect and an evaluative aspect of its role or use, which are, moreover, connected, for we cannot see whether a use of the term carries the evaluation force of “good” unless we can also see whether it enters into the skein of relations which constitute the descriptive dimension of its meaning.

Chapter 36

The Value-Oriented Bias of Social Inquiry

Ernest Nagel

We turn, finally, to the difficulties said to confront the social sciences because the social values to which students of social phenomena are committed not only color the contents of their findings but also control their assessment of the evidence on which they base their conclusions. Since social scientists generally differ in their value commitments, the “value neutrality” that seems to be so pervasive in the natural sciences is therefore often held to be impossible in social inquiry. In the judgment of many thinkers, it is accordingly absurd to expect the social sciences to exhibit the unanimity so common among natural scientists concerning what are the established facts and satisfactory explanations for them. Let us examine some of the reasons that have been advanced for these contentions. It will be convenient to distinguish four groups of such reasons, so that our discussion will deal in turn with the alleged role of value judgments in (1) the selection of problems, (2) the determination of the contents of conclusions, (3) the identification of fact, and (4) the assessment of evidence.

1

The reasons perhaps most frequently cited make much of the fact that the things a social scientist selects for study are determined by his conception of what are the socially important values. According to one influential view, for example, the student of human affairs deals only with materials to which he attributes “cultural significance,” so that a “value orientation” is inherent in his choice of material for investigation. Thus, although Max Weber was a vigorous proponent of a “value-free” social science—i.e., he maintained that social scientists must appreciate (or “understand”) the values involved in the actions or institutions they are discussing but that it is not their business as objective scientists to approve or disapprove either those values or those actions and institutions—he nevertheless argued that

The concept of culture is a *value-concept*. Empirical reality becomes “culture” to us because and insofar as we relate it to value ideas. It includes those segments and only those segments of reality which have become significant to us because of this value-relevance. Only a small portion of existing concrete reality is colored by our value-conditioned interest and it alone is significant to us. It is significant because it reveals relationships which are important to us due to their connection with our values. Only because and to the extent that this is the case is it worthwhile for us to know it in its individual features. We cannot discover, however, what is meaningful to us by means of a “presuppositionless” investigation of empirical data. Rather perception of its meaningfulness to us is the presupposition of its becoming an *object* of investigation.¹