

Analytical Political Philosophy

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1. Political Philosophy and the Founders of Analytic Philosophy

Political philosophy is not, initially, easy to place in terms of the foundation and early development of analytic philosophy. If, following the traditional understanding, one takes analytical philosophy to have been founded by Frege, Russell, Moore and Wittgenstein, it is not obvious what influence these figures have had on the subsequent development of the discipline. To take them in turn, Frege did not write professionally on any political or social topics (although famously Dummett reports his shock and dismay at finding anti-Semitic comments in Frege's diaries Dummett, 1981, xii. These diaries are now published (Frege, 1994), as are some suggestions Frege made about an electoral system, (Frege 2000)). Russell is more complex. As a public intellectual he was known primarily as a political campaigner, especially for his pacifism, and opposition to nuclear arms, and indeed, was imprisoned for his views during the First World War. He wrote widely on political topics, and gave the first Reith Lectures for the BBC, later published as *Authority and the Individual* (Russell, 1949). Yet *The Problems of Philosophy* (Russell, 1912) does not have any discussion of political philosophy, and neither is it mentioned in his *My Philosophical Development* (Russell 1959). Russell's political writings have had very little, if any, influence on subsequent debates. Despite the attention given to political philosophy in Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* (Russell, 1949), and the fact that his first published book was *German Social Democracy* (Russell, 1896), Russell appeared to consider political writing as something rather separate from philosophy.

Moore's reputation as a moral philosopher in a way holds out more hope that he would have made a contribution to political philosophy, but even in his case he did not explicitly write on these topics, and one struggles to find more than a few scattered remarks. Wittgenstein, of course, had little to say about political and legal matters in his early writings. His later writings, such as *Culture and Value* (Wittgenstein 1980), do bear on politics, and other writers in political philosophy, such as Hanna Pitkin in *Wittgenstein and Justice* (1972), David Rubinstein in *Marx and Wittgenstein* (1981) and, from a very different perspective, even Jean-Paul Lyotard, who makes extensive use of the term 'language game' in *Just Gaming* (Lyotard and Thébaud 1985), have found inspiration in *Philosophical Investigations*. However, it would be hard to argue that Wittgenstein's later writings remain firmly within the analytic tradition.

Casting the net more widely, Carnap and Neurath bear some interesting similarities to Russell in holding radical political beliefs and contributing to intense contemporary political debates, while never becoming part of a tradition of academic political philosophy. One way in which they differed from Russell was in claiming that their anti-metaphysical contributions to philosophy were somehow continuous with emancipatory political struggle, although how exactly this connection is to be made, and especially whether they developed a 'left philosophy of science', remains a topic of contemporary debate (Uebel, 2005, Richardson, 2009, Uebel, forthcoming). Another point of difference was that Neurath engaged in and contributed to

academic debates in political theory, as well as taking part in political activism and holding political office. Yet there is little trace of attention to Neurath at least in English-language political philosophy, except as a figure worthy of scholarly interest, and, perhaps rediscovery (Cartwright et al 1996, O'Neill 2002).

A.J. Ayer, who also was a political activist, albeit in a more conventional party-political vein, and also lectured on political theory in the late 1930s, explains his own lack of writing in political philosophy with the comment that he found that concepts such as 'the social contract' and 'the general will' 'did not repay minute analysis', but he had nothing of his own to replace them with (Ayer, 1977, 184). He did, however, later publish an essay entitled 'The Concept of Freedom' in which he offers an analysis of the measurement of freedom (Ayer, 1944). Ayer claims that his friend Isaiah Berlin turned to political philosophy because, according to Ayer, Berlin's lack of knowledge of mathematical logic made him come to the view that to work in central areas of philosophy was 'beyond his grasp' (Ayer 1944, 98). This explanation, however, does not quite tally with Berlin's own, in which it was the non-substantive ambitions of contemporary philosophy that led to his disillusionment and turn to the history of ideas. (Ignatieff, 1998, 131). We will, though, return to Berlin's writings later. Despite Ayer's evident interest in political matters, his own brand of positivism bears on political philosophy in possibly devastating fashion, apparently by reducing arguments in political philosophy to either disagreement about facts, to be resolved by the social sciences, or subjective expression of emotions, about which there can be no rational debate (Ayer, 1936). All that is left, it appears, is logical analysis of concepts. Again we shall return to this below.

The impression, therefore, is that most of the central figures in the foundation and further development of analytic philosophy - even those with strongly held and argued political views - did not see political philosophy as part of their activity as philosophers. Indeed, at least in the case of Ayer, their philosophical position appears to rule out the possibility of political philosophy at least as a normative discipline. The only major exception to this is Karl Popper who is known both for his contributions to philosophy of science and political philosophy. Popper's *The Poverty of Historicism*, first published as a series of articles in 1944-5, dates back, he says in the 'Historical Note' accompanying the first publication in book form, to 1919-20. (Popper, 1957) His major two-volume *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Popper 1945a, 1945b), which, with *The Poverty of Historicism*, he described as his 'war effort' (Popper, 1974/1992, p. 115), famously argues in favour of the 'open society' and against the possibility of 'historical prophecy' and in favour of 'piecemeal social engineering'. *The Open Society*, Popper says, was 'well received in England, far beyond my expectations' (Popper, 1974/1992, p. 122). Yet although scholars were prepared to engage, highly critically, with Popper's readings of Plato (Levinson, 1953) and Marx (Cornforth, 1968) few political philosophers seem to have responded to the substantive content of Popper's own position.

In some ways it seems strange that Popper remained on the sidelines to the development of academic political philosophy, despite the wider

recognition of the power of his work. Indeed in social science and broader political theory Popper is regarded as a major contributor, especially for his theory of the demarcation between science and pseudoscience (Popper 1935/1959, 1963) in addition to the themes mentioned above. Yet he was largely ignored by political philosophers. In the Preface to the first volume of the series *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, the founding editor Peter Laslett, in 1956, refers to Popper as ‘perhaps the most influential of contemporary philosophers who have addressed themselves to politics’ (Laslett, 1956a, xii). In this series, however, which we will discuss in detail shortly, not only does Popper not appear in any of the volumes, but his work is not engaged with in any of the 70 or so papers in the seven volumes that have appeared to date. Neither did Popper publish in the yearbook of the American Society of Political and Legal Society, *Nomos*, the first number of which appeared in 1958 and has been published annually since (Friedrich, 1958).

2. Political Philosophy and the Focal Points of Early Analytic Philosophy

Even if few of the major figures in the early rise of analytic philosophy attended to political philosophy, this does not exclude the possibility that others would do such work inspired by developments elsewhere. This, therefore, raises the question of what constitutes the emergence of analytic philosophy. This complex story is told elsewhere within this volume, but to simplify, it may be possible to identify three initial strands, which I will term the rejection of idealism, the introduction of the new logic, and, distinctly, the insistence on conceptual analysis.

The first strand, then, is a negative one: the rejection of forms of idealism descending from Hegel. In the context of political philosophy the leading text is Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, first published in 1821, although not translated into English until 1896 (Hegel 1821/1896). Such delay may indicate a neglect of Hegel in the mid-19th Century, but may also be a consequence of the facility of British scholars in the 19th Century to read German, and their habit of interacting with German scholars.

The most influential works of the major idealist political philosophers include T.H. Green's 'Lecture on Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract', and *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* which were included in the volumes of his works published between 1883-5, shortly after his death in 1882 (Green, 1883-5). Also important is Bernard Bosanquet's, *Philosophical Theory of the State*, first published 1899, with the fourth and final edition published in 1923 (Bosanquet 1899/1923), as well as F.H. Bradley, including his essay 'My Station and Its Duties' in *Ethical Studies*, first published in 1876 (Bradley, 1876). Hastings Rashdall's *Theory of Good and Evil* (1907) also bears on many political issues (Rashdall, 1907).

Idealism, as understood in Hegelian terms, for a long time remained largely of historical interest in contemporary thought. Although there is a revival of interest in idealist political thought it still remains only on the fringes of Anglo-American political philosophy, except as an object of intellectual history. It seems that we are yet to see any serious attempt to revive any strong form of neo-Hegelianism in political philosophy, although some of Hegel's ideas about moral community have influenced current criticisms of liberal thought. Hegelian idealism is notable for its social holism: the idea that the state or society exists as a moral and metaphysical entity in its own right. As developed in the UK, idealism took many forms, and it would be wrong to think that it is defined by any one doctrine or position. However, Russell's account of his own reasons for departing from idealism are instructive. Key to idealism, argues Russell, is the doctrine of 'internal relations': that 'every relation between two terms expresses, primarily, intrinsic properties of the two terms and, in ultimate analysis, a property of the whole of which the two compose' (Russell, 1959, 42). Russell accepts that this is plausible for some relations, such as love, but argues against generalising it to all. In particular it cannot apply to asymmetrical relations as are common in mathematics. According, Russell

replaces it with the doctrine of 'external relations' allowing for contingent relations between objects (Griffin, this volume, Candlish 2007, ch 6).

It is clear that the doctrine of internal relations leads to a form of holism, in which all must be seen as components of a whole, and thus, in political philosophy, it is natural that the legacy of the rejection of idealism appears (at least) two-fold, in the implicit adoption of two forms of individualism. First, there is an assumption that some sort of high regard must be given to the moral importance of the individual, running from utilitarianism in which total value is a simple sum of individual values, to rights theories in which autonomy must not be violated. Second, a form of methodological individualism appears also to be widely assumed, in which it is presumed that explanations of social facts should be conducted in terms of facts about individuals. Of course a wide range of positions can be held, but the general tenor of contemporary political philosophy is to give moral and explanatory priority to individuals over social collectives. This dramatically contrasts with Bradley's famous doctrine that the individual is a bare abstraction (Bradley, 1876). While it is also often noted that Rawls, in *A Theory of Justice*, quotes Bradley approvingly (Rawls, 1971, 110), it has to be recognised that Rawls reads this phrase largely in institutional terms - i.e. what duties you have depends on institutional facts - rather than in the metaphysical and moral terms implied by holistic forms of idealism.

A second part of the initial foundation of analytic philosophy is the invention of modern logic, especially quantification and the predicate calculus, with Frege and Russell (Frege, 1879, Russell 1903, 1905, Russell and Whitehead 1910-13) and the application of logical techniques to other areas of philosophy. Here it is hard to see how such concerns immediately exerted any influence on political philosophy, in that it is hard to find examples before the 1950s of any attempt to use any form of formal theory in moral and political philosophy. Matters changed to some degree with the publication of Arrow's *Social Choice and Individual Values* (Arrow, 1951) and, to a lesser extent, Luce and Raiffa's *Theory of Games and Decisions* (Luce and Raiffa, 1957), in that political philosophers felt that they had at least to acknowledge the existence of such work. Yet few seriously attempted to use formal methods until Braithwaite's *Theory of Games as a Tool for the Moral Philosopher* (Braithwaite, 1955), and James Buchanan and Gordon Tulloch's *The Calculus of Consent* (Buchanan and Tulloch, 1962). Braithwaite's, though, was a somewhat anomalous work in that Braithwaite, a philosopher of science, had been appointed to the Knightbridge Chair at Cambridge, at that time considered to be a chair in moral philosophy, and for his inaugural lecture felt that he should make a contribution to the subject. And indeed this lecture seems to have been Braithwaite's only attempt to connect with moral philosophy. Others, such as Brian Barry, David Gauthier, Amartya Sen, and John Rawls would see possible applications of game and decision theory (Barry, 1968, Gauthier, 1969, Sen, 1970, Rawls, 1971). This strand of political philosophy remains alive and active, although its connection with logical developments in philosophy is much less marked than its debt to game theory, rational decision theory and social choice theory.

However, a third strand is often claimed also to be central to analytic philosophy, the use of conceptual analysis, as exemplified by Moore (Moore 1903), as distinct from the logical analysis of Frege and Russell. Whether this amounts to an innovation, however, is not obvious. At its most prescriptive, it would be the project of analysing concepts by providing a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for their application, or, at least, to make as much progress in this direction as the subject matter allows. However, it is not clear how this differs from the project of seeing the philosopher's task as including the provision of definitions, which has been part of philosophy since the ancient Greeks. If, on the other hand, conceptual analysis is thought to be a term to describe a broader approach to philosophy which emphasises rigour, argument and attempts to achieve conceptual clarity, then it is equally hard to see it as anything new. After all, Jeremy Bentham (e.g. Bentham 1823/1970) and Henry Sidgwick, whose *Methods of Ethics*, first published in 1874, and going through seven editions, the last of which was published in 1907 (Sidgwick, 1874/1907), exemplified these virtues arguably to a higher degree than Moore. Indeed, outside political philosophy, Bentham's 'theory of fictions' was later recognised as anticipating Russell's theory of descriptions (Wisdom 1931, Quine, 1981, Beaney 2003/2009).

However, to return to the first strand, it appears that the rejection of idealism left a void in political philosophy, rather than an alternative programme. When one looks for major works of political philosophy published between the wars, it is hard to find anything of comparable importance to those published at the turn of the century. Harold Laski produced a stream of books during this period (e.g. Laski 1925), yet he is rarely referred to within contemporary legal and political philosophy. Similar remarks can be made with respect to John Dewey's prolific output. Tawney's *Equality* (1931) remains a point of reference, yet it would be a great exaggeration to claim that it has been central to the development of political philosophy. Also notable is Plamenatz's *Consent, Freedom and Political Obligation* (1938), although this is an interesting transitional work, engaging with Green and Bosanquet, yet producing a contribution to the liberal individualist approach to political obligation that still receives notice today. Perhaps Marxism made more enduring contributions, with Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness* (1923/1967) and the first writings emanating from the Frankfurt School. In passing it is worth also noting that T.S. Eliot, who wrote his PhD thesis on Bradley, delivered the lectures that became *The Idea of A Christian Society*, in 1939 (Eliot, 1939). This work, idealist in general conception, also gives a powerful sense of a struggle between three competing ideologies and political systems - liberal democracy of the USA, UK and France, fascism of Germany and Italy, and communism of the Soviet bloc - dominating world politics. Eliot seemed far from certain, as he wrote, which would prevail. It is extraordinary to contrast the uncertainty and tensions of the world Eliot was writing in with the relative stability of our own. Perhaps, between the wars, political theory took a back seat to real world political conflict.

But in considering the development of political philosophy in the twentieth century it is important also to consider the place of utilitarianism. At the start of the twentieth century, idealism vied with utilitarianism, especially in the version defended by Sidgwick, as leading approaches to ethics (Driver, this volume). At least in some quarters, however, utilitarianism was seen as outdated; Russell ruefully remembered that as a young man he and his friends referred to Sidgwick as ‘old Sidg’ (Russell, 1959, p. 30). On the other hand it is sometimes thought that the lack of substantive progress in political philosophy before Rawls is a somehow related to the dominance utilitarian thinking had on political philosophy, which it is said, obtained a kind of ‘dominance-by-default in the English-speaking liberal democracies in the twentieth century’ (Miller and Dagger, 2003, p. 449). Yet whether utilitarianism remained dominant as a theory in political philosophy (as distinct from economics and public life) in the decades before Rawls is not obvious. Utilitarianism was most obviously represented by Sidgwick’s *Elements of Politics*, which was published in 1891 and reprinted several times, including in 1919 (Sidgwick 1891). In terms of the development of utilitarianism the most significant innovation may be that of the economist Roy Harrod’s paper setting out a version of rule-utilitarianism (Harrod 1936), and utilitarianism was taken very seriously within economics. Yet if one looks at the political philosophy textbooks of the 1930s and 1940s there is no sign of a discipline in the grip of utilitarianism. E.F. Carritt’s *Morals and Politics* (Carritt, 1935) provides a history of the subject from Hobbes to Bosanquet without even a mention of Bentham, Mill or Sidgwick, while in his later *Ethical and Political Thinking* utilitarianism appears in a chapter entitled ‘Crude Moral Theories’ and Carritt presents several objections to utilitarianism, including a version of the now notorious ‘scapegoat’ objection in which under certain circumstances utilitarianism would justify punishing an innocent person (Carritt, 1947, p. 65) Indeed Rawls critically responds to this argument in his most utilitarian early paper, ‘Two Concepts of Rules’ (Rawls, 1955, p. 10-11). In Mabbott’s *The State and the Citizen* (Mabbott 1948) Bentham and Mill are mentioned primarily for their errors and Sidgwick is ignored entirely. T.D. Weldon’s *States and Morals*, contains no significant discussion of utilitarianism and only passing mention of Mill and Sidgwick. If utilitarianism was dominant, it is hard to find evidence.

Despite this, the idea that contemporary analytic political philosophy owes a great deal to utilitarianism is very plausible, if the claim is interpreted as a comment about form rather than content. We have noted several times that the distinctive virtues of analytic political philosophy were already present in the writings of Bentham, Mill and Sidgwick. Agree with it or not, utilitarianism offered a model of what a clear and rigorous political philosophy could be, and how it would be established.¹

3. Post-War Analytic Political and Legal Philosophy: Philosophy, Politics and Society

Although Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* was published in 1944 (Hayek, 1944), the immediate post-war period saw little revival of political philosophy, to the point where in 1956, in the preface to *Philosophy, Politics and Society* (first series) the historian Peter Laslett famously wrote that the long tradition of political philosophy, 'from Hobbes to Bosanquet', appeared to have stopped, notoriously observing 'For the moment, anyway, political philosophy is dead.' (Laslett, 1956a, p. vii) Laslett's volume was conceived as a parallel, to Flew's Logic and Language series, which, encouragingly, contained papers in political and legal philosophy by Margaret MacDonald and H.L.A. Hart (Flew, 1951). Yet for the editor of a collection of papers in political philosophy to announce the subject 'dead' is quite extraordinary, especially when important work was still been done not only by Hayek, but also, for example, Adorno and Horkheimer in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944/1997), although to be fair to Laslett he restricts the scope of his claim to writing in English. Laslett considers three possible diagnoses of the situation. First, the horrors of the second world war. 'Faced with Hiroshima and with Belsen, a man is unlikely to address himself to a neat and original theory of political obligation.' (Laslett, 1956a p. vii) Second, the rise of sociological thought, including Marxism, has tended to explain away political philosophy as sociologically determined by its context, and hence as a symptom of deeper causes to be understood through social analysis (Laslett, 1956a, p. viii). But finally, and most importantly, 'The Logical Positivists [killed political philosophy]. It was Russell and Wittgenstein, Ayer and Ryle who convinced the philosophers that they must withdraw unto themselves for a time and re-examine their logical and linguistic apparatus. ... [This re-examination] called into question the logical status of all ethical statements ... and [raised the question] of whether political philosophy is possible at all' (Laslett, 1956a, p. ix).

The first of these explanations, though often repeated, may seem, however, unconvincing. Popper, as we noted earlier, referred to his writings in political philosophy as his 'war effort' (Popper, 1974/1992, p. 115), and, as Laslett himself notes, it seems just as likely that a war of such magnitude should inspire reflection on political matters rather than suppress it. The second - where ideology is reduced to a subject of sociological study - may well be more significant in undermining political theory as an autonomous discipline. The third - the rise of positivism (though here rolled together with logical atomism and ordinary language philosophy) - again looks a promising explanation but we will see that it is also more problematic than it looks. But still the appearance is a powerful one especially when combined with the introspections of ordinary language philosophy, with its concentration on clarification of questions rather than proposing solutions. Each could have a dampening effect on the prospects for political philosophy; together they threaten to be stultifying.

The particular implications of positivism for political philosophy are said, by Laslett, to have been drawn out by T.D. Weldon, whose

Vocabulary of Politics (Weldon, 1953) is summarised by Weldon in a paper entitled 'Political Principles', included as the second essay in Laslett's collection (Weldon, 1956), after an elegant, and now well-known, essay by Michael Oakeshott, on 'Political Education'. Clearly untouched by logical positivism, Oakeshott makes the case for the priority of tradition over ideology, and conversation over argument (Oakeshott, 1956). By contrast in 'Political Principles' Weldon, in a somewhat irritated tone, applies a fairly direct form of logical positivism to deflate the ambitions of traditional political philosophy arguing that political principles have no firmer epistemological foundation than individual judgement or collective agreement.

Laslett subtly describes 'Political Principles' as a 'terser' form of the argument of the Weldon's 1953 book *The Vocabulary of Politics*. The term 'terse' is accurate both in the sense of the paper being more concise but also rather brusque in tone. The *Vocabulary of Politics* was published in a series edited by Ayer, and in his editorial forward Ayer suggests that Weldon aims to 'exhibit the logic of the statements which characteristically figure in discourse about politics'. Certainly Weldon makes what appear to be straightforward assertions of a logical positivist creed. In certain places Weldon argues that the role of philosopher in respect to politics is not to answer what have been taken to be the traditional questions, but to clarify the meaning of the vocabulary in which they are couched. He even goes as far as to say that '[W]hen verbal confusions are tidied up most of the questions of traditional political philosophy are not unanswerable. All of them are confused formulations of purely empirical difficulties.' (Weldon, 1953, p. 192). Yet, as is the case so often, Weldon's own analysis rather betrays his theoretical claims. Much of Weldon's argument is that traditional political philosopher has implicitly accepted a type of Platonism, in which terms like 'freedom' and 'the state' stand for concepts with real essences, and that the task of the political philosopher is to discover such essences, which then will provide 'philosophical foundations' for particular political ideologies. Weldon claims that this approach is mistaken: there are no essences or foundations.

Weldon plausibly links the search for 'foundations' with the fear of subjectivism. In 1953 this manifests itself as the concern that unless it is possible to find philosophical foundations for western liberal democracy, one would have nothing to say in opposition to soviet communism, or, indeed, the Nazi regime which of course was a very recent memory. Weldon attempts to disarm this line of objection by the plausible contention that it is possible to support and oppose political positions with reasons even if there is no definitive set of foundations or philosophical test against which any political position can be judged.

At the same time, Weldon suggests, it does not follow that politics collapses into individual subjectivism; foundations are not necessary for rational politics. Rather he sketches an account in which politics is a practice with its own internal standards of excellence (although Weldon does not use this language himself) rather like art criticism or wine tasting, in which there can be genuine judgements. Weldon also takes time to sketch

out the virtues of a statesman, and how such a person compares with experts in other fields. In this respect Weldon appears far closer to Oakeshott than to Ayer or Ryle. More generally, Weldon curiously combines a great respect for the genius of many of the great political philosophers, with a readiness to accuse them of rather simple logical and grammatical mistakes.

Still, it is evident that Weldon's relation to logical positivism and linguistic analysis is a complex one. The analytic project of conceptual analysis is sometimes implicitly guilty of the Platonism which Weldon rejects, and he is very keen to avoid the accusation that rejecting Platonism leaves one only with a 'boo/hurrah' approach to political philosophy.

Indeed, the special difficulties of applying positivism to political philosophy was pointed out even before Hiroshima and Belsen, in a paper called 'The Language of Political Theory' by Margaret MacDonald (Macdonald 1940-41). MacDonald points out that political disagreement does not always seem to be based on empirical questions or linguistic confusion, and remaining disagreements can have enormous impact on human lives. Implicitly, she seems to admit that crude application of logical positivism is insufficient to diagnose all disagreement in political philosophy. By way of case study, she turns her attention to the problem of political obligation, arguing that none of the leading accounts - social contract, tradition, utilitarian - provide a general answer, and that instead each holds part of the truth and there is an indefinite set of vaguely shifting criteria, differing for different times and circumstances.

The value of the political theorists, however, is not in the general information they give about the basis of political obligation but in their skill in emphasizing at a critical moment a criterion which is tending to be overlooked or denied (MacDonald 1940-41,112).

MacDonald's better known paper, 'Natural Rights', first published in 1947-8 is reprinted by Laslett, and given the historical importance of the Laslett volume it is worth looking at all the papers in the volume, if briefly. In her contribution MacDonald argues against both the idea that natural rights can be founded on the natural law, revealed by reason, and a crude 'boo-hurrah' positivism (MacDonald 1947-8/1956). Like Weldon at his best, MacDonald struggles to find a middle ground. The view she presents is that statements of natural rights are akin to decisions, declaring 'here I stand', and, like Weldon, uses an analogy with another area of critical judgement - in her case literary appreciation - to point out the possibility of rational argument through the presentation of reasons. With both Weldon and MacDonald, while it is clear that a positivist orientation, and concentration on questions of language, strongly inform their thinking, neither is prepared simply to apply a positivist formula, and both make contributions to political philosophy of a pragmatist, contextualist, form which are independent of considerations of linguistic analysis.

More generally, many of the essays in this volume have a tendency to try to explain away disagreement in political philosophy on the grounds not of substantial doctrinal difference, but in terms of confusion about the logic or grammar of concepts. One example is Rees' essay, which is an application of a type of linguistic philosophy to diagnose apparent philosophical

disagreements about the nature, importance and use of the concept of sovereignty as resulting from a failure to distinguish different concepts of state and sovereign. Although by no means a simple application of positivism, Rees' argument shows a positivist spirit by its general architecture: essentially that once linguistic confusions are cleared up then remaining disagreements can generally be settled in empirical terms (Rees, 1956). Quinton presents a somewhat similar methodological approach, albeit with, potentially, a more interesting pay-off. He attempts to reconcile retributive and utilitarian doctrines of punishment by claiming that the former is a logical doctrine concerning the use of a word, and the latter a moral doctrine about the justification of punishment (Quinton, 1956).

Bambrough makes a methodologically self-conscious attempt to apply new modes of linguistic analysis to Plato's use of analogies, with the 'dual purpose of making Plato's doctrines clear and making a contribution to the understanding of the logic of political theories' (Bambrough, 1956, p. 99). Indeed Bambrough's discussion of Plato is exceptionally illuminating, but it is very unclear that it depends in any way on a new philosophical method. The essay concludes with a much more methodological discussion, focusing on the issue of what follows from the recognition that questions in politics and ethics are not factual questions with empirically verifiable answers. Here Bambrough has even less to offer than Weldon and MacDonald on the topic, merely suggesting that such deliberative questions require decisions, but can be reasonable if made with thought and knowledge.

Gallie, as a methodological preliminary, considers the debate between those who hold the 'monarchic' view of ethics - that there is one true theory for all times and places - and the 'polyarchic' view, which claims that different moralities are valid in different times and places, and he argues that considerations of 'the logic of ethics' cannot settle this dispute as any questions about logic are internal to a language and cannot rule on whether there is more than one possible language. The rest of the paper is devoted to trying to defend the claim that there are distinct liberal and socialist moralities, which not only conflict with each other but can also both be found within the moral thought of each individual in contemporary society (Gallie, 1956). It is worth noting that the argument has some affinities with Gallie's much better known paper, 'Essentially Contested Concepts' published the same year (Gallie, 1955-6).

Other papers, though, seem somewhat less bound by their historical context. Bernard Mayo's very short paper, on the general will, assumes an anti-metaphysical account of an individual, and of the notion of individual will, which is then applied to society as an entity. Mayo suggests - in a move that anticipates later philosophy of mind - that the interpretative attitude we take to individuals can also be applied to societies. Just as we posit an individual will to make sense of individual behaviour, we are equally justified in positing a 'general will' to make sense of social action (Mayo, 1956). Laslett's own contribution to the volume is a lengthy exposition of the important point that modern society is not the sort of 'face to face' society theorised by Plato or even Rousseau. However, this is offered as a type of rebuke to sociologically and historically ill-informed

political theorists rather than an insight of which creative use can then be made (Laslett, 1956b).

The overriding character of the essays in the book (with some exceptions) is a conviction that previous theorists, for all their genius, went badly wrong often because they were confused about the meaning, logic, or grammar of particular words or concepts. But very little, if any, real use of logic is made: one might think that 'logic' is used in the sense in which it appears in the title of Ayer's *Language Truth and Logic*, rather than that of Frege or Russell. Certainly there is no sense of modern logic having a transforming effect on the presentation of political philosophy. Indeed the mood is much more one of linguistic, rather than analytic, philosophy, in any obvious sense. But it is also unclear that there is much, in terms of methods of argument, that marks a break with, say, Hobbes and Bentham, who each sought out clarity and rigour in argument, and were equally prepared to accuse their predecessors of confusion.

4. The Revival of Advocacy

There is a character to the writings of the First Series of Philosophy, Politics and Society that is brought out very well in the Introduction to the second series, published in 1962, this time edited by the sociologist Runciman, alongside the historian Laslett. The editors contend that the papers of the first volume, and other writings of the time, are much more concerned with diagnosis than with advocacy (Laslett and Runciman, 1962, p. viii-ix). And indeed, looking back to the first series there is virtually no assertion or defence of a substantive position in political philosophy.

The mood, however, had changed to some degree by 1962, and between 1956 and 1962 there had been significant developments in the area. For one, Isaiah Berlin's classic paper 'Two Concepts of Liberty' was presented as an Inaugural Lecture and published in 1958 (Berlin 1958/1969). The tone and general character of Berlin's writing makes him an unlikely champion of analytic philosophy, especially in the light of Berlin's warning against attempting to impose methods of logical and linguistic analysis in political philosophy:

To neglect the field of political thought, because its unstable subject-matter, with its blurred edges, is not to be caught by the fixed concepts, abstract models and fine

instruments suitable to logic or to linguistic analysis - to demand a unity of method in philosophy, and reject whatever the method cannot successfully manage - is merely to allow oneself to remain at the mercy of primitive and uncriticised political beliefs (Berlin, 1958/1969, p. 119)

Yet the central contrast of his paper is very interesting for our purposes. In distinguishing positive from negative liberty, Berlin is distinguishing a collectivist view of liberty, in which, for example, the state knows best what makes you free, from an individualist notion in which liberty involves the pursuit of a plan of one's own. The collectivist view is associated by Berlin with Hegel, Fichte, Bradley, Bosanquet and Green, the individualist notion with Hobbes, Locke, Smith, Bentham and Mill. In other words, Berlin's essay is one of the main sites in which analytic political philosophy emphasised its decisive break with the idealist tradition, and by reviving an older tradition, Berlin is helping support a new one.

A second development was the publication of the major text *Social Principles and the Democratic State*, by Stanley Benn and Richard Peters in 1959, which, on the first page of Chapter 1, asserts its analytic credentials with a phrase later to be made famous by Margaret Thatcher 'The first and obvious observation to make is that there is no such thing as society' (Benn and Peters, 1959, p. 13). However, rather than an assertion of a form of individualism it is part of a programme of conceptual analysis in which a series of political concepts, such as equality, democracy, authority and freedom are probed in depth, as an attempt to introduce a form of analytic reasoning into issues of politics.

Another highly significant event during this period was the publication of H.L.A. Hart's *The Concept of Law* 1961 (Hart 1961/1994). This work, the founding text of analytical jurisprudence, also has to be regarded as a classic of analytic philosophy. Hart explicitly describes his book as an exercise in

‘analytic jurisprudence’, as well, more surprisingly, as ‘descriptive sociology’, and develops a version of legal positivism, rejecting both natural law theory and the crude ‘command’ theory of law identified with earlier positivist views. Legal positivism is a form of positivism in that it makes central use of a fact/value distinction, asserting that the existence of law does not depend on its moral content (the ‘Separation Thesis’). Hart introduces the idea that any legal system needs a ‘rule of recognition’ by which new laws are made and legitimised, and that the existence of law depends on the social facts by which it is recognised (The ‘Social Thesis’). Despite the power of argument and general clarity of expression, however, Hart’s own view has been surprisingly resistant to precise capture, especially in the light of the inclusion of an unfinished postscript to the second edition of the work (published in 1994), primarily responding to Dworkin’s criticisms.

It is also worth noting that Hart’s important paper ‘Are There Any Natural Rights?’ was published as early as 1955, a year before the first series of *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, and much more constructive than most of the papers in that volume (Hart, 1955). In addition to the substantive contributions Hart makes to the theory of rights, and, by means of his ‘principle of fair play’ to the theory of political obligation, this paper is notable for perhaps one of the clearest statements of the methodological assumptions of post-positivist conceptual analysis, included in the following statement, ‘Perhaps few would now deny, as some have, that there are moral rights; for the point of that denial was usually to object to some philosophical claim as to the "ontological status" of rights, and this objection is now expressed not as a denial that there are any moral rights but as a denial of some assumed logical similarity between sentences used to assert the existence of rights and other kinds of sentences’ (Hart, 1955, 176).

Both Berlin and Hart are represented in the second series of *Politics, Philosophy and Society*. The preface of the second series includes a reflection on the remark in the preface to the first concerning the alleged death of political philosophy (indeed all other volumes in the series either discuss or allude to this remark). The ‘heyday of Weldonism’ was said to have ended (Laslett and Runciman, 1962, p. vii) and Weldon in fact had died in 1958, according to some accounts taking his own life (King, 1994). The second series contains much of interest. Berlin’s contribution is his famous paper ‘Does Political Philosophy Still Exist?’ (Berlin, 1962). Here he continues his sideswipe against prescriptive methodology, mentioned above, suggesting that political philosophy arises out of disagreements about the conception of man, and while it can be suppressed, it cannot be legislated out of existence. Berlin is able to convey a sense of history in which positivist strictures are a passing fad which cannot suppress human curiosity and inventiveness. Berlin invites us to observe that in a historical perspective such concerns will eventually appear parochial, local and a product of their time. Yet Berlin is still somewhat guarded about the current state of political philosophy, observing that no ‘commanding work’ had been published in the 20th Century (Berlin, 1962, p.1).

The second series of Politics, Philosophy and Society includes a number of papers that have exerted an influence on subsequent debates, and in several cases continue to do so. Richard Wollheim's 'A Paradox in the Theory of Democracy' (Wollheim, 1962) set off a small industry, and Bernard Williams' 'The Idea of Equality' is widely reprinted and still discussed (Williams, 1962). Hart's 'Prolegomenon to the Principles of Punishment' is thorough, illuminating, and informed by detailed understanding both of political theory and practices of criminal law (Hart, 1962). In passing, it is interesting to note that the editors remark that they asked Bertrand Russell to contribute a piece on nuclear disarmament, but he declined to do so, although, perhaps, the fact that he would then have been around 90 years old may have had some bearing on this (Laslett and Runciman, 1962, ix).

Part of the explicit agenda of the volume is to bring the social sciences into contact with political philosophy. Here, I think, we have to say that the volume is not entirely successful. MacIntyre's 'A Mistake About Causality in Social Science' is much more a contribution to the philosophy of social science, rather than a contribution to social science or an attempt to show how social science can be of use to philosophers (MacIntyre, 1962). But the volume does contain several papers by social scientists, including Runciman (the co-editor), Dahrendorf and Reinhard Bendix, all of whom draw on empirical research or sociological theory to attempt to illuminate questions of issues of democracy and of inequality.

However, there is little doubt that the highlight of the collection is the reprint of Rawls's 'Justice as Fairness', first published in the *Philosophical Review* (Rawls, 1958/1962). The editors seem clear that Rawls is doing something new, and highly stimulating, and even at that time there seems to be a sense that the future health of the discipline is in his hands. The character of Rawls' paper is quite different to anything else in the first two volumes. First, it is the only paper in the volume to set out and defend a particular substantive conclusion. Second, it has a distinct approach to methodology. Many other authors of the era chide previous philosophers through the application of methodological dogma, and then find themselves hamstrung by their own methodological strictures. By contrast, Rawls lays out elements of a methodology, and then uses it to constructive effect. Third, Rawls's relation to the previous history of the subject is to find inspiration in it, rather than either to ignore it, or treat it as a series of informative mistakes. So, for example, Rawls rather over-generously suggests that 'a similar analysis' to his principles of justice can be found in the now largely forgotten work *The Principles of Moral Judgement*, by W. D. Lamont (Lamont, 1946) (Rawls, 1958/1962, p. 134n). Indeed the original *Philosophical Review* version of Rawls's paper contains many more referenced footnotes, and clearly demonstrates Rawls' exhaustive engagement with the recent literature. Fourth, Rawls does not restrict himself to philosophical texts, but is quite happy to make use of work in related fields, such as welfare economics. With Rawls, under the influence of Hart, Berlin, and Stuart Hampshire, whom Rawls encountered in Oxford

in the academic year 1952-3 (Pogge, 2007: 16) one sees political philosophy rediscovering its confidence.

One has to ask, though, whether political philosophy in the United States ever suffered the same degree of loss as confidence as it did in the UK. The first volume of *Nomos*, the yearbook of the American Society of Political and Legal Philosophy was published in 1958, with a collection of essays on Authority, by a range of authors including Frank Knight, Hannah Arendt, Bertand de Jouvenal and Talcott Parsons (Friedrich, 1958). The general character of the volume is one of historical reflection and conceptual analysis, with little, if anything, of the spectre of 'Weldonism' that haunted British political philosophers at the time. Volumes continued to be produced on an annual basis, with Volume VI, Justice, produced in 1963, a particular highlight with Joel Feinberg's 'Justice and Personal Desert', perhaps the most enduring of the papers included, alongside other important contributions such as John Rawls's 'Constitutional Liberty and the Concept of Justice', Robert Tucker's 'Marx and Distributive Justice' and Hugo Bedau's 'Justice and Classical Utilitarianism' (Friedrich and Chapman, 1963).

5. Oxford Readings and Laslett and Runciman Third to Fifth Series

The third series of *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, again edited by Laslett and Runciman, appeared in 1967 (Laslett and Runciman, 1967), the same year that Quinton produced the edited collection *Political Philosophy* for the Oxford Readings in Philosophy series. Quinton included Hart's 'Natural Rights' paper as well as Berlin's 'Two Concepts of Liberty'. Other highlights include a symposium between R.S. Peters and Peter Winch on 'Authority', and two papers by Brian Barry, 'The Public Interest' and 'Justice and the Common Good'. Barry's *Political Argument*, a major work of analytic political philosophy, had recently also been published (Barry, 1965). Indeed in the first paragraph of *Political Argument* Barry explicitly describes his approach as 'analytical', which, interestingly, he contrasts with 'causal', by which he appears to mean the collection of data or historical information for purposes of scientific explanation (Barry, 1965, p. xvii). Clearly Barry's intention is to use a method of analysis, involving arguments, objections to the arguments of others, and distinctions, rather than supporting or undermining theories through the accumulation of evidence.

Two more methodological papers are included by Quinton, John Plamenatz's 'The Use of Political Theory' and P.H. Partridge's 'Politics, Philosophy, Ideology'. These both respond to the allegation that political philosophy is dead. Plamenatz appears to agree with his contemporaries that most of great philosophers of the past were hopelessly confused; nevertheless, he claims, political philosophy is a branch of practical philosophy, needed to guide conduct, despite the claims of the positivists (Plamenatz 1960/1967). Partridge suggests that one reason for the apparent decline of morally informed political philosophy is the triumph of democracy, and the development of a broad political consensus. Nevertheless, he argues, political theory of other sorts flourishes (Partridge 1961/1967).

For present purposes, however, Quinton's introduction to the volume is of greatest interest. He begins by enquiring after the nature of the subject of political philosophy, suggesting that the 'most uncontroversial way of defining political philosophy is as the common topic of a series of famous books' (Quinton, 1967, p. 1). But Quinton then suggests that 'a comparative definite place has now been marked out for philosophy within the total range of man's intellectual activities'. This place is 'the task of classifying and analysing the terms, statements and arguments of the substantive, first-order disciplines' (Quinton, 1967, p. 1). From this, Quinton concludes, remarkably, that 'the works that make up the great tradition of political philosophy are ... only to a small, though commonly crucial, extent works of philosophy in the strict sense' (Quinton, 1967, p. 1) For, as Quinton remarks, they also contain factual or descriptive elements falling under the heading of 'political science' and recommendations of ideal ends, which he calls 'ideology'.

Returning to *Philosophy, Politics and Society* series three, the editors report a subject in a productive phase, with a good number of books and

important articles appearing in recent years. As with previous volumes the contributions range over a variety of subjects, but there is a greater awareness that positivism is a theory that needs to be engaged with critically, rather than a formula or straightjacket. Interestingly, the collection begins with a paper by Ayer, 'Man As A Subject for Science', which asks why the social sciences have failed to achieve the apparent success in the natural sciences. Ayer's conclusion is relatively modest: the fact that human action has a social meaning does not rule out the type of determinism that would allow scientific explanation of human behaviour (Ayer, 1967). However, a more critical engagement with positivism appears in the following essay, Charles Taylor's 'Neutrality in Political Science', which attempts to undermine the fact-value distinction by arguing that certain combinations of descriptions and value judgments cannot coherently be combined, and thus it is mistaken to suppose that questions of facts and values are entirely separable (Taylor, 1967). This is complemented by the interesting inclusion of Hannah Arendt's 'Truth and Politics'. Without making the point exactly in these terms, Arendt provides an important counterweight to the naivety of a positivistic approach to politics that supposes that scientific enquiry will be sufficient to settle empirical conflict. In contrast, Arendt shows with some plausibility how impotent a dispassionate search for empirical truth can be in the face of political power that has an interest in an opposing view (Arendt, 1967).

The collection also includes contributions from Arrow, summarising his impossibility theorem, C.B. MacPherson, R.M. Hare, Stephen Lukes, John Plamenatz and Bernard Crick. But once more the highlight of the volume is Rawls's paper, this time 'Distributive Justice', in which he argues that a competitive market, if appropriately regulated, can be made to satisfy his two principles of justice (Rawls, 1967). Much of this paper, if not the main thrust of the argument, re-appears later in *A Theory of Justice*.

For the fourth series, published in 1972, Laslett and Runciman are joined as editor by Quentin Skinner (Laslett, Runciman and Skinner, 1972). It is, presumably, no coincidence that the Cambridge school of the history of political thought is well-represented here with papers by Skinner, John Dunn and Richard Tuck (then aged 23). The preface comments that the recovery of political philosophy was partly a matter of rebutting the 'end-of-ideology' theorists who proclaimed ideology to be over, on the basis of 'a high degree of governmental stability [in Western democracies together] with a high degree of popular apathy' (Laslett, Runciman and Skinner, 1972, p. 1). It is curious, however, that the end of ideology theorists, by which the editors presumably mean Daniel Bell and followers, were neither represented nor discussed in any detail in the earlier volumes, although they were discussed by Partridge in the Quinton collection. Another previous bogey - crude positivism, as so often problematically attributed to Weldon among others - is said to have been overcome by the realisation by Taylor, Foot, Hampshire and others that identification of 'the facts' often involves a description which is 'normatively weighted' (Laslett, Runciman and Skinner, 1972, p. 3). The overwhelming impression given in the Introduction is relief at the defeat of the smothering forces of the 'end-of-

ideology' and positivism, and the resurrection of political philosophy, which now takes on a variety of forms. Yet it is worth noting that the preface makes no mention of Rawls. Presumably the volume went to press before the publication of *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls, 1971), published in 1972 in the UK, and so at this point nothing usefully could be said. Once more the collection reprints some highly notable papers, such as Hanna Pitkin's 'Obligation and Consent' (first published 1965 and 1966), Robert Nozick's 'Coercion' (first published 1969) and Gerald MacCallum's 'Negative and Positive Freedom' (first published 1967), with other contributions from Alasdair MacIntyre, James Cornford, Alan Ryan and James Coleman.

Before moving on it is worth adding a very brief word about Skinner's paper "'Social Meaning' and the Explanation of Social Action", for this is part of a programme of work by Skinner that may well be among the most ambitious attempts to connect political philosophy with other work in contemporary philosophy. Drawing on the work of Austin, Strawson, Grice and Davidson, alongside Winch and Hollis, Skinner attempts to apply Austin's notion of 'illocutionary force' in analysing the social meaning of action (Skinner, 1972).

For the fifth series, published in 1979, co-edited this time by James Fishkin alongside Laslett, political philosophy has clearly entered its Rawlsian phase (Laslett and Fishkin, 1979). The preface begins by suggesting that the existence of *A Theory of Justice* at last falsifies Berlin's earlier contention that no commanding work of political philosophy of the twentieth century exists (Laslett and Fishkin 1979, p. 1). The editors also note the importance of the publication of Nozick's *Anarchy State and Utopia* (Nozick, 1974), and the foundation of the journal, in 1971, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. The editors comment that they have a 'twinge of regret' that so little of the work that has led to the revival of the subject was conducted in the UK. Indeed, of the work they present only two papers were produced by authors based in the UK, Laslett himself and the relatively unknown Geoffrey Harrison of the University of Reading, whose paper 'Relativism and Toleration', first published in *Ethics* in 1976, is really a work of moral philosophy. Brian Barry, who has a paper in the volume, was then based in Chicago. On the other hand, they say, they are delighted that the field is now flourishing. As noted earlier, however, it is unclear that political philosophy in the United States ever went through the paralysing methodological anxieties suffered in the UK. It may well be that the dominance of linguistic philosophy in Oxford exerted an effect on political philosophy in a way that was not experienced elsewhere. To take one example, the Oxford obsession with the question of whether a claim in philosophy is analytic or synthetic may have forced discussion into unpromising cul-de-sacs, whereas elsewhere in the world, especially at Harvard under the influence of Quine, the straightjacket was applied with a lower degree of pressure, and political philosophers felt freer to advance their case by whatever means were at hand (for related reflections see Cohen, 2000, pp. 17-19).

The fifth series was published at what may well be close to the high point of political philosophy in the twentieth century. The previous few years had

seen, as we have noted, the publication of Rawls's and Nozick's major works, and within two years (1981) Dworkin's two papers 'What is Equality? Part 1 and Part 2' would also appear (Dworkin, 1981a, Dworkin 1981d). The years 1971-1981 are rarely celebrated, but they are the years in which the contemporary canon in political philosophy was created.

Laslett and Fishkin speculate that three causes, in addition to Rawls's towering work, brought political philosophy to its new vibrant state. The first is the growth of human populations and its effect on the environment. The second they cryptically call 'arithmetic humanity in relation to politics' by which they mean what would now be called global ethics and problems concerning our duties to future generations. Finally, they list concerns over the obligations owed by the 'subjects of contemporary authoritarian states', especially in relation to the Soviet Union (Laslett and Fishkin, 1979, p. 2). The second of the themes is well-represented by the reprint of Peter Singer's famous 1971 paper 'Famine, Affluence and Morality' and also Laslett's 'The Conversation Between the Generations', although the first theme (environmental concerns) is not to be found in the volume, and the third (authoritarianism) only partially. It is true that several papers discuss democracy and the limits of authority, yet only Fishkin's own contribution 'Tyranny and Democratic Theory' expressly takes non-liberal societies as its object. Perhaps for this reason it is worth comparing Laslett and Runciman's account of the revival of political philosophy with one which is now more familiar. This is the claim that the US civil rights movement and American involvement in the Vietnam war created a series of urgent problems concerning the goals and limits of state power, sparking a variety of critical responses including defences of anarchism (Wolff, 1970/72), detailed reflection on the nature of a just war (Walzer, 1977) and extensive discussions of civil disobedience and freedom of expression. On this view, these urgent problems not only drew in the finest philosophical minds to the debate but also rendered any last vestiges of positivistic subjectivism an irrelevance.

Returning to Laslett and Fishkin's introduction, they also raise the question of whether the series has now served its purpose and ask whether there will be any point in the future in producing such a general work collecting together papers in political philosophy. In fact the series still continues, but changed in form so as to be focused on a single topic. The next volume, also edited by Laslett and Fishkin, appeared in 1992 and, for the first time, had a substantive title: *Justice Between Age Groups and Generations* (Laslett and Fishkin, 1992). This was followed by *Debating Deliberative Democracy*, in 2003 (Laslett and Fishkin, 2003). Laslett, sadly, died in 2001, but the series continues, with *Population and Political Theory*, edited by Fishkin and Robert Goodin published in 2010 (Fishkin and Goodin, 2010).

Comparing the later volumes with the earlier parts of the series, the most obvious point is that the subject had developed to a point where a short volume devoted to political philosophy generally had little purpose. To some degree the same development occurred with the Oxford Readings series, where *Political Philosophy*, edited by Quinton, published in 1967,

can be compared to Jeremy Waldron's edited collection *Theories of Rights* (Waldron, 1985). The second change is the shift from what the editors of the second series aptly called diagnosis to advocacy: arguments for substantive views, which re-emerged with Rawls and gave others the courage to continue. This, I think, is a matter more of overcoming some of the dogmas of positivism and linguistic philosophy rather than applying other aspects of analytic philosophy. The third development concerns the engagement of the papers with the social sciences. The editors throughout the series made various valiant attempts to connect political philosophy with allied subjects such as history and sociology. Over the decades it may be possible to detect the rising importance to political philosophy of economics, rational choice theory and formal models, and possibly the diminishing importance of qualitative social science, especially sociology. To some degree this may be part of the remaining legacy of positivism for political philosophy: the refusal to countenance empirical theory unless it yields determinate predictions that can be tested by observational or statistical methods. However, a powerful counter-current also exists in the work of writers such as Michael Walzer, Bernard Williams and Charles Taylor who act on a much more inclusive view of what counts as successful and useful social science (see, for example, Walzer 1983, Williams 2005, Taylor 1990).

6. Analytic Political Philosophy since 1970

We noted in the opening section of this paper that, at its foundation, it is possible to define analytic philosophy in terms of the rejection of idealism, and the use of the new logic and of conceptual analysis. In recent decades, however, analytic philosophy has tended to be defined much more in terms of its Other: continental philosophy. Yet how exactly to characterise this distinction in relation to political philosophy is contested (Glock, 2008, pp. 179-203). So, for example, it is often thought that analytic political philosophy aims at conceptual clarification, while continental political philosophy is more politically engaged. While this is plausible as a tendency it will hardly do as a criterion. Equally, it may often appear that analytic philosophy looks towards mathematics and the empirical sciences for models of methodology, whereas continental philosophy looks more towards literary and interpretive studies. Again this seems fair as a broad characterisation, although there are many counter-examples. Perhaps the best we can do is to say that a broad distinction can be seen in that there is a line of intellectual tradition that runs from John Stuart Mill and another from Hegel.

Any list of 'leading contemporary analytic political philosophers' is bound to be contested. Yet it is possible to identify a broad grouping of political philosophers who have in common respect for a particular type of discipline of thought, in which argument, distinctions, thesis and counter-example characterise their work, and there is a self-conscious attempt to achieve rigour and clarity. They also take each other's work extremely seriously, and will naturally attempt to position their own contributions in the light of the positions they attribute to others in this group. Yet there is a great deal of difference in their styles of writing too. One thing that is especially striking is their use of examples. Rawls, in a *Theory of Justice*, is relatively sparing (Rawls, 1971). *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, by contrast, bristles with examples, almost all of which are stark, small-scale, abstract and entirely fictional, and many carry a great deal of argumentative weight, especially by way of counter-example (Nozick, 1974). This approach is also to found in Dworkin, Cohen and some work of Sen (although in other work Sen also uses many real-world cases too, as for example, in Sen 1999). Nozick notes that his approach to political philosophy may strike some as troubling :

I write in the mode of much contemporary philosophical work in epistemology or metaphysics: there are elaborate arguments, claims rebutted by unlikely counterexamples, surprising theses, puzzles, abstract structural conditions, challenges to find another theory which fits a specified range of cases, startling conclusions, and so on. Though this makes for intellectual interest and excitement (I hope) some may feel that the truth about ethics and political philosophy is too serious and important to be obtained by such 'flashy' tools. Nevertheless, it may be that correctness in ethics is not found in what we usually think (Nozick, 1974 p. x).

Many political philosophers now argue in the style brought out most clearly and explicitly by Nozick, although it had already been pioneered by Judith Jarvis Thomson, most notably in her 'A Defence of Abortion',

published in the first issue of *Philosophy and Public Affairs* in 1971 (Thomson 1971), and, to some degree, in work published by H.L.A. Hart and Philippa Foot in the *Oxford Review* (Hart 1967/1968, Foot 1968/1978). Such use of abstract, generally fictional, examples is one half of what often is most distinctive in contemporary analytic political theory. In this respect, although Rawls theory has been far more influential than Nozick's in the substantive development of subsequent political philosophy, much of contemporary political philosophy is written in a style far closer to Nozick than to Rawls.

If the elaborate use of abstract, fictional examples is one half of what is most distinctive about contemporary analytic political philosophy, the other half is abstraction of another sort: the largely unstated ambition to develop theories with the precision and economy one finds among scientists or economists, with fewest possible concepts, all as clear as they can be made, and with widest possible application. As with the use of conceptual analysis, the search for a concise but powerful theory is not new but nevertheless it is a type of paradigm of rigour which characterises many of the writings most recognisable as contributions to the tradition of contemporary analytical political philosophy. It is often accompanied by a lack of comprehension of, or respect for, writing that does not conform to this model, supposing that it is somehow deliberately obscurantist, evasive or otherwise of poor quality.

Such a negative attitude to other approaches is exemplified in one of the very few movements within political philosophy which has self-consciously termed itself 'analytic': 'analytic Marxism'. The theorists comprising this group, included G.A. Cohen, Jon Elster, John Roemer, Erik Wright, Hillel Steiner, Philippe van Parijs and Rober van der Veen, among others (see in particular Cohen 1978/2000, Roemer 1982, and Elster 1985). These theorists were attracted, albeit to considerably different degrees, to elements of Marx's thought but were also united in their dissatisfaction with the standards of rigour with which Marxist topics were treated in the literature, especially by those influenced by the French Marxist Louis Althusser (Althusser 1965/1969 and Althusser and Balibar 1968/1979). So, for example, in a footnote Cohen quotes the following from Etienne Balibar 'This is precisely the first meaning to which we can give the idea of dialectic: a logic or form of explanation specifically adapted to the determinant intervention of class struggle in the very fabric of history.' Cohen comments. 'If you read a sentence like that quickly it can sound pretty good. The remedy is to read it more slowly' (Cohen 1978/2000, xxiii).

Elster, in his review of Cohen's *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, wrote that it 'sets a new standard for Marxist philosophy' (Elster 1980, p. 121). In a similar vein, Allen Wood commented, in reference to his own excellent book on Marx published in 1981 'while it is easy to write an above average book on Marx, it is very difficult to write a good one' (Wood, 1981, p. x). Cohen writes in the preface to the first edition of *Karl Marx* that in his attempt to state Marx's theory he will be guided both by what Marx actually wrote and by standards of clarity and rigour of analytic philosophy. He remarks 'it is a perhaps a matter of regret that logical

positivism, with its insistence on precision of intellectual commitment, never caught on in Paris' (Cohen 1978/2000, p. x).

Cohen's Introduction to the 2000 revised edition contains a substantial discussion of the nature and history of Analytic Marxism. Here he introduces the term analytic by means of two contrasts. In what Cohen calls a 'broad sense' analytic is opposed to 'dialectic' thinking, and in a narrow sense opposed to 'holistic' thinking. Cohen suggests that Marxism has been hampered by the assumption that it had its own 'dialectic' methodology, and thereby eschewed other, powerful, methodologies that had developed in the analytic tradition of philosophy and social science: logical and linguistic analysis, neo-classical economics and rational choice theory. Analytic philosophy in the supposed narrower sense of the rejection of holism is to adopt a form of methodological individualism in explanation; in essence an important part of the rejection of idealism identified above (Cohen, xx-xxv). The work of Elster (Elster 1985) and Roemer (Roemer 1982) equally deploy such methodology, and indeed Elster has criticised Cohen (in his adoption of functional explanation) for being insufficiently rigorous (Elster, 1980).

Part of analytic Marxism's motivation for making its methodology so explicit is its competition with, and antagonism to, a 'dialectical' school, influenced by Hegel and by French Marxism, each side contesting the other's right to stake their claim on the same subject matter of enquiry. Subsequently, this group has produced a significant body of important writings that are not about Marx but continue to be characterised by a number of the features of the analytic style we have identified: rejection of idealism, preference for quantitative over qualitative social science, use of abstract examples and simplified models, methodological and moral individualism, self-conscious search for clarity and precision of thesis and argument, intolerance of the claimed obscurity of others, and the ambition of presenting simple theories or principles of great power and application. Philippe van Parijs *Real Freedom for All* (van Parijs, 1995) and Cohen's later work *Rescuing Justice and Equality* (Cohen, 2008) are excellent examples, containing many of these features. But Hillel Steiner's *An Essay on Rights* may well be the purest example of such a methodology, in which the most of the main features we have identified are deployed at length. For example, explaining his focus on rights as a means to illuminating issues of justice, Steiner suggests. 'A sensible strategy, it seems to me, is to begin at the elementary particles, since all big things are made from small ones. The elementary particles of justice are rights.' (Steiner 1994, p. 2) In an echo of Nozick's comment cited above, Steiner remarks that those concerned with oppression, exploitation, discrimination and poverty may find his treatment of these topics abstract and detached from the real issues, even to the point of frivolity. But, he replies, conceptual analysis must be done, by the most effective means, if the issues are to be dealt with in a suitably rigorous fashion.

7. Conclusion

It could be argued that the emergence of analytic philosophy was not, initially, a helpful development for political philosophy. The most prominent early contribution was the rejection of idealism, especially the work of writers such as Bosanquet and Green. Yet, as we have seen, such rejection was not accompanied by the acceptance of an alternative approach, or at least not on any significant scale. The new logic had no influence on political philosophy, and the confines of linguistic philosophy and logical positivism left political philosophers with a very narrow understanding of their discipline: so much so that, as we noted above, in 1967 Quinton went as far as to suggest that many of the historically great works of political philosophy were only in small part strictly speaking political philosophy at all (Quinton, 1967, p. 1). Political philosophy became introspective and unambitious, although not averse to criticising the apparently crude errors of the great theorists of the past. With a few exceptions, such as the work of Hayek and Popper, it was not until the publication of Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* in 1971 that political philosophers began to return to write on a broad canvas and pursue advocacy of substantive positions. Since then, the subject has flourished and a distinctive methodology of analytic philosophy has developed, although much more in the idiom of Nozick than Rawls, and most self-consciously by Analytic Marxism.

Alongside, of course, has also developed a counter-tendency, objecting to the abstraction, individualism, ahistoricism, reductionism, over-simplifying tendencies, and, sometimes, the apparent frivolity, of analytic political philosophy, or, at least, of some examples of it. Yet often even the counter works, such as Elizabeth Anderson's important paper 'What is the Point of Equality?' (Anderson, 1999) display many of the methodological characteristics of analytic political philosophy and by means of entering into critical debate can be thought to be part of the same methodological tradition. In a sense it may appear that analytic political philosophy is almost inescapable, unless one self-consciously adopts a 'continental' style. Yet it is also possible to see what it would be to write in a manner which is less obviously analytic. So, for example, the writings of Michael Walzer, Amartya Sen, and Martha Nussbaum (Walzer 1983, Sen 1999, Nussbaum 2000), taking sociology and history seriously, and attempting to be politically engaged, provide different approaches which, at the least, are on the outer fringes of analytic political philosophy, without being identifiable as continental philosophy. The abstract, politically unengaged, and ahistoric character of much analytic political philosophy affords it certain advantages in terms of sorting valid from invalid arguments and coherent from incoherent propositions. Nevertheless it would be a great pity if other styles of thinking about political questions, informed by history and sociology, and not only neo-classical economics and rational choice theory, disappeared from the menu available to political philosophers.²

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