

A THREE RING CIRCUS: THE DISCIPLINING AND COMMODIFICATION OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCE

By

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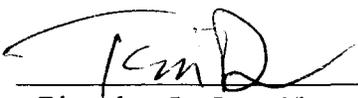
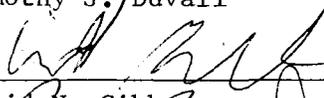
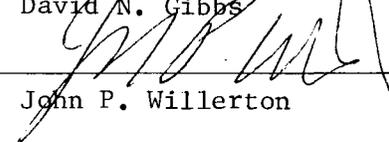
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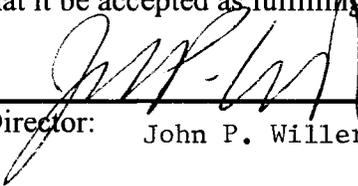
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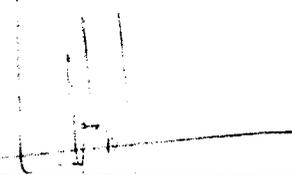
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## **DEDICATION**

For my parents, Donlon and Jean McGovern. Not many can say the best people they know are their parents. I can count myself as one of the lucky few. Their kindness, patience, and love for knowledge inspired us to always dare to ask. Thank you. And for Éva Monnier. I simply could not have done this without her unending generosity of spirit and love. Köszönöm szépen drága szívem.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the impact of economic rationality upon the practice of political theory within the discipline of political science and its relationship with the larger modern political context in which they are embedded. This work addresses an interest in tying together the rise of economic rationality and the rise of methodism within political theory with the decline of “epic” political theory and civil society. I argue here that the decline of civil society is tied in part to the commodification of political knowledge within the modern university system, and that the modern university system and its practices are inundated by market rationality and discourse. This is expressed in the practice of political theorists “capturing” the idea of the public and commodifying it through the peer-review journal process; the “public” becomes the medium through which political theory and science identifies itself as a discipline and its practitioners professionally. The public is not privy to understanding itself as a public and is cut off from its own intellectual means of coming to grips with its own identity. Notions and ideas about the public are “methodized” and “disciplined” and are traded among political scientists and theorists more out of private professional concern than concern for serving public interests or democratic ideals and values.

The purpose of political science and theory is the analysis of power in all its dimensions. I argue that political theory’s position to comment on the nature of power is itself compromised by the dominance of market rationality and methodism. Political theory’s critical distance from the methodism of political science has been narrowed by

the rise in the importance of the peer-reviewed article for “professional development.” In order for political theory to engage the expansive, critical position of epic political theory, and thus public interest, it must address the issue and problems presented by peer-review, the nature of “progress” in the social sciences and come to engage an ethic of responsibility to democracy.

## INTRODUCTION: THE END OF THE EPIC

There is a grim parallel between the state of the citizen in our political imagination and the state of political theory in the disciplinary musings of American political science. Robert Putnam, in his widely acclaimed *Bowling Alone*, informs us that we are no longer easily identified in terms of our traditional civic rituals, while at the same time John Gunnell notes that political theory has been pushed to the margins of political science as a curious, freakish, inbred sideshow clinging to the arcana of old, dead white males. Perhaps the most important actors politically in the West for the past two centuries, citizens provided the foundation for the modern nation-state, “providing it with the administrative, coercive, and extractive capabilities” that allowed the nation-state to dictate much of the world’s recent history (Crenson and Ginsberg 2002: ix). That era is coming to an end; the traditional, “epic” nature of political theory is as well. Political science, Bernard Crick argued, is a peculiarly American enterprise, in that it among all the other social sciences enjoys a unique relationship to politics itself and “exemplifies most sharply the relationship between the American academy and public life.” Political theory is even more so an American invention, according to Gunnell. The ultimate irony of its development as a particularly American invention is that while political theory was envisioned to be actively engaged in American public life, its being situated in a professionalized, commodified academic setting denies just such engagement.

The fate of citizenship and the alienated academic character of political theory are ultimately intertwined. The nation-state system of which the citizen was once the backbone and that helped to give rise to the modern university system (and with it political theory as an academic subfield) has since its inception been under stress and pressure from some of the powerful forces it helped to create. Citizens no longer compose our public. In fact we may no longer be a public in that there is no collective sense of the public as itself: ordinary Americans have, following World War II, slowly been reduced from citizens to customers. The movement from overtly political behavior to market behavior has resulted in what Crenson and Ginsberg describe as “personal democracy” as distinct from “popular democracy.” America, they argue, is becoming a nation of rabidly private citizens who lack a collective identity: “individual recipients of governmental services who are not encouraged to involve themselves as a group in the political or governmental process” (Crenson and Ginsberg 2002: x).

As the citizen has given way to the consumer, effectively narrowing the scope of social identity in modern politics, so too has political theory succumbed to the Siren Call of the market, narrowing its vision as well. There has been much time and energy devoted to the nature of political theory and its relationship with political action, authority, and the public and this dissertation in no way seeks to question the sophistication or the intent of the authors of this work. Rather, this dissertation seeks to fill what gaps it can that have been left open between these carefully crafted arguments. Foremost among these is the exploration of this connection between the decline of the

citizen and the descent of political theory as mediated through the ideology and pervasiveness of “The Market.”

Economic rationality, the driving will of “The Market”, is so widespread as to seem omnipresent. The rise of the nation-state and the progress of industrial production heralded the steady descent of God from his privileged and public position of the great legitimator. As Tim Duvall notes in his article “The New Feudalism,” “[d]uring the period of the Renaissance and the corresponding emergence of the nation-state, God’s role as a legitimator for social and political structures began to fade from view ... In the contemporary Western world, the ‘free market’ plays the role that God played in (old) feudalism. The New Feudalism revolves around what Harvey Cox has called ‘The Market as God’” (Duvall 2003: 84). Theology, as Cox describes it in his essay, attempts to explain, through a grand narrative composed of “myths of origin, legends of the fall, and doctrines of sin and redemption,” the inner meaning of the human experience and the course and cause that humanity ought to take up. “At the apex of any theological system, of course, is the doctrine of God. In the new theology this celestial pinnacle is occupied by ‘The Market’” and this comes to represent our salvation (Cox 1999: 18). “The Market” takes on, in Cox’s view, the classic definitions of divinity: omnipotence (the capability of defining what is real or the “ability to convert creation into commodities”), omniscience (the ability to determine what human needs are through the mechanisms of price and profit), and omnipresence (“The Market” is not only around us, but inside of us as well – areas once exempt from economic rationality such as our spirit are now

commodified and subject to the basest forms of commercialism). “The Market” in this view is simply everywhere.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine critically the impact this pervasiveness has upon political theory and its relationship with the larger political context in which it is imbedded. Again, while there has been some very sophisticated and creative work done in cataloging and analyzing the historical evolution of political science and theory in the United States and the modern university system, very little has been done to tie together the rise of “The Market” and the rise methodism within political theory with the decline of “epic” political theory and civil society. I argue here that the decline of civil society is tied in part to the commodification of political knowledge within the modern university system, and that the modern university system and its practices are inundated by the market rationality and discourse outlined above. The notion of the public has been captured, commodified and repackaged through the peer-review journal process; the “public” becomes the medium through which political theory and science identifies itself as a discipline and its practitioners professionally, but only as a closely guarded market fetish. The public is not privy to understanding itself as a public and is cut off from its own intellectual means of coming to grips with its identity, let alone having any input into what political theorists say of it. Notions and ideas about the public, sanitized and methodized, are traded among political scientists and theorists not out of interest in bettering that public or allowing the public to be “public,” but rather to advance their position within the discipline, the university system, and thus their

private careers. Much of political theory and academia has succumbed to “The Market” as God.

In Cox’s market religion, “marketology,” humans, particularly those with money or capital, own anything they buy, are able essentially to dispose of anything they choose within market reason, and manipulate power to erect rules and institutions to protect their ability to profit or continue to buy. “Older religions,” Cox argues, “encourage archaic attachments to particular places. But in “The Market’s” eyes all places [and things] are interchangeable. “The Market” prefers a homogenized world culture with as few inconvenient particularities as possible” (Cox 1999: 23). Political theory has experienced this homogenizing effect, or as Fredric Jameson describes it, “flattening.” As political theory has become ordered rationally within the modern university system, it has taken on the rationality of “The Market” matrixed upon the system itself. It is important for the discipline to produce a certain kind of knowledge, but it is also important that it produces it in such a way that the discipline itself is reproduced (which in turn helps to provide the legitimating ideology for the university system and the government/corporate institutions that support it). That knowledge has come to be dominated by methodism – discussions of how to discuss political and social issues. The means of understanding political issues and framing public interests has overtaken the ends of improving politics and the public. How *I* come to think and describe public behavior, goals, etc ... and the means *I* use to arrive at my conclusions are what becomes important in the disciplinary discourse that is political theory. Political theory has been flattened by market forces for the sake for political theory as a market – not as a means for the public to better understand itself.

The modern university system in the United States was conceived of as a tool necessary for the development of the United States as a modern nation-state. Political science and government departments in the systems elite schools were to provide the administrative and bureaucratic foot soldiers and train them to combat the heterogeneous forces of regionalism, parochialism, and suspicion and bring the populace into the twentieth century prepared for the consumerism unleashed by the industrial revolution. Political theory sought initially to provide the covering ideology that pushed “these United States” toward “The United States” - a people with a unified sense of history and purpose. What this system seems to have done instead is allow academics to commodify the notion of politics, to elevate the practice of politics to the state, but in such a way that it could not be easily accessed by the public itself. The public and notions about it became the medium through which intellectual careers were made and the university system reinforced. The *idea* of the public, not the public itself, became a valued element in the academic trade - it became ripe for marketization. The moment that the university system devised a system of studying the idea of the public – that system became bound and protected through an elaborate set of rules and procedures to keep the general public away from those seeking to give it meaning and making that meaning valued within their own, alienated sphere.

The commodification of political theory is very near complete. The production and reproduction of political theory within the discipline aids in the production and reproduction of the larger academic market. To validate itself, the discipline must keep its production capacities high. It has in turn, like many other academic disciplines turned

to the peer-review journal to maintain the appearance of valid production. The “public good” is analyzed and reanalyzed in thousands of different, alienated ways that reinforce the importance of how a question is asked, but lacks the external public referent as to why the question is asked. So much of what we do has now become so harmonic with The Market as God, we are not capable of seeing through the dominance of method. Methodism has become a fundamental component of the academic market because it enables high productive capacities among its disciples (through individual, private [alienated] career rewards). Cox notes that the first commandment of “The Market” is that there is *never* enough. There is an eerie parallel here with the dominance of method and scientism that pervades political science: there is never, ever enough data and never enough discussion about how to discuss it.

To facilitate production, markets demand uniformity. A major cost of this uniformity to political theory has been the marginalization of epic political theory. To survive as part of the modern discipline of political science, political theory has had to take on its methodism, ultimately serving narrow disciplinary market concerns rather than the pressing concerns of the larger public. As the idea of the public narrows from the emergence of The Market as God, so too has the scope of political theory. Political theory has taken on the methodism of market and become depthless so as to serve the reproduction of the discipline and the flattening of the public sphere.

To assess the impact of marketology on political theory, this dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter One explores the early development of political science as a discipline within the newly developing modern university system. Its

development must be understood as occurring within a variety of historical and social forces for it is just these forces that leave a telling impression on the scope and direction of the discipline and that continue to affect it today. American political science was conceived in light of the burgeoning power of the nation-state and the rise of industrial capitalism. There were added to this mix populist ideas regarding progressivism, democracy, and government as well as the rise of professionalism and a growing industrial ideology as distinct from the individualistic ideology of the American founding. If American political science had a stated desire to aid in the development of democracy or the public directly, that desire was compromised immediately. The rise of professionalism, bureaucracy, and marketology allowed for the “capture” of the idea of politics and democracy by experts. The modern university rewarded this capture and sought to maintain its newly acquired economic and social status. The ideology that accompanied the development of the nation state and rise of the industrial market prepared the citizenry to be removed, isolated, and ultimately made passive receptors of politics of the expertise and method.

Chapter Two outlines the theoretical framework employed here to analyze the homogenizing effects of method and market upon political theory. I begin by outlining Marx’s theory of knowledge and its relation to commodification – the result being alienated knowledge that forms the dominant ideology of a given mode of production. Methodism is the reigning ideology in political theory because it is the most easily produced and least threatening knowledge within the present status quo of marketology. Methodism is the intellectual inheritance of the industrial age knowledge machine that is

the modern university system and its social sciences. The discipline in turn assures that this methodism remains generally unquestioned, particularly at its core. The only “legitimate” way to question it is through the peer-review process, a process that is clearly oriented away from inquiries that might undermine the hegemonic position of the method. This lack of questioning is made apparent by Gunnell’s work on the “levels of discourse” within political theory. Gunnell mercilessly assaults political theory for having very little reference to the world of the public and the gall to suggest that somehow its enterprise is superior to other forms of knowledge. I utilize Gunnell’s work here to parallel these levels of discourse, the insulating of political knowledge from the public with the insulation and alienation that occurs through commodifying effects of “The Market”. For Gunnell, the alienation of the public from a public conception of itself appears as a philosophical question. For me, it is a question of markets and ideology.

The “flattening” effect of “The Market” upon political theory is made evident in Chapter Three. In this chapter, I synthesize the argument laid out by Jameson in his work on late industrial capitalism with Wolin’s “epic” political theory to provide an operating definition of the type of political theory that has essentially been lost to the discipline. Where Jameson describes modern art or architecture as providing a “utopian gesture” to its participants, the scope and “publicness” of epic political theory as described by Wolin ought to offer the same type of gesture. That gesture, however, is lost when political theory is turned toward other goals by the methodism of “The Market”. To assess what has happened to political theory in the past thirty years, I present my survey research on

what has passed as political theory in the five highest ranked political science journals. Reading these articles in light of both Wolin's epic theory and Gunnell's levels of discourse, it becomes clear that the methodism that Wolin warned us of in 1969, dominates political theory today through levels of discourse separate and insulated from the larger political community – reinforcing the commodified nature of the discipline and undermining epic political theory and the public it seeks to defend.

The issue of methodism and its being a central concern to the established practices of political science is the subject of Chapter Four. Where Ricci argues the tragedy of political science is its adherence to a scientific identity and Gunnell argues the dominance of certain philosophical traits in political science and theory lead to their demise, the *Perstroika* movement of the late 1990s initially appeared to strike a balance between Ricci and Gunnell's assessments and argue for a "pluralistic" approach to political science. The movement, a loose affiliation of like-minded scholars, seeks to end the "hegemony" of certain quantified approaches to political science. While the movement looked promising at its inception, promising new approaches to understanding political science and theory, it never moved beyond the question of narrow, market-oriented methods. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the almost total inundation of the discipline by methodism of "The Market". The most promising response to its dominance is itself compromised by the omnipresence of marketology.

Chapter Five represents my arguments to counter political theory's slide into the methodism of marketology. It begins by surveying the last overtly epic political theorists openly available to American political science: Max Weber and John Dewey. Both

actively engage the question of knowledge, the impact of the scientific method on it, and the impact of these upon the public itself. Both seem critical of the advancement of rational expertise at the cost of the public knowing and acting as “the public.” Much of the argument made by Jameson for the utopian gesture and the argument by Wolin for an epic political theory are implicitly and explicitly premised upon the work of Weber and Dewey. These in turn, I argue are perhaps best represented today in the work of André Gorz. Gorz argues that democracy, to be understood as democracy, must move away from “The Market” populism that dominates our political process today. Gorz explores the dominance of marketology in our collective rationale and argues that political choice must be moved out of the narrow realm of market choices. I utilize Gorz’s critique of modern liberal democracy and turn it towards political theory and the discipline. The public has been externalized from political thinking – it is no longer a primary referent to those practicing political theory. As the discipline has come to be dominated by the journal process and market, political theorists become beholden to other political theorists and scientists.

I conclude my argument with Chapter Six. In it I explore the nature of the notion of progress in political science and theory as it is problematized by the work of Weber and Wolin. If we are to consider seriously the objectives of a democratic society we cannot rely alone upon the “private” peer-review journal process. As Weber and Wolin call for social scientists to engage in vocations informed by ideal types when engaging their chosen realms, I too call for a vocation informed by an ideal type – one that commits political theorists to an ethic of responsibility to democracy.

## CHAPTER 1: STATE BUILDING AND THE PRIMACY OF EXPERTISE

According to David Ricci, an ancient Greek notion has come not merely to inform the condition of American political science, but has come to dominate it -- the ancient Greek notion of tragedy. Political science, he argues, finds itself in a tragic predicament because, like Achilles or Creon and Antigone, it is committed to two ends that ultimately appear to be incompatible. Ricci argues that American political science has in the past traditionally been devoted to the idea that a healthy political system is one founded on democratic principles and that it was the perceived duty of the political scientist to help society maintain and strengthen these principles. And yet political science also finds itself more and more committed to a scientific approach to politics.<sup>1</sup> As political science developed into an academic discipline, it found itself bound in the confines of the university and therefore isolated from the larger societal/political context and content to engage in methods that satisfy academia's requirements of rationality and intellectual rigor.

Political science, beginning in the late 1800s, sought to capture a notion of the political and define it in such a manner as to position the discipline within the growing machinery of industrial knowledge and expertise that was viewed as the cornerstone of America's march toward modern statehood. The university was seen as a source of a

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<sup>1</sup> Ricci defines this as a commitment to Popperian visions of science: a focus on falsifiability, testability, tentativity, the importance of method, a push toward scientific community generally to the exclusion of questions concerning right and wrong, ethics, philosophy, classical metaphysics, etc ...

new spiritualism, passing from the divinity schools' focus on clerical training to the training of a new corps of believers and practitioners of science and administration to help channel the nation's energies and resources into building its modern statehood. It is at this time that political science takes on its modern characteristics of specialization that are still with us today and comes to be identified within the modern university as a viable academic discipline. The primary focus of the discipline within this setting came to be the state, understood as the "glory of man," and political theory was tasked with legitimizing the discipline's pursuit of this "highest ends of humanity."<sup>2</sup>

Ricci's work is important in examining the various pressures placed upon political science and academia as collective entities early on in this pursuit. It is important too in that he provides the reader with the caveat that no clear social model of behavior exists for these communities. In this regard, Ricci provides a forceful argument and profile of the discipline. However, while Ricci's work is compelling, highlighting the commitment on the part of American political science towards a "scientific" posture, his characterization of the discipline as "tragic" falls short, at least in describing the past thirty years or so of political theory if not all of political science. Here there is no real apparent conflict of competing ends. It would appear that clear methods and technical expertise as commodities in the academic market are in the end the dominant aims of political theory. Other aims are simply not considered pertinent enough by political theory to render its present condition the tragic predicament that Ricci describes. Political theory has generally come to concern itself not with questions of society at

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<sup>2</sup> Francis Lieber, *Manual of Political Ethics* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1885), 1:162.

large, but rather to obsess about its own perceived need to isolate itself from the vagaries of political life to maintain the health of its own methods, knowledge, market and the viability of its own medium of exchange.

This chapter outlines a brief and selective history of American political science and theory in light of these developments and, along with it, the development of the American university system. It is not meant to be an exhaustive study, nor is it meant to suggest that the figures here that helped to set the course of American political science and theory were the only political scientists in their respective eras nor that their texts were the only political commentary produced. It is made abundantly clear to all graduate students upon entering their studies that every paradigm or research program has its counter-program or its challengers. There is always some underlying degree of disciplinary tension. This is not at issue. This chapter explores the early formation of political science and theory and how these were pulled between their commitments to understanding the nature of public life, the imperatives of a scholarship that demanded that politics be studied scientifically, and a maintenance of the behavior and institutions that help to determine a “free” people as they pursued their ideal “State.” Out of this tension came a heady mix of professionalism, specialization, expertise, and intellectual isolationism. Those elements in political science and theory that were once honed to legitimate the function and scope of the state are now used to legitimate political theory as its own endeavor, isolated from questions and concerns of the public. I argue that the movement among the three poles of politics, science, and freedom has been stifled, particularly within political theory. The dominance of questions concerning method have

overtaken disciplinary interests in politics and freedom. The focus on method and its reward within the university system have helped to legitimate this stifling and has given way to a practice of political theory that is narrow in scope, isolated from the public, and keen to maintain its position as a closed academic market. Political theory has come to legitimate not the state but its own commodification.

### **Twin Births: An American 'State' and Political Science**

In his 1992 work, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, Garry Wills contends that Abraham Lincoln reshaped the course of American history in arguing for “the union” of “The United States.” Wills argues Lincoln was fighting for much more than a mere collection of federalized states. Lincoln instead was fighting for an understanding of “The United States” as a nation-state. The nation-state had come into its own in Europe, having survived the uprisings of the late 1840s and the idea now sought new life in the fertile ground of a recently united United States. While Europeans clearly could not claim to have invented the notion of the State, European intellectuals viewed Europe as having perfected the nation-state and considered it a necessary element for those entities seeking status as a world power. The importance and majesty accorded the nation-state in European thought was not lost on American political thinkers. As one ardent student of American political science noted near the close of the nineteenth century, the “true State” was the “grandest of all earthly institutions” - an organic brotherhood whose chief aim is “the bringing of man ... to the highest degree of civilization of which he is capable - and as “it expands its sway over the earth, the larger becomes the sphere of individual

opportunity and the higher rises the tide of human prosperity and advancement” it brings with it a new world of “righteousness and peace” (Hoffman 1909: 16-7). Much of what follows in political thought, and science, and the university system in the United States after the Civil War may be seen as an attempt to recast American thinking in light of the “State” and provide an intellectual foundation upon which the American nation-state would rest. But it is not only a foundation for the State, but a foundation laid for the expertise of political science as well and a synthesizing of those factors discussed in the previous section.

It is no mere coincidence that American interest in the State would lead its early political science and university system to mirror those found in Germany, for Germany provided Europe with the intellectual roots of modern State. These roots in turn are found in the work of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Hegel has often been cited as *the* philosopher of the modern State. “Indeed,” writes Carl Friedrich, “Hegel’s thought sprang from and continued to revolve around the problem of how an ethical community could be organized [and] how the national state might be made into the all-engulfing, loyalty-inspiring community which the Greek *polis* had been” (Friedrich 1953: xiv). Hegel conceives of the State as an historical culmination of forces that return a people to a proper organic polity, where the State is not an abstract idea confronting citizens but rather a condition where no member is an end and none is a means. The State as an organic polity is an organism precisely because it is a union of *individual subjects* and *the whole* (i.e., the historical synthesis of the individual and common will of a people). Not only is the State organic, but it is the ultimate political manifestation of a rational society.

According to Hegel, “the state is the actuality of the ethical Idea. It is the ethical mind *qua* the substantial will manifest and revealed to itself, knowing and thinking itself ... the state is absolutely rational inasmuch as it is the actuality of the substantial will which it possesses in the particular self-consciousness once that consciousness has been raised to consciousness of its universality” (Hegel 1952: 155-6). The State thus represents the most rational and ethical organization in that it represents the fusion between the individual subject’s desires and the objective desires of a people - the synthesis of the universal and particular. Citizens in such a condition follow the laws because these are the laws they would write themselves as rational beings understanding their individuality in light of the universal will.

The notion of a synthesis between the particular and universal manifest in a rational State is perhaps best represented in Hegel’s notion of the bureaucracy or civil service. The civil service represents the highest political development of history. The crown represents the universal sovereignty of a people while the legislative represents the particular interests found within. A civil service, rationally trained and organized, synthesizes the universal interests of the people as a whole with their particular interests as individual subjects. What is required of a bureaucracy, in order to maintain the State “is that men ... forgo the selfish and capricious satisfaction of their subjective ends; by this very sacrifice, they acquire the right to find their satisfaction in, but only in, the dutiful discharge of their public functions. In this fact ... there lies the link between universal and particular interests which constitutes both the concept of the state and its inner stability” (Hegel 1952: 191).

It is this focus on trained and organized civil servants and the subsequent stability of the bureaucratic structure that came to dominate German politics and the German academy. In nineteenth century Europe changes were underway in the university system that paralleled the growing strength of the nation-state. While it is the case that some universities had prior to the nineteenth century become part of individual nation-state systems, it is clear that by the end of the nineteenth century nationally constituted educational systems were the rule rather than the exception. What developed in nineteenth century Europe and Germany in particular was a close link between modern nation-states and the universities' role in underpinning a sense of national culture, identity, and "State-ness," allowing some fields of study, once linked within the boundaries of the state with other universities, to acquire a very national orientation (Torstendahl 1993: 116). Education became a State function. According to John Gunnell, the German university became the seat of a new nationalistic political consciousness and a source of increased State concern with respect to political attitudes, all of which was complemented and facilitated by university reforms that attempted to move the system away from religious and utilitarian perspectives toward a new pedagogy that would train a bureaucratic professional elite. The University of Berlin, for example, was consciously designed to help produce political leaders and a professional bureaucracy who would support the values associated with the reconstituted State based upon the political ideal of *Rechstaat*.<sup>3</sup> German universities came eventually to claim

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<sup>3</sup> According to Gunnell, a liberal regime that rejects absolutism but falls short of democracy.

expert guardianship not only of a German cultural heritage marked by the likes of Kant, Hegel and Goethe, but of the key elements in the production and maintenance of the modern, rational nation-state.

This notion of a well-ordered, expert, professional bureaucratic elite piqued the interest of American observers intent on crafting the American State following the Civil War. Supporters of the Progressive Movement in the United States, for example, championed such state-crafting, arguing that history had brought the United States into the company of real nation-states as defined by the European model. As Eldon Eisenach notes, “the Progressives attacked what they saw as false images of nationality, urging instead that Americans consider their country as only now entering the larger stream of world history, requiring new institutions, new ideas, and new practices to insure older values and attain higher and better ones ... In the formation of the Republican party the Progressives saw both the rebirth of the nation and the birth of a new nation finally prepared to enter the world stage on an equal basis with European nations” (Eisenach 1994: 49). Progressives found these new institutions, ideas, and training regimens in the newly reorganized and professionalized hallways of the American university and in them, a much-needed bulwark against the inertia of pre-war Jacksonian reforms that subverted the ideal of the modern State.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Although Eisenach points out that the history of the post-war movement away from Jacksonian Era reforms is told often and well, he points to Shefter, 232 as providing the most cogent description of this shift in regime norms and practices.

Much of the groundwork for this bulwark was laid by Francis Lieber of Columbia University in the late 1850s. German-born, Lieber spent much of his career championing the idea of the American State, according to Gunnell, as seen in his work *Manual of Political Ethics* - the first study of the state in America and the first study of America as a state - and in his *On Civil Liberty and Self-Government*, where he continued to recognize the State as natural, necessary, organic sovereign form of society dedicated to the highest ends of humanity. By the time of the Civil War, he sought a theory of the state to support the Union and argued that the American State was the manifestation of the latest stage in the history of the Teutonic state (Gunnell 1993: 31).

Much of Lieber's State-centric thinking is reflected in his ideas on the role and organization of the field of political science. In his inaugural address at Columbia in 1858 on the need to study history and political science in free countries, Lieber envisioned the domain of political science to be the state, urging recognition of the need for a national university that would focus on national identity and make the American State a great power (Gunnell 1993: 30). Political science in training the new citizens and statesmen should strike a balance in his schema between studying history and philosophy by teaching political ethics, the science of government as understood through the development of the West, American politics, and international law. The idea was to ingrain in the citizenry through a well-ordered and structured educational system the fundamental truths of the great political thinkers and a national identity to secure the State against the more irrational elements of the non-Western world.

The structuring of this educational system and the development of graduate studies in political science in the United States (still reflected in the structure of political science today) was left to Lieber's successor at Columbia, John W. Burgess. Burgess shared his predecessor's belief in the moral superiority of the State. Burgess was primed early in his education in politics to esteem the State, having been to Germany to study politics and history. He became so firmly attached to both the philosophy and practice of the German state and to German education and its relationship to politics during his studies in Germany that it was this vision of a unity of academic study with public policy with which he single-mindedly sought to create a science of politics in the American academy (Gunnell 1993: 50-1).

Burgess' establishment of the School of Political Science at Columbia is often referred to as the birth of American political science as a learned discipline. According to Somit and Tanenhaus, Burgess' program offered the first and for many years the most ambitious program of political science in the United States. The program at Columbia was diverse in its approach, encompassing history, sociology, economics, as well as politics. Politics itself was broken down into areas such as theory, law, and government. At Columbia, David Ricci notes, undergraduate students could take their fourth year in the School of Political Science and after a total of three years in that school plus the completion of a doctoral dissertation, would receive their Ph.D. "The curriculum was full of comparative history ... This entailed an endeavor to understand how various political habits, rights, procedures, and institutions developed in the United State as compared to European countries or their antecedents. Attention focused mainly on the

‘State’ as a whole and on the American states and local governments as parts of the federal system” (Ricci 1984: 60).

In September of 1880 Burgess, along with three other faculty members, put their foundational scheme into operation at Columbia. The approach organizing the study of political science subject was broken down into lectures, the provision of a journal of political science edited by the faculty, the formation of an “Academy of Political Science, whose membership should include all persons who should have passed successfully through the School of Political Science” and the publishing of texts and treatises on the subject by both department faculty and students (Burgess 1934: 200). While the approach to the subject was informed by its American roots, Burgess clearly saw “as models of university teaching the method of the German universities, of the Sorbonne and the College de France” (Burgess 1934: 198). By the 1890s the study of the state was firmly established as the conceptual touchstone of American political science and rooted in Burgess’ disciplinary scheme. In Somit and Tanenhaus’ survey of early work in the field the state was ever-present. Two examples are provided therein: Crane and Moses’ text divided the study of politics into two branches with the first addressing the development and structure of the state and the second addressing the issue of what the state “ought to do”; in another popular text at the time, Woolsey divides his approach similarly, studying both the fundamental relations between a government and a people and the ways in which the ends “contemplated in the existence of the state may be best attained” (Somit and Tanenhaus 1967: 24).

But what of the ends contemplated in the existence of a discipline of political science? And what is the relationship between these ends and the use of the idea of the “State”? Before the Civil War there was very little theorizing or popular conceptions about an American State with political thinkers concentrating more on the nature of rights granted through social contracts and constitutions. The use of the State in discussion regarding American politics was essentially limited to those in the newly organized discipline of American political science. As Gunnell points out:

The concept functioned a number of ways in the emerging discipline. It defined the domain of political science as an autonomous field, and, as a supervenient vision of political reality, it served to underwrite the legitimacy and authority of political science vis-à-vis politics. It was, for many, a secular substitute for the mystery and social bond of religion. It offered a way for political science to talk about its subject matter in a manner that distanced the discipline from the perceived dangers and baseness of political life. As esoteric and metaphysical as the language of the state may have been, it reflected practical purposes ranging from the propagation of nationalism to the defense of conservative and radical ideologies (Gunnell 1993: 58).

Gunnell argues that the state ultimately was an attempt to find an organic coherency in American politics and posit a homogeneity underlying the fast expanding social and governmental plurality visited upon the nation at the closing of the nineteenth century, i.e., a search for an American nation and an American political community. While Gunnell makes note of the alternatives he fails to explore their implications for political science as a discipline.

The irrational celebration of the State as *the* “rational” political organization separated American political science from the “irrational” world of “real” politics and allowed the founders of the discipline to maintain their own value system capable of

deeming certain methods and areas of study as the “proper” field of knowledge. With the notion of the state, figures like Lieber and Burgess could delimit the purview of the “new” science of politics. The idea of the State itself was not questioned, merely the methods by which the manifestations of the state were understood. Early American political science set out to justify the State by placing it at the center of the discipline and then ringing it with a scientific, methodological shield acceptable to the university system. As the State was the most rational of political developments, those organs used in its maintenance were expected to be as well. Political science took on the look and language of the sciences to legitimize itself for the state and the academy. So long as the primary focus of the discipline was merely methodological questions of the discipline and not the core value of the State, political science remained safe and helped to maintain the development of the American nation-state and university alike. More importantly, it helped to maintain the discipline itself by reinforcing that it and not the citizens defined the scope and meaning of politics.

### **American Political Science, Industrial Knowledge, and the Rise of Expertise**

The historical era between the American Civil War and World War I was witness to an explosion of industrial activity in the United States. In this period the United States became unmatched in both its agricultural and industrial capacities for production and consumption. These capacities led to exponential growth in both its imports and exports, bringing with it vast wealth. But with this industrial power came the potential for industrial problems such as those outlined by advocates of the Progressive Movement.

One such Progressive report on the conditions of industrial life outlines the principle causes of social unrest as including the unjust distribution of wealth, unemployment, denial of justice in the creation and administration of law, and denial of the right to form effective labor organizations. Of these, the uneven distribution of wealth was of particular note:

Massed in millions, at the other end of the social scale, are the fortunes of a size never before dreamed of, whose very owners do not know the extent, nor without the aid of an intelligent clerk, even the sources of their incomes. Incapable of being spent in any legitimate manner, these fortunes are burdens, which can only be squandered, hoarded, put into so-called 'benefactions' which, for the most part, constitute a menace to the State, or put back into the industrial machine to pile up ever increasing mountains of gold (Cashman 1988: 203-4).

To manage this industrial menace, the State turned to the emerging field of industrialized knowledge represented by the rise of the American university and the academic expert.

The rise of industrial production as a cornerstone of the modern American economy is paralleled by the development of industrialized knowledge. This concept of industrialized knowledge may be understood in two complementary ways: it is industrialized in the sense it is pursued to organize, rationalize, and give meaning and legitimacy to the industrialized character of modern life; and it is industrialized in the sense that the manner in which it is produced takes on the characteristics of the industrial age itself (bureaucratization, commodification, and professionalization). Key elements in the development of industrialized knowledge include the rise of the American university system as distinct from pre-Civil War colleges, the rise of academic markets and professional associations, and a fundamental shift in American political ideology toward

an “industrial individualism” as distinct from the atomistic individualism of *laissez-faire* liberalism.

It is telling that the “higher” education of pre-Civil War America was located in small colleges found throughout the Northeast and Southeast dedicated generally to the training of their respective sectarian clergies. Higher education was indeed dedicated to “the higher calling.” With the primary aim of these colleges focused on the development of their respective doctrinal instruction, very little leeway was given to alternate studies or methods of inquiry. As Ricci notes, “each college reflected the comprehensive world view of its founders, a matter on which they were in agreement and in deference to which they worked to mold their students ... Where various college presidents and boards of trustees believed they knew what was worth knowing and imparting to the young, they maintained firm control over a standard course of instruction ... In all of this, not surprisingly, there was little room for independent thought” (Ricci 1984: 30-1). A premium was placed not upon inquiry and discussion but rather upon classroom and “mental” discipline. This type of discipline marked an attempt on the part of these colleges to increase the capacity of its students to learn. This capacity, according to Roger Geiger, was thought to be best achieved through the immersion of the student in rote classroom recitations of classical languages. Students were also exposed to a variety of subjects ranging from history, philosophy, chemistry, and the natural sciences, all of which were taught by just a handful of professors expected to be able to address each of these areas. “Knowledge under this system of knowledge was not the end of education, but a means ... a college education was the accepted prerequisite for professional careers,

and those careers were the path to a respectable social status” (Geiger, in Rothblatt and Wittrock 1993: 236-7).

The social status and character of the student was foremost in the minds of these schools founders, for these were the vessels in which the future of their organizations laid. Those interested in reforming higher education in light of the European model recognized that it was in the interest of the new university system and the State to move away from a concern for the moral development of the student and concentrate on those forms of knowledge best suited to the maintenance of the university and the State themselves. Knowledge was still a means but a means shifted towards another end. The wide but shallow knowledge of the individual student in the college system was to be replaced by the narrow, expert training of the university system. The breadth formerly required of individual professors would be replaced by the university’s breadth of study represented by individual departments. The moral development of the individual student that appeared in question under the college system, given the “disciplining” such a system represented, was assumed under the university system to have already taken place once the student became a professional or technically proficient. The morality of a professional or discipline organized under the auspices of the university, with State support, or in the support of the State, was taken for granted. The State was the highest form of moral development and the university as an extension of the state was thus moral as well. The “higher calling” of higher education remained. The focus had simply shifted from Christian vocation to the church of the State and the rationally ordered university system that sought to support it.

This shift in higher education also represented a shift in the location of respectable social status and knowledge. While the old college system was geared toward a professional life outside and beyond the college, where the graduate would gain respectability and the necessary knowledge to further his professionalization, the university system placed itself and its disciplines and professions as the locus of status and knowledge. This it was able to do as a result of the growing professionalization and industrialization of knowledge itself. Higher learning outside of theology was generally pursued outside of the old college system. As Geiger notes, it was learned societies like Benjamin Franklin's American Philosophical Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the national Academy of Sciences that sustained advanced studies that lay outside the interest of the various sectarian colleges. Later scientific training just prior to the Civil War was done within institutions affiliated with schools such as Harvard and Yale, but degrees were not awarded by the colleges themselves. However, the need for scientific and technical training demanded by life in an industrialized modern nation-state changed this arrangement and the nature of academic life at the university.

The new university system was an instrument of national integration and social mobility. The university system was to focus on the "real" world of nation building that reflected vocational ambitions of a growing middle-class. The university was to cease being a "cloister" and instead to be turned into a "workshop" "where any person [could] find instruction in any study" (Veysey 1965: 61-3). Leading advocates of this workshop approach to the university and society were Andrew White, appointed president of

Cornell in 1868 and Charles Eliot, president of Harvard. While enamored of the discipline of the college system, White stressed the importance of developing “human energies,” an approach complemented by Eliot’s introduction of the elective system into the American university. Laurence Veysey’s *The Emergence of the American University* suggests that Eliot’s reforms parallel one of the primary goals of higher education reform: utility. This is noted too in the work of Alain Touraine, where he notes:

The key word is utility ... Classical studies were supplemented by commercial and industrial ones without the former being considered noble and the latter menial. At that time the business administration schools were established. The first, the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, was established by the University of Pennsylvania in 1881; similar schools were created in 1898 by Berkeley and Chicago, in 1900 by Dartmouth and New York University, and finally by Harvard in 1908. The movement continued to spread until, in 1970, 500 colleges and universities had business and administration schools or programs with a total enrollment of 100,000 (Touraine 1974: 29).

Touraine goes on to note that these universities and schools represented a means of transition from a little-differentiated society to a complex one, while focused on energies and the development of a national consciousness and society ready to inherit its historical duties as nation-state. What was needed to help capture these energies was a trained, professional group of professors to fill the electives sought by the growing classes of middle-class students eager to gain societal respect and earn power.

The growing interest on the part of students to secure improved incomes that were beginning to emerge with university training and degrees was not lost on those interested in organizing the new higher educational model, nor on those wishing to teach within it. The industrialization of knowledge in the United States took place in what Burton

Bledstein refers to as “the culture of professionalism,” an idea that suggests that “at key points in the new order there was room for experts of unique skill and perspective whose access to a ‘special understanding of a segment of the universe’ constituted a scarce and necessary resource to be placed at society’s service ... In every area of public and private life, the shape of modern society would be determined more and more by professional knowledge and skills, or at least by intensively trained people who claimed professional rank” (Ricci 1984: 48). Americans, according to Bledstein, wrapped themselves in a system of thoughts, habits, and behaviors that has become entrenched over the past century to such a degree as to take on a “natural” appearance, one not likely to be challenged openly, and one “which has admirably served individuals who aspire to think very well of themselves” (Bledstein 1976: 81).

There were several consequences of the culture that had lasting impacts on the industrialization of knowledge, the university and the discipline of political science. The first of these is what Bledstein refers to simply as “conservative consequences.” Professionals were sought out and expected to use their expertise to help solve social ills. Clearly, however, those ills were cast in light of the professionals’ own growing middle-class values and predilections.<sup>5</sup> Professionals sought to close ranks around themselves, limit access to their knowledge, and make sure their knowledge remained marketable. By means of ceremonies and rituals professionals cultivated inner aristocratic

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<sup>5</sup> According to Bledstein, professional doctors in 1890s were loath to report tuberculosis among the middle-class patients and to quarantine them and instead insisted that it was the poor whose freedom of movement needed limiting.

or elitist social instincts, “laying claim to knowledge and powers existing beyond the reach or understanding of ordinary humans ... the Ph.D. dissertation was an exercise not only in scholarly method, but in the human endurance and delayed gratification necessary to make an ‘original contribution to knowledge’” (Bledstein 1976: 93-4). These rituals were beginning to take center stage in people’s lives, organized in such a way as to maximize the impact of the professional’s knowledge and the dependence of the client on such knowledge. “Symbols of professional authority – including the number of technical aids in an office, the number of articles and books on a vita, the income and life style of a successful practitioner – reinforced the public’s consciousness of its dependence. Indeed, the pattern of dependence was the most striking conservative consequence of the culture of professionalism. Practitioners succeeded by playing on the weaknesses of [the public’s] vulnerability, helplessness, and anxiety” (Bledstein 1976: 99).

In doing these things, professionals set themselves firmly at the center of Americans’ lives. This professionalism helped to cultivate a new vision in the lives of the growing middle class, a vision that would parallel political science’s promotion of the state. This vision, Bledstein argues, was “vertical” in that it compelled the middle class to look upwards, above their own station and condition, and strive to become all that they could be, outgrow the physical/spiritual limitations and move to a higher life of understanding. The State was able to provide this space at a meta-level. A professional lifestyle would provide it at a micro-level. The profession with its codes and elite knowledge gave the professional a sense of status and achievement. Professionals sought to organize the world rationally according to their disciplines, a rationality that paralleled

as well the rational political organization of the State. The social ills visited upon the nation were not structural but rather brought on by the near-sighted, uneducated, instinctive priorities of the poor themselves. The professional would seek out the root cause of failure in individuals, heal them, and allow them back into society once cured. The professions were to “discover the true nature of every subject, to locate its position in space and time, to establish its duties and coin its words. After the uncritical social promiscuity of the earlier egalitarianism, no American could reasonably complain against such a natural and structured society” as the State (Bledstein 1976: 117).

As political science supported a seminal notion of the American nation-state, the State in turn supported the institution that supported political science – the university. The university, Bledstein argues, was *the* most important element in the rise of the professional culture. These universities began to corner the market on training young men in the scientific understanding of government that distinguished them from the gentlemen practitioners of the Jacksonian era. In securing a position within the newly growing nation-state, the professional, by virtue of his university training, not only sought the regulation of society based upon the rational principles of science, but also “transformed public administration into an instrument of opportunity for the middle class.” The university, organized vertically, paralleling the verticality of the State, helped to organize society’s view of itself vertically. It became a function of higher education in America to legitimize the authority of the middle class, of which it was populated and attended, by appealing to the universality and objectivity of the sciences upon which the various professions within the university were founded. The university convinced both the

government and the public that its various standards and rituals guaranteed objectivity and that its tightly guarded body of knowledge remained untainted by old-time politics and partisan self-interest.

The final critical element of the industrialization of knowledge is the changing political ideology that marked the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and opened the 20<sup>th</sup>. This change in ideology parallels the changes wrought by the advent of political science and the apotheosis of the State in the mind of American political science, the rise of the university system, and the culture of professionalism. It at once supported them and in turn was supported by them as well. The period between the Civil War and World War I has been shown to be one of massive social, economic, and cultural changes. Political ideology reflected these changes. Frank Tariello argues that government “as a conscious creation of free men, instituted to secure preexisting rights and restricted in its sphere of operation, gave way to the notion of an illimitable society as a constantly changing force using government as a tool ... Inquiry shifted from an examination of government to an anatomy of society. The individual as conceived apart from the collective fell into disrepute” (Tariello 1982: 1).

What was needed for the citizenry of the United State to understand themselves in light of their historical inheritance of “Stateness” was a new understanding of themselves, both as individuals and as a society. The university system, professionalism, political science were all being geared in some manner of degree to support this new vision. Leading figures in the newly organized field of political science recognized in the Progressive movement that the free-market liberalism of Jacksonian era politics had been

replaced by an understanding of liberalism in an industrial form. As America moved off the farm into the machinery of the city, its understanding of individual freedom and development was drastically altered. As cities and their productive capacities became more and more rationally organized and regulated, so too did society need to be reorganized and regulated to keep the machinery of industrial capitalism working. Just as machines, resources, markets, and corporations fell into the purview of the newly professionalized eyes of the federal government, so too did society and the individual. Not only was the machinery to be worked upon and maintained – society and the individual were “maintained” as well.

This maintenance was of course shrouded in claims that more government and State intervention made the individual more free. The advent of industrial society doomed the atomistic agrarian individualism of the gentleman farmer of “The Founding.” The notion of the individual understood prior and superior to the society in which he or she found him or herself was considered bankrupt. “Most of the scholars of this period accepted this view, finding that ‘the philosophy of the progressive era was therefore individualism, a new individualism designed to give the individual under new conditions, the same kind of advantages enjoyed in a simpler day. It wished to place controls on certain practices of business, not restrain freedom but to conserve freedom for a greater number of people’ (Tariello 1982: 98). This was best achieved through expanding State activity, in which the state provided the necessary space for individuals to act in their communal capacities. Those individual scholars who figured so prominently in the founding of political science figured prominently too in the ideology of industrial

democracy. Richard Ely and Henry Demarest Lloyd provide just two examples of the heady feeling of a new individualism within the scope and maintenance of the new state, arguing that the individual only experiences true individualism in sacrificing for the greater good of society.<sup>6</sup>

The political science emerging from this period was marked by the likes of Charles Merriam, John Dewey, and Harold Lasswell. Increase in the political power of the nation-state would result in the appropriate distribution of power, placing it in the hands of well-trained experts who suffered from none of the effects of subjective desire. Prevailing notions of the individual held over from a different era needed to be debunked and abandoned in favor of an individualism informed by the industrial nation-state. Early American political scientists highlighted the culmination of historical forces that made up the newly minted State. “Only by rendering unto society that which belonged to society, and that included everything, could the proper circumstances for individual growth be created. ‘Every step in the direction of true collectivism has been and must be a step in the direction of true individualism.’ The more society regulated its affairs, the more individualism flourished” (Tariello 1982: 98).

### **Closing the Poles: Political Theory’s Isolation**

This individualism comes to inform our present understandings of the development of political theory and science. As the twentieth century progressed,

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<sup>6</sup> See Henry Lloyd, *The Lords of Industry* (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1910) and Richard Ely, *Socialism* (New York: MacMillan and Co, 1900).

arguments for the state generally fell by the wayside and gave way to the need to combat the advancing forces of absolutism and totalitarianism in the guises of fascism and communism that threatened the flourishing “managed” individualism of Merriam, Dewey, and Lasswell. While the focus had moved from the state, political science still relied upon the now long-integrated components of its origins in state-making: a scientific identity, professionalism, and expertise. As such, two scholarly tendencies describe a majority of the discipline’s work from the end of World War II to the early 1970s, according to Ricci, tendencies that still have powerful effects today. First, there was a zeal for a scientific mode of research that sought to move beyond the perceived “hyperfactualism” of the pre-War years. Secondly, with this professional zeal came a general sense that society had come to accept the long-term depreciation of “revelation and tradition” that had fostered the university movement in the mid-1800s and a relatively new appreciation for the scientists’ role within modern society. “Thus the new strictures on how political scholars should practice a new sort of science, as opposed to unimaginatively persisting with the old business of data collecting, fit comfortably within a wider view assigning social utility to the whole enterprise” (Ricci 1984: 134). Yet, from these two tendencies will come a third, made manifest in the practice of political theory today: the synthesis of the accepted social utility of market rationality with scientific method to the exclusion of expansive political inquiry and public interest.

Much of the post-war approach of political science was dominated by what has come to be known as “behavioralism.” While at the time there was some heated debate over the tenets of the behavioral approach from the likes of David Easton, Robert Dahl,

Gabriel Almond, and David Truman, the behavioral approach to political analysis is essentially characterized by an interest in scientific as opposed to unscientific questions, or in its simplest construction: a distinction between questions of what *is* and questions of what *ought* to be. According to Ricci,

Behavioralists ... in the hope of avoiding controversy over intangible matters, took as their proper concern the realm of investigations into concrete actuality, which they chose to call science. And so Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan held that 'the basic concepts and hypotheses of political science' should contain 'no elaborations of political doctrine, or what the state of society ought to be.' Or, as David B. Truman concluded for behavioralism specifically, 'inquiry into how men ought to act is not a concern of research in political behavior'" (Ricci 1984:137).

Somit and Tanenhaus suggest that this interest in the question of what is, came to inform the following articles of behavioralist faith (with the authors noting that not even the most committed behavioralist held all of these views): political science can ultimately be capable of prediction and explanation; political science should concern itself primarily with phenomena that can be observed; data should be quantified and "findings" based upon quantifiable data; research should be theory driven, i.e., testing operationalized hypotheses; political science should avoid both applied research aimed at providing solutions to specific and immediate social problems and melioratory programmatic ventures; the truth of values cannot be established scientifically beyond the scope of science and are therefore beyond the scope of legitimate inquiry; political science should be interdisciplinary; and political science should become more self-conscious and critical of its methodology (Somit and Tanenhaus 1967: 176-9).

Such an approach, particularly with its isolation from specific and immediate social problems and its focus on methodology, generally left the behavioralists being expected to engage Karl Popper's urging and example of doing their work in such a way as to reject ideology and ideological theorizing and to examine instead the highlights and successes of the political institutions and arrangements extant within American society (especially in contrast with those of the Soviet Union).<sup>7</sup> Liberal, democratic institutions and market realities developing in post-war America were simply taken as givens. Little room was left for traditional theorizing. "From the very beginning, behavioralism gave an added impetus to what political scientists still call 'the decline of political theory' ... It was not that philosophical matters were deemed unimportant in principle, but that there seemed no way of dealing with them scientifically" (Ricci 1984: 145). The scientific method works well only when applied to facts. "The consequences were severe for political values, which are the very stuff of traditional political theory. Because they entail loosely defined concepts such as justice ... they are doomed to remain in the nonscientific realm" (Ricci 1984: 145). The result is an approach to politics that may help to achieve societal goals that people may cherish but one that also recognizes these cannot goals cannot be determined by science as those we *ought* to espouse.

There were some attempts at this time to find some resonating, shared ideas between political theory and the behaviorist elements of the discipline; however, what was taking place was the "professional differentiation of the field with 'empirical' theory

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<sup>7</sup> See Ricci, pp 123-4 for his discussion of Popper's analogy between science and democracy.

becoming the property of behavioralism and the increasingly distinct ... remainder designated as 'traditional' or normative and historical" (Gunnell 1993: 261). These intellectual "exercises," notes Gunnell, were more a search for reconciliation driven by professional concerns and circumstances than any necessary development of intellectually distinct positions and often went on to reinforce preexisting divisions. "The exact terms of such divisions were primarily a legislative act of the disciplinary establishment and reflected its assumption about the distinction between fact and value and between empirical and normative claims, but [their] grudging acceptance by political theorists was ... a reflection of a wish for greater institutional autonomy" (Gunnell 1993: 261).

It is telling that Gunnell mentions the interest in a "greater institutional autonomy" with the notion that theory was the "property" of various epistemological camps within the discipline. This fragmenting of the "turf" of political science and the gradual shunting of political theory to its periphery has come to dominate the discipline for the past thirty years. Along with disciplinary fragmentation is the market positioning of the sub-fields, as seen in their various attempts to capture and exploit their own methods of political analysis in order to garner the most institutional and professional rewards. Much of what drives the debate over the nature of political science and inquiry is not merely philosophical or scientific in nature, but market-driven, determined by life in the modern university system. Such a system pushes members of the discipline to engage in "turf battles" to protect "their" methods as personal property and legitimate them as worthy of institutional and professional respect, reputation and remuneration.

“It is a fact of modern university life ... that the reputation of great [and the not so great] educational institutions rests on their ability, or presumed capacity, for delivering scientific knowledge where, in the modern view, that knowledge is specialized rather than general,” writes Ricci (Ricci 1984: 213). As universities came to prominence in American society, each academic discipline attempted to gain unique access to and control of a specific branch of the scientific project found within the modern epoch, seeking continued funding and support of their scholarship to the exclusion of those projects that would attempt to synthesize an ecumenical world view or challenge their dominance within their branch. Disciplinary boundary and access rules and rewards were thus designed to narrow the scope and generalizability of research programs to keep production in their branch high and thus justify their preeminent positions within the academy.

In light of these arrangements, members of the discipline examine political issues as defined by their respective sub-disciplines according to the demands of market positioning *vis à vis* publication. As Ricci notes, the present and generally accepted view of scientific knowledge is that society simply needs more of it – not as determined by any public referenda on the matter but by the practitioners of the discipline themselves – production in this regard is auto-referential and takes on its own “natural inertia.” Ricci continues:

This knowledge is produced in scientific communities that can be said to resemble markets, where goods are offered for sale to potential customers. Thus, scientific researchers (or “sellers”) submit new ideas for publication to scholarly journals, where their acceptance (or “purchase”) indicates that these researchers are highly regarded by the community, since journal

editors and referees (or “buyers”) are scholars of repute who would not certify a manuscript for publication unless it were commendable according to the discipline’s lights. Accordingly, the status of “scientist” is earned in exchange for an offering of knowledge, when a scholar’s ideas are accepted by his intellectual peers (Ricci 1984: 220).

Much debate is then given to the prestige of the journals in which authors are publishing and which adhere to the vaunted status of most “scientific.” Such repute is reputed to be based upon the journal’s contribution to the greater body of scientific knowledge at the disposal of society at large. What is clear from a review of these journals and the behavior of scientific communities (including political science and theory) is that journal repute have very little to do with community service and very much to do with the capacity to produce more scientific journal articles as determined by the scientists themselves.<sup>8</sup>

The difficulty of such a situation is that markets do not always produce the most desirable outcomes or nurture the production of society-wide benefits. The case of scholarly publication, as set in the modern university system, demands high production often at the cost of any consideration for quality. In their survey of political scientists in the 1960s, Somit and Tanenhaus reported that quantity of publications far outweighed quality of publications in the mind of the political scientist. This fact demands that the scientist engage in readily reproducible knowledge – knowledge that tends to be specialized, narrow in scope, and very much isolated from wider social concerns. Ricci describes the present condition of the discipline as one dominated by concerns of quantity

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<sup>8</sup> See Norman Storer, *The Social System of Science* (New York: Holt, 1966); Michael Mulkey, *Science and the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979).

over quality, marked by a propensity to specialize, given to the proliferation and endless refinement of techniques and jargon, and charged with the abandonment of the public interest. The imperatives of knowledge markets and the university system seem to demand this peer-review publishing, the fragmentation of the field into greedily guarded fiefdoms, and the narrowing of political inquiry into method driven, self-reifying research.

Where Ricci believes there to be a lack of organizing principles to aid the discipline in the distinguishing between the significant and the non-significant in politics brought on by the “decline of rationality,” I believe it to be brought on by the ascendancy of market rationality. Political science, and political theory in particular, has become susceptible to accepting its basic mantra: if you can produce it and sell it, it must be good. More and more of what is practiced within political theory operates around the knowledge market’s principle of readily produced political “knowledge” whose basic features are those of market commodities: use value bounded by exchange value. The rationality of the knowledge market requires not expansive visions of our political future or reconceptualizations of an active, participatory public in the creation of this knowledge but bounded, “safe” interpretations of the canon that help to secure the individual scholar’s reputation, the discipline’s boundaries, and reproduction of the modern university system.

## **Conclusion**

The early development of political science as a discipline must be understood as occurring within the cross-currents of a variety of historical, social forces for just these forces leave an indelible mark on the scope and direction of the discipline and that continue to affect it today. American political science was conceived in light of the burgeoning power of the nation-state and the rise of liberal democracy. Added to this mix was the rise of professionalism, the university system, and a growing industrial ideology as distinct from the individualistic ideology of the American founding. If American political science had a stated desire to aid in the development of democracy, that desire was compromised immediately given the social, political, and economic milieu of the late nineteenth century.

The rise of professionalism and the modern university system allowed for the capture of the idea of politics and democracy by experts; the university system as it developed between the Civil War and World War I rewarded this expertise with market viability and social status. The ideology that accompanied the development of the nation state and rise of the industrial market prepared the citizenry to be removed, isolated, and ultimately made passive receptors of politics of the experts. The idea of democracy and politics were captured at the founding of the discipline. This capture has in turn been ringed by the various boundary and access rules established in part by members of the discipline itself. The idea of politics has been commodified and rendered subject to the demands of the knowledge market, prompted not by the needs of the public but by the market participant's demand for scholarly reputation and reward. Academic dialogue on

politics continues to be held hostage by the experts of political science and theory, who are loath to relinquish command over this knowledge for fear that it will cost them status and their livelihood. The impact of this market behavior on the nature of political theory and its construction of its political inquiries is the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 2: ACADEMIA, ALIENATION, AND THE MARKET AS GOD

The isolation and decline of political theory have been attributed to a variety of factors, as seen in the previous chapter. This chapter elucidates my theoretical framework to offer an alternative factor in this isolation. This begins with a discussion of Marxist critical theory and the relationship between knowledge and its mode of production. This leads to a discussion of modern political theory and science as essentially fetishized products of industrial knowledge production in the modern university system. The final section of this chapter synthesizes the fetishized conception of political science's methodology with John Gunnell's "orders of discourse." Where Gunnell views the isolation of political theory and science from its larger social context as a result of philosophical issues, I argue through his discursive orders that this isolation is due at least in part to the marketization of his 3<sup>rd</sup> order of discourse. Political science and theory have come to rely upon a view of politics and political knowledge that is separate from the public in order to reproduce that view for their own market consumption and reward. The establishment of the Western canon along with the rise of methodism in the social sciences and the separation of these from the larger public are as much result of the rise of market forces in the modern academy as those factors suggested by Ricci and Gunnell in chapter 1. Much of what is engaged in terms of political theory and science may be understood in light of Gunnell's discourse, but much more is laid bare when viewing this discourse in light of its market character.

### **The Marxist Legacy: Mediation and Critical Theory**

There is a deep and abiding fear that underlies much of Western political thought; it is the fear that public institutions or positions will be “captured” by self-interested actors and put to their use for their own private gain. Aristotle’s typology of ideal and non-ideal constitutions is based upon the differentiation between those political arrangements that serve the whole and those that serve narrow interests. This definition carries over in turn into Thomas Aquinas’ definition of kings and tyrants. This concern also forms the basis of Madison’s Federalist 10 and thus helps to provide the intellectual foundation of American political thought. Much of the ink and airtime set aside for political punditry is dedicated to this fundamental topic – the fear that our public political choices have been corrupted by the concern for a few. It is an idea that also informs much of the early work of Karl Marx.

Marx’s take on the issue of private and public with regard to politics differs from mainstream American political thought however, and it is this difference that I hope to utilize to describe the nature of political thought as it is examined by political theory and science today. Political scientists would argue that the source of their understanding of political behavior is conditioned by the scientific method, an “open market” of ideas, and their own individual choice. Improvements in their understanding of political activities are conditioned upon improvements in their methods – the honing of technique. Many discount the relationship that exists between the context and the questions asked in this context, i.e., they fail to interrogate the social, political, economic context in which the

important questions are those that are bound to technique and method. The importance of this relationship is not lost on Marx.

Marx's examination of the relationship between knowledge and political context and the impact that it has had on modern scholarship is vast. Before turning to Marx's arguments on this matter however, I believe it important to first make mention of his method and the implications of it for this dissertation. Marx's method is dialectical. As Robert Heilbroner notes in his work on Marx, "at the core of all varieties of dialectics, we find a continuation of that incessant querying, that active engagement with the resistant stuff of knowledge, so unforgettably portrayed by Plato in the person and style of Socrates ... for Marxism the legacy of this Greek sense of dialectical questioning process resides in an 'activist' attitude toward knowledge itself" (Heilbroner 1980: 31). He goes on to suggest that a Marxian approach to philosophy and knowledge emphasizes the *production*, rather than the passive receipt of knowledge on the part of the knower. To know is to be active in the production of knowledge. But it is not only the production of knowledge on the part of the knower that is important in Marx's approach, but the production of knowledge on the part of society in which the knower is situated as well.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Marx utilizes the dialectic as a means of revealing the necessary connectedness of social events that might otherwise be viewed circumstantially conjoined. What is important to note of Marx's approach and the approach employed by this dissertation is that it "sheds not light on the actual sequences of events through which contradictory tendencies work themselves out. Even if a dialectical perspective enables one unfailingly to identify the forces of contradiction in any social situation, the perspective does not describe the sequential happenings by which the contradiction works its effect on the social system" (Heilbroner 1980: 40). Insight is thus afforded into *relationships* and not causal sequencing by the dialectical approach. "It offers a heuristic – a diagnostic or revelatory – approach but no special technique to implement that approach. Problems that may remain hidden to a nondialectical view are opened for exploration, but the conclusions to

Heilbroner's discussion of Marx's interest in context should serve as a warning to readers here: this dissertation does not purport to establish a sequential causal connection between the rise of the modern university system and the descent of modern political theory. This would be an impossible task taken as a whole. It does however examine the context in which modern political science and theory are practiced and the implications of this context upon their practice and their production. Too often this context, this external referent, is left out of discussions of political science, theory and knowledge. This silence I argue is strategic: it allows for the market-like production and reproduction of knowledge in a market context. As society has become more and more bound to market rationality and distribution, so too has its knowledge production. That knowledge production, in taking on market-like exchanges and rationality, in turn reifies the context in which it is situated. The discourse of political theory is almost exclusively a "market discourse." It is a discourse that accepts its context and its mode of production as given and creates methods and techniques that guarantee its reproduction. The purpose of this chapter is to lay bare the nature of these discourses and examine their relationship within the discipline and their larger societal context.

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which those explorations may lead are not themselves prescribed by the dialectical perspective itself" (Heilbroner 1980: 41). An approach to social science relying upon a dialectical method suggests very different requirements in terms of interpretation from a modern "positivist" perspective. "The primary task of the dialectically minded social scientist ... is to inform us as to the presence and nature of our systematic misperceptions, so that we can discern essences where we would otherwise be deceived by appearances. What is dialectical about this scientific task is, of course, derived from the view that stresses the relational, [socially bound] aspect[s] of social knowledge - a view that differs markedly from the approach of non-Marxist social science, with its emphasis on 'facts' rather than contexts" (Heilbroner 1980: 49).

The relationship between knowledge and its societal context is of the greatest import to Marx. The relationship of the public to its role in the production and reproduction of society is mediated through its knowledge of itself. This knowledge is in turn mediated through what society is allowed to perceive of itself by those who control the means of production. While society helps to make arrangements that allow for the production of this knowledge it does so in a way that allows for its non-public control. Marx calls this ideology. A fundamental condition of modern life under capitalism for Marx is the capture of the public reproduction of knowledge and societal “understanding” in such a way that such knowledge benefits a select few. For Marx, modern politics is the exploitation of the working class in the interests of the owning class. The knowledge produced by the current mode of production does not reveal this relationship.

Three fundamental factors of modern (re)production and knowledge introduced by Marx in his early work are the notions of *privatization*, *alienation*, and *the division of labor*. Each of these ideas helps to form the basis of his critique of industrial capitalism as seen in his works, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* and *The German Ideology*. Much has been written about this and other early Marx work. I will simply outline the essentials of Marx’s argument here as a means of emphasizing the arguments offered in this chapter. In his *Manuscripts*, Marx outlines his understanding of human “potential.” Marx does not posit an unchanging, permanent “nature” to humans. Rather he argues that certain social arrangements encourage the improvement of the human condition. In this, Marx recognizes humans as progressive, productive beings in a twofold manner: 1) they reproduce themselves physically and are socially capable of

improving the means by which this is achieved, thus allowing for more time and energy to be spent on 2) their production of “free, conscious activity” for themselves, as dictated by their own propensity to engage in their “species being,” rather than the dictation of their creative human labor by an “alien” force – i.e., the dominant class.<sup>10</sup> As humankind has progressed through the various modes of production, notes Marx, it has become more and more “alienated” from its species being and no longer sees the worker laboring to produce a fully creative life, but rather living to labor. In this, alienation perhaps is best described as a social/economic/historical condition where humans are dominated by forces of their own making, yet where unaware that they are its source. Under the capitalist mode of production “people lose themselves in work ... alienation is a central feature of capitalism just because of the possibilities capitalism itself creates. Now that we can live beyond toil, there is no longer any reason for the workers’ poverty and drudgery. That their own labor is used against them, producing the opposite of human fulfillment, is a measure of the worker’s alienation” (Gottlieb 1992: 18).

In addition to alienation as a central feature of capitalism is its mediation through private property. Again, the relationship between these features ultimately appears dialectical to Marx. For example: alienated labor produces private property, private property is naturalized by society as *the* way to produce and thus reinforces and produces alienated labor. The relationship of private property to alienated labor is the subject of the *Manuscripts*, while the historical development and impact of private property and the division of labor provide much of the subject matter for *The German Ideology*, though

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<sup>10</sup> See Tucker 1978: 76-93

these works are not exclusive of the other. As capitalism develops, the “privateness” of one’s labor appears as being “natural” and is reinforced by the prevailing intellectual thought, or ideology, of the mode of production: one’s understanding of his or her labor is a private one – I am the source of my labor and I freely choose to work when and how I like – as posited by such liberal luminaries as John Locke and Adam Smith. This privateness in turn reinforces the alienation of individuals from themselves, their fellow workers, their work, and their creativeness, or “species being.”<sup>11</sup> Ideology then is constituted by the ideas, conventions and culture reflected in religion, politics, law, and morality that command any given mode of production. Yet, these “dominant” ideas are those of the dominant or “ruling” class.<sup>12</sup> The point of ideology is to maintain the privileged position of the ruling class and legitimize the forces by which it maintains its hegemony.<sup>13</sup> It does this by obfuscating its privileged position by reinforcing those elements that help bring it into being: alienation (as discussed above), the notion of private property, and the division of labor.

As private property and alienation are mediated through one another, so too is the division of labor mediated by and mediating of other elements. Marx notes as much when he remarks in *Ideology* that “division of labour [sic] and private property are, moreover, identical expressions: in the one the same thing is affirmed with reference to activity as is affirmed in the other with reference to the products of the activity” (Tucker 1978: 160). Alienated labor, private property, and the division of labor all help to

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<sup>11</sup> See Tucker 1978: 79-81

<sup>12</sup> See Tucker 1978: 172-3

<sup>13</sup> See Tucker 1978: 154; 176-189

maintain the cleavage experienced in modern capitalist society between the haves and have nots, worker and owner, individual workers, and workers and their work. That these appear as natural to the worker is done with aid of the dominant ideas of the ruling class. These ideas in and of themselves are the product of this interentailing, dialectical mediation of the factors of capitalism. While workers reify the natural condition of their labor through performing their labor, they remain alienated from their own awareness. The division of labor Marx notes is not merely physical, as in the division of labor between town and country, but mental as well. The laboring class is separated from their own mental abilities through the alienation and privatization of the laboring process.<sup>14</sup> The antagonism that Marx characterizes between town and country experienced during the development of capitalism and that acts to represent the alienation of the oppressed class from its mental labor can only exist within the framework of private property. Marx argues that such arrangements are the most “crass expressions of the subjection of the individual under the division of labor, under a definite activity forced upon the him” – a subjection that makes one man into a privileged mental laborer and another into a restricted physical laborer, a condition naturalized by the ruling class’s control of society’s “ruling” ideas.

This production and reproduction of knowledge, naturalized as part of the division of labor, which is itself taken as “natural,” according to Marx, on the part of the ruling class is strategic. This strategy, the context in which it is played out, and the ideas it produces is the very stuff of the third generation of critical theory, represented best by the

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<sup>14</sup> See Tucker 1978: 173

work of Ben Agger. Agger's interests, like those of mine presented here, lie with the problems of public life, "including dilemmas of disciplinary knowledge, the use and abuse of scientific and technological expertise, deindustrialization ... and the loss of public discourse" (Agger 1991: 1). Like me, Agger contends that democracy is threatened by the professionalization of social knowledge and problem solving and the marginalization of the public from knowing itself as a public in a Deweyian sense through a devaluing of public discourse and public intellectuality. Much of Agger's work is an attempt to reenergize Frankfurtian methods and ideas with contributions from various approaches including poststructuralism, postmodernism, and feminist theory. Here I seek to make use of his work with regard to the role of academic discourse and the organization of academic disciplines in the commodification of knowledge and the impact this has on the "publicness" or lack thereof in academic discourse.

The mediating between and interentailing of alienation, private property, and the division of labor culminates in Marx's primary analytic category of the *commodity*. Agger, as well as all other Marxist approaches, makes use of this categorization in his discussion of a "literary political economy." Central to his discussion and to this chapter is the argument that like most commodities today, academic writing, ideas, and discourse is produced and traded primarily in light of its "exchange value." Journal and monograph space is seen as a scarce resource and "thus becomes necessary real estate for those who would rather publish than perish" (Agger 1990: 25). Agger goes on to note that commodified discourse thus exhibits all the central features of Marx's critique as outlined above when he describes it as displaced from the realm of public discourse. Such a

displacing, or alienating/privatizing/dividing, of discourse “definitely lowers the rate of public intelligence in that writers write not for expressive and political reasons but to please editors and publishers concerned both to maximize profit and enforce social control. Discourse’s displacement is a structural tendency in a commodified literary [and academic] world” (Agger 1990: 25). In the course of this literary displacement, political knowledge of and its production by the public, once an element central to our understanding of politics, is displaced into the hands of a select few: *a public thing in original conception is thus reconfigured for the exchange, use and benefit of a small private concern.*

The reigning or mediating ideology of the academic realm in which political science operates according to Agger is the notion of the “open market” of competing ideas that in turn parallels the liberal metaphor of Adam Smith’s free-market economy. Agger wants to replace this understanding with one that is more analogous to a state-guided Keynesian economy, where we might be able to better understand the management of the production of knowledge “that includes not only government and its economic steering functions but also higher education as well as religion and other aspects of culture and entertainment” (Agger, citing Miliband 1991: 90). My interest is not with theories of state politics, but rather with the effects of commodification and market behaviors on the production of political knowledge and understanding and here I believe that Agger’s description of academics and the social sciences is revealing: “In this climate, the total administration of academic scholarship is merely an instance of the general reduction of critical thought and writing to operational definitions, where social

science is transformed into mere data gathering and statistical manipulation. Thus the 'mainstream' in the social sciences is almost by definition grounded in a methodological protocol of piecemeal data gathering and secondary data analysis using the techniques of a mathematical positivism (Agger 1991: 91). The idea of a Millian "open-market" of ideas is thus undermined by the exclusion of alternative epistemologies and methodologies and the resulting homogeneity and hegemony of academic discourse.

Two implications of Agger's work in terms of dominant ideology are the notions of individual autonomy and the strategic insularity of academic legitimacy from its larger public social context. While Agger is clearly interested in moving our commonly held Millian "open-market" beliefs about academia toward a state-centric model, he does acknowledge that much of the reproduction of the homogenous and hegemonic work produced is done so without overt or onerous input from *external disciplining*. "It is far more effective for academics to police themselves through proscriptive editorial practices ... [s]elf-censorship, Foucault's discipline and Marcuse's surplus repression, operates at the level of editing as well as in the hiring and tenuring processes. Such self-governance for the most part precludes the need for overt administrative control of scholarship" (Agger 1991: 93). The domination of deeply held and narrowly defined definitions of academic legitimacy and political knowledge is reinforced by the "illusion of [the] individual writer's autonomy, a central feature of ideological occlusion in late capitalism. By supposing that every piece of submitted work will get a fair reading, the ideological metaphor or an intellectual open market is maintained" (Agger 1991: 94).

More important in this regard is the insularity of academic production. Much of what is produced in the social sciences and thus political science is produced self-referentially through the peer-reviewed journal format. This is part of the academy's strategy of reproduction. Modern political science has captured the idea of politics and commodified it to be traded not on an open market but in a closed one, one deemed legitimate by the modern university system and larger political machinery of state and federal governments. What is in turn produced and rewarded by this system is the reproduction of the discipline and specialized, insulated forms of knowledge. This reproduction requires knowledge that is readily reproduced for "consumption" among members of the closed market or discipline. This market limits through the peer-review and tenure processes those that might seriously challenge the hegemony of such easily reproducible forms knowledge. Methodism is the reigning ideology in political science because it is the most easily produced and least threatening knowledge within the present status quo. Methodism is the intellectual inheritance of the industrial age knowledge machine that is the modern university system and its social sciences. The discipline in turn makes sure that this methodism remains generally unquestioned, particularly at its core. The only "legitimate" way to question it is through the peer-review process, a process that is clearly oriented away from inquiries that might undermine the hegemonic position of the method. "Mainstream refereed journals constitute vital media" of the closed market "inasmuch as they represent and reinforce a certain acceptable work style and mode of academic presentation. [Closed market] management of knowledge proceeds through a referee process that is deeply ideological and methodologically

narrow, facilitating the discipline by deflecting scholars' critical intelligence as well as by leading them to do narrow 'applied' research," generally benefiting the discipline and leaving the status quo unquestioned and unassailed (Agger 1991: 93).

### **Political Theory Method as Fetish**

Such silence on the part of the discipline, again, is strategic. Moreover, that part of the discipline of political science that was at one point best suited to question such silence, political theory, has been, as outlined in Chapter 1, in "decline," marginalized, and isolated. This marginalization, subject of this dissertation, is part of the "market" strategy of the discipline – its decline is no accident. However, to develop this argument further it is necessary to once again turn to Marx's discussion of commodities and social production.

Central to Marx's "toolkit" in deconstructing capitalism is the notion of commodities and their use and exchange value. The modern production of commodities arises for Marx in the context of the mediation of private property, the division of labor, and alienation. The various forms of alienated labor are discussed above, yet Marx in *Das Kapital* adds an additional dimension to alienation in his discussion of the "fetishism of commodities." There are two essential features of the fetish that bear on our discussion of political theory and methods here. The first of these is that a commodity acts as a repository of the various social relations that brought it into being – what appears at first as "a very trivial thing, and easily understood" is actually quite "mysterious" and complex. Commodities provide an access point to understanding the

whole of the capitalist mode of production for Marx in that they are in their “origin ... the peculiar social character of the labour [sic] that produces them” (Tucker 1978: 321). To understand the fetishized commodity is to understand the whole of the nexus of exchange, alienation, division of labor, and private property.

The second element of the fetish, a dialectical component of the first, is that the production of commodities requires that they become the means by which human relations are articulated and are thus taken as a given, or “natural.” “Fetishism occurs when social relationships which derive from human activity are perceived to be the product of inhuman, unchangeable forces ... dead commodities are ... invested with autonomous powers [fetishized] at the expense of the real subjects of history ... the fetishism of commodities not only populate the world with fictitious entities [Reason, “The Market”], but they also require a passive acceptance of things as they are” (Gottlieb 1992: 21).

This observation on Gottlieb’s part leads to the core of my argument regarding political theory, its role within political science, and its relationship with the conception of the public: political theory, as it is currently practiced in the context of American political science, is conditioned to and content to leave things “as they are.” Understanding political theory in terms of Marx’s fetishism of commodities provides tremendous insights to the “decline” of political theory, the rise of methodism’s hegemony in the practice of political science, and the loss of its public character. Interrogating political theory in this manner reveals the dialectical nature within the production of political theory and its estrangement from the public through its

methodological and market focus. The mediation of alienation, privatization, commodity exchange, division of labor all come together in the commodification of methodized political theory and this in turn is reinforced by the ideological nature of the knowledge produced by political theory and the manner in which it is produced.

The methodism that has come to grip political science and theory acts in just such a fetishized way, leaving the political context in which the discipline is situated untouched. Wolin notes that there is a veritable grab-bag of theories that exists from which the political scientist might choose, but to label these as political theories is a “categorical mistake.” Systems theories, communication theories, structural modeling, rational choice frameworks, formal modeling theory, are “unpolitical theories shaped by the desire to explain certain forms of non-political phenomena. They offer no significant choice or critical analysis of the quality, direction, or fate of public life ... they share the same uncritical – *and therefore untheoretical* – assumptions of the prevailing political ideology which justifies the present ‘authoritative allocation of values’ in our society” (Wolin 1969: 1063).<sup>15</sup> The change or revolution that Wolin felt was upon the discipline in the 1960s and continues to affect us today is the molding of political science into an endeavor that reflects a tradition of politics that eschews ideals and principle in favor of practicality and technique. And like all technique-oriented activity, the behavioral movement and its progeny presuppose

that the fundamental purposes and arrangements served by its techniques have been settled and that, accordingly, it reinforces [sic] tacitly or explicitly, those purposes and arrangements and operates according to a notion of alternatives tightly restricted by these same purposes and arrangements. The emphasis upon

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<sup>15</sup> My emphasis.

methods does not signify simply the acquisition of a “kit” of new “tools” but presupposes a viewpoint which has profound implications for the empirical world, the vocation and the education of political scientists and the resources which nourish the theoretical imagination (Wolin 1969: 1063).

The change this “methodism” represents is therefore not neutral and bundles within itself, in a generally uncritical way, a number of assumptions about the “givenness” and “correctness” of existing political practices, behaviors, structures, and institutions, which in turn support the methodological approach that leaves them intact and essentially unquestioned. What is important for the technician is *how* to ask a question, not the importance of *which* question to ask.

Political science’s methodological ideal and its focus on the question of “how” understood as fetish lays bare the alienated, commodified nature of the discipline. The hegemony of method narrows the range and manner of questions pursued by political theorists. What is encouraged by the dominance of the “how” of methodology is the “flatness” or “depthlessness” of its approach to questions regarding the direction of the polity or condition of the “public thing.” Method remains alienated from the larger public because its aim is not the public’s improvement of itself but rather an improvement in the method and procedure employed. The fundamental question for the person involved in the pursuit of science and its method is not ultimately “what will this add to our understanding” but “is this reproducible.” In this, Fredric Jameson’s depiction of the flatness, alienation and commodification of postmodern art provides a telling metaphor for my arguments here.

For Jameson, the photograph may act as fetish for our postmodern condition. Photography moved “art” into the hands of the public and let them be their own source of

history. What is particularly important in this is the notion that the photograph represented “reality” – the photo captures the true essence of any given situation and alternative understandings or hermeneutical gestures are ultimately limited by the depthless format of the photographic negative. The “givenness” of the photo’s “reality” comes to take on the fetishized givenness of late-industrial/postmodern capitalist pursuit of method, privacy, individualism, division of labor, etc ... According to Jameson

we must surely come to terms with the role of photography and the photographic/negative in contemporary art of this kind: and it is this indeed which confers its deathly quality on the Warhol image, whose *glaced* x-ray elegance mortifies the reified eye of the viewer in a way that would seem to have nothing to do with death or the death obsession or the death anxiety on the level of content. It is indeed as though we had here to do with the inversion of Van Gogh’s utopian gesture: in the earlier work, a stricken world is by some Nietzschean fiat and act of the will transformed into the stridency of color. Here, on the contrary, it is as though the external and colored surface of things – debased and contaminated in advance by their assimilation to glossy advertising images – has been stripped away to reveal the deathly black-and-white substratum of the photographic negative which subtends them (Jameson, 1985, 60).

What is fascinating about Jameson’s approach with regard to photography is the effect he implies that capitalism has upon the actual art medium itself: here the effect of capitalism upon the initial material object is referred to again (a world “stricken” and rendered fruitless by aggressive modern technology), but with the combining of cultural and economic logics, this devastation takes place at the very surface of the medium as well. Just as the landscape is rendered barren in modern monopoly capitalism, now the medium by which such images are replicated is rendered “fruitless” or lifeless by late capitalism.

Much the same happens to the political theory produced in this epoch. The color, vibrancy, and rhythm of epic theory are all but washed from the matrix of the medium,

leaving only the outlines of images, devoid of matter, meaning, and context. Political science and theory's methodism assumes the context as "right," like the photograph's "reality" of the framed image. What is left for the producer is merely of technique of dealing with variations of variables dictated by the mandates of chemistry and physics that govern photography. What the viewer is left with is merely wondering how the photographer did what she did to produce such a photograph. The larger scope of the meaning and implication of this process is hidden and washed away through the assumptions of the "rightness" of the photographic method. The public is not allowed to assess the "reality" beyond the photograph, merely consume what it has to present them. Just as in the case of photography's domination by method outlined in Jameson's characterization, so too does political science and theory's focus on method help to leave things as they are.

This methodological focus ultimately enables political theory and science to flourish as a closed market and sustains the commodification of political knowledge through the reinforcement and legitimization of the key elements of commodification (alienation, privatization, exchange, and division of labor). For a market to function there must be an agreed upon measure of exchange, a reference point that remains relatively unquestioned as an appropriate means of valuation. That reference for political science and theory has become methodism. But methodism has changed the scope and nature of political inquiry. The knowledge remains alienated from the larger public and is the result of a specialized type of labor that requires years of disciplining. The knowledge the ancients conceived as being generated by the whole of the citizenry is captured for

private trade among a few. The rules and disciplining represented by political science may be seen as erecting borders to their trade in an effort to bolster the self-referential nature of their value system. The range and scope that Wolin envisions for political theory is necessarily limited by the rule and practices of the peer-reviewed journal system because such a Wolinian gesture on the part of the political would ultimately undermine the closed trade that political theorist and scientists engage in. Political theory must remain alienated, private, and specialized to remain the commodity it has become for its practitioners.

#### **Gunnell: Orders of Discourse**

In the previous chapter I devoted some space to the works of David Ricci and John Gunnell to provide some reference to the “lay of the land” of political theory’s place in the historical development of modern American political science. Gunnell’s more recent work builds upon the themes outlined and revisited throughout his work over the past three decades; primary among them is his assertion that “political theory has become an insular activity, disconnected from authentically political concerns and centered around exegetical and metatheoretical problems of its own contrivance” (Isaac 1997: 455). Political theory and science’s relationship to that which they study is quite different from that of the natural scientist and is at least one step removed from the social behavior it purports to describe. Political theory has in Gunnell’s view, and mine, become even more removed. Gunnell seems to argue that this is a problem with its philosophical foundations and lineage and to be sure he has done a tremendous job in

cataloging the development of political theory since the founding of the discipline. Yet, Gunnell, while aware of the importance of the milieu in which the political theorist works, fails to fully appreciate the impact that modern academic production, its rules, and its values have had on the tenor and scope of political theory in the past forty or so years. In the following section I seek to make use of Gunnell's work on the nature of the discipline, particularly his typological scheme of discursive levels or "orders," but to resituate these in light of their application to a market interpretation of political theory's alienation from its broader social setting.

For Gunnell this alienation stems from political science's fascination with and jealousy of the privileged position of the natural sciences. As Gunnell characterizes it,

The core of the alienation of political theory has been the tendency, born of a search for intellectual identity and authority, to subscribe and become hostage to various philosophical doctrines – particularly those involving the foundation of scientific and normative judgment. This has encouraged the construction of abstract images of both the activity and object of inquiry and of the relationship between them. Such philosophical mortgaging has also hampered discussion among discursive enclaves within the field ... For the most part, academic political theory continues to be defined by debates that revolve around abstract self-referencing issues with only the most tenuous ties to situated political phenomena (Gunnell 1998: xii).

While there have been arguments over the various forms of liberalism, there has been very little wrangling among political theorists or between them and their larger discipline, which in turn leaves political theory "distanced" from "what might be called the particularities of politics" and inhibited from engaging "the crucial theoretical issue of the generic constitution of social phenomena" (Gunnell 1998: xii). Political theory has not been forced by political science to become more "relevant."

Gunnell's view is motivated as well by his contempt for political theorists wrapping themselves in the vestments of the public moralist and claiming that the work they engage in is a kind of historically validated form of public moralism. Here Gunnell argues that his work is about urging political theorists and philosophers to think more realistically and authentically about their role in politics and political science. "If what I have to say points in any specific direction, it is toward an intellectual engagement of concrete particulars whether they be actions, practices, texts, or historical artifices ... [it] amounts in many ways to a plea that political and social theory return to the ordinary which would include both thinking theoretically about the essence of the ordinary in human life and confronting the situated practical problem of the relationship between metapractices and the modes of ordinariness that they address" (Gunnell 1998: xiii). Gunnell realizes that political theory, as part of political science and the social sciences, has a distinct heritage in that, while it formed the basis of political inquiry in the centuries prior to the development of modern political science, it came to have a distinct place within the practical mission of the social sciences as defined by the modern university system. While political theory became essentially a scholarly activity, it retained the "idiom" of its origin. "This prescriptive and evaluative style, however, became more anomalous and paradoxical in the context of the modern academy and in a situation where practical authority seemed to depend increasingly on a claim to objectivity and scientific purity" (Gunnell 1998: xiv). Gunnell argues that this is in part a holdover from its nineteenth century origins, but it is also in part that political theorists have begun to take more seriously their own legitimating claims, arguing their connection to a tradition

extending back to Plato and a privileged access to “some transcendental ground of judgment.”

Gunnell seeks to deny political theorists and scientists this ground. He believes such a position to be untenable in that politics is “a particular historical configuration of conventional or symbolic phenomena and cannot, in itself ... be assigned an ontological or theoretical status ... [or] be the subject of theoretical statements – either empirical or normative” (Gunnell 1997: 519-20). Gunnell is seen in *Discourses*, as well as in his other recent work, as generally writing against the capture of epistemology by the social sciences – “particularly the attempt of social scientists to buttress their discipline and enterprise with the philosophical doctrine of Comtean positivism” – that is often accompanied by disastrous results (Feldman 2000: 51). Rather than reaching for the moral or epistemological high ground, Gunnell hopes to provide a reasoned argument for political theorists and scientists to engage in more relevant studies and approaches to politics given that politics itself ultimately does not transcend concrete, temporal, or historically unique issues. “The cognitive issue of a theory of politics must ultimately be understood in the context of the practical problem of the relationship between social science and its subject matter” (Gunnell 1997: 519).

To understand the practical problem of the relationship between political science and politics, Gunnell introduces the idea of understanding science, theory, and epistemology as various discursive levels or “orders of discourse.” In attempting to define politics as made up of conventions, Gunnell in turn suggests that politics are

merely practices that are historical, socially constructed, and discursive in nature. “When we use the phrase ‘orders of discourse,’” Gunnell notes,

*discourse* is a more generic term than practice, but certain practices are often identified with or subsume particular discourses, or what might be called *discursive regimes*. A particular practice, such as one of the social sciences, often contains, more than one level or order of discourse, while a certain mode of discourse may not be especially associated with any distinct practice. There were for example discourses on nature before there were differentiated practices of natural science, and there were discourses about politics that antedated the practice represented in the discipline and profession of political science (Gunnell 1998: 18-9).

First-order discourses are those that take place at the “everyday” level of life and are taken as givens due to their functional necessity to human existence. These include natural science, religion, music, art, and politics. Their givenness is not a function of their being unalterable but rather that they do not gain their primary identity in terms of their relationship to and dependency on another practice. What most fundamentally distinguishes first-order practices is “that they do not only define and conceptually and practically constitute themselves ... but in varying ways and degrees construct and project an image of the external world in which they are situated. Such practices are the medium through which the ‘world’ is defined” (Gunnell 1998: 19). It is this construction, involving the ontological claims that “define a universe of phenomena, constitute a vision of reality, and create a domain of facticity” that Gunnell identifies as the proper realm and definition of theory. Second-order discourses such as the social sciences on the other hand gain their identity through their attempts to understand first-order practices: they are extraneous in that they are predicated on the existence of other practices and discourses and since they do not constitute the object of their study. Third-order discourses are

“those that have another metapractice as their object, and they include, for example, the philosophy of social science” (Gunnell 1998: 22).

The advantage gained for Gunnell in using this “discursive” typology is that it provides a clearer notion of how we can and should understand by way of second, third, and fourth level discourses (metadiscourses) and their relation to the practical realm of politics. By way of these levels, Gunnell is able to demonstrate how various metapractices have dominated discussion and elevated themselves “above” the fray of first-order practices and attempted to dictate to them their proper behavior or understanding. As Joan Cocks describes it, such a typology allows the charting of various pathologies resulting from metapractices overstepping their discursive arena. “The initial pathology appears when the philosophy of science develops a universal theory of scientific truth disconnected from any understanding of how science actually proceeds. The next pathology occurs when social science appropriates this abstract notion of truth to validate its status as the authoritative knowledge of society” (Cocks 1999: 1209). “Thus the philosophy of social science has often set itself up as the arbiter of what social science can and should be; or epistemology has claimed to be the adjudicator of what are and are not legitimate cognitive enterprises ... metapractices have failed to note that they are practices of an entirely different order of discourse from that about which they speak” and as such fail to secure any higher ground by virtue of a superior knowledge about how they ought to function (Fay 2000: 606). As Gunnell puts it,

[n]o matter what we may wish politics to be, and no matter what some may claim that it has been, it is, in fact, the historical particularities

associated with town meetings, city councils, corrupt campaigns, and myriad other sub-forms tied together less by a model imposed by the social scientist than by traditions and the self understandings of social actors. This is not to say that social science cannot redescribe or retheorize politics; it necessarily does so at least in the limited sense that the language and theories of social science are not those of society. But this returns us once more to the fact that the issue at stake is not just that of a cognitive relationship but a practical one” (Gunnell 1997: 530).

Or, “[a]ll houses have foundations, but there is not general foundation on which they all rest,” (Gunnell 1998: 106). One of Gunnell’s most important claims then, and a claim offered by my work as well, is that second-order practices very often ignore, ridicule, and/or claim unfounded insight into first-order practices; practices that provide the necessary data for existence of the second-order discourses. Political theory has become too committed to a philosophical approach to political questions and has turned those questions into test beds for various philosophical methods and analysis.

To support his case that political theory has become alienated from politics, Gunnell does not in *Discourses* “investigate empirically what either political actors or theorists do” (Cocks 1999: 1209). This being said, he does provide us with his typology of discourses that allows for just such an empirical study and directs us just where to look: the closed market that is political theory. “Despite the images of it conjured up in the present or imposed upon the past – whether as the potential agent of human emancipation or as a source of general laws of political behavior – the activity of political theory is in reality a highly professionalized academic sub-field in the context of the modern university” (Gunnell 1997: 535). Or as he notes in *Discourse*, “[w]hile the purpose of a rhetoric of inquiry has often been to secure the cognitive autonomy and identity of social science and to advance its practical aspirations, it has paradoxically,

tended to divert attention away from such matters and function more to advance the fortune of professional enclaves and reinforce existing persuasions” (Gunnell 1998: 209).

The advancement of professional enclaves and existing persuasions is explained well by Gunnell’s various discursive levels. While Gunnell chooses to engage “the enemy” with the enemy’s weapons of choice (the philosophies of science, social science, and knowledge) his typology lends itself well to my project here. As Gunnell conceives of it, there is politics (i.e., historical conventional practice as first-order), talk about politics (social and political sciences as second-order), and talk about the talk about politics (political theory as third order), and so on. Political theory has situated itself well within the knowledge market of the modern university system in that it has created and captured for itself a self-referencing, self-legitimizing, and self-producing body of knowledge that helps to reinforce modern social reproductive ideology. In utilizing a “canon” of “classic” political thinkers as its cache of raw materials, political theory is capable of mining its discourse about politics ad infinitum and thus able to reproduce itself within the discipline and university. All political theory need do is engage in debate about the canon itself: it need not defend it, create it, or legitimate it for all this has already happened. The creation and maintenance of the Western canon of political theory may be readily understood as the result of strategic market positioning of political theorists. As modern, liberal democracy evolved through the twentieth century, capitalism perfected its ability to reproduce itself physically as well as ideologically. Political theory’s capture by epistemological arguments does not appear accidental – its marginalization from actual political practices is strategic.

Political theory's dominance by third-order discourse while marginalizing it from public political practices reifies its fetishized condition. As we shall see in Chapter 3, political theory in the past thirty years has become dominated by third order discourse, or as I will often label it there, market discourse. The market of political theory, situated as it is in the modern university system requires a capacity on the part of its participants for high production rates of "political knowledge" and the promise of profit or in this case academic rewards for their work. The easiest way to maintain this production is to produce and reproduce a product that is readily accepted by its consumers, generally other political theorists and scientists. The canon provides political theorists with the raw material of their "political" ideas but as Gunnell has aptly shown, this is not a discussion of politics as practice, but discussions about discussion of politics. Political theorists, use and reproduce an idea of the public already supplied to them by the canon. The actual historical present-day public is left out of the discourse nearly altogether. What the theorist is able to do then is discuss say for example Locke's take on politics and suggest a new or more refined way of understanding Locke and *his* understanding of politics. It is not a contribution to the public *per se*, but allows for the reproduction of the canon itself and the manner in which political theory is itself practiced. The individual theorist is then able to engage in political thought in the most alienated and fetishized way: they are alienated from the public directly, for theirs is discourse of others discussing the public; they are engaged in fetishizing and reifying the canon which in turn leaves much of the status quo in place; they are encouraged through the academic market to sell their "own" third-order ideas about the reified field thus encouraging the continued production

and exchange of alienated ideas and method; and that it is their own private view that they are attempting to sell to whole of the sub-discipline and discipline in the hopes of advancing the social sciences through the lowly work of one individual seeking her or his little contribution to the vocation.

Gunnell's typology is important in understanding the parallel between the rise of the discipline as a closed market and the dominance of methodism within political science and political theory. As addressed in the section above by Sheldon Wolin, methodism lets things remain as they are by seeking questions that assume a given social arrangement. I am arguing here, through the use of Gunnell's orders of discourse, that these orders are tied intimately to the rise of methodism and the fetishizing of political theory. Third order discourses are mostly about methodism – how best to understand how politics is discussed. Again, as Gunnell points out, this is not political in the sense that it is direct participation in politics. What is important here is not how Plato, Machiavelli, Locke, Marx, or Rawls understands politics but how I understand him and how every other political theorist misunderstands him. Because I am discussing one of these authors, it is generally accepted that what I am saying, so long as it is in the format of a peer-reviewed journal article, will be accepted as important. There is no reference to the public at all in this case. It becomes a matter of “tightening up” our inquiries or taking a new look at just what Plato meant by some minutiae in one of his discourses. How we ask the question becomes the important element of our inquiries and this in turn narrows the scope of our inquiry in such a way that allows for its rapid reproduction. The hard work of establishing the effect of our work on the public's understanding of itself, of

legitimizing our research question, of establishing some discourse about whether our views are “right” or “wrong” in some moral sense is taken care of for us by engaging in mere methodological inquiries into the given canon.

The rise in process parallels the rise in the dominance of method. The rules and conventions of the discipline have developed over the past forty or so years to reinforce just this type of approach to political science and theory. The reference for “understanding” politics has been reintegrated back upon the discipline itself – it understands how politics works through its various methodological lenses. But these lenses are in themselves theoretical constructs and fail to have any external references other than peer-reviewed epistemological debates. These debates are reinforced again by the rules and procedures of the peer-review process and the market stipulations of the modern academy. Where the natural sciences can refer to a universal methodology that eschews the theory/action split, the social sciences lack such a reference and turn their questions of legitimacy back upon the specialized language games of epistemology and their ability to produce vast amounts of peer-reviewed work. What social science lacks in natural science’s “legitimacy,” it makes up for in sheer productive capacity – a capacity that is reinforced by its reliance on methodism.

This methodism is made manifest through Gunnell’s discursive typology. The dominance of third-order discourse in political science and theory is a dominance of market discourse – methodism has become the reproductive standard and means of exchange among political scholars. Its capacity to remain estranged from the public yet remain legitimate and its capacity for rapid rates of high reproduction have made it the

hegemonic knowledge system of the social sciences and late modern university knowledge system. This fetishized discursive market methodism highlights the ideological character of political theory, both in terms of what is produced and how it is produced. As we will see in the following chapter, the dominance of the market discourse has narrowed the view and scope of political theorists. No longer are they willing to engage wholly in questions concerning the public as the public or concern themselves with potential futures of political understanding – such thinking is simply not rewarded in the narrow confines of the peer-review system. The discussion is limited to those topics reified by the productive capacity of political theorists themselves: reproduction of a canon that assumes certain parameters of political debate, discourse, and vision as a given that in turn reward the continued interpretation and reinterpretation of these parameters outside and above the practical politics of the first-order. What is produced by political theory is a knowledge that is wholly safe for consumption by political theorists and the university system, leaving these institutions and their conventions generally unquestioned and untouched and the discipline insulated from the public concern. Public knowledge, i.e., knowledge about the public, has been commodified for the narrow interests of the closed market that is political theory.

As Agger notes, the reigning or mediating ideology of the academic realm in which political science operates is the notion of the “open market” of competing ideas that in turn parallels the liberal metaphor of Adam Smith’s free-market economy. Yet this market must have common points of reference and value that might be agreed upon by the market participants. That value is method. And this methodism reinforces and is

reinforced by the ideology of a market defined by a “plurality” of ideas in free competition with one another. The dominance of “pluralism” within political science as the paradigm of political behavior is paralleled nicely by the pluralist view of the discipline that studies it. What Gunnell, Agger, and I have shown is that this “free,” plural market is based upon a methodology that finds its worth not in explanation but in replication. This method leaves the larger context of industrialized knowledge, the modern university system, the closed market of third-order discourse, the capture of politics by the academy and the academy’s capture by epistemology untouched. Methodism’s focus on the “how” leaves its interrogative powers fetishized and alienated from the broader political context of “what” and “why.”

### **Conclusion**

There has been much discussion within the past forty years concerning the decline of the public intellectual and parallel decline in political theory. This decline I argue is in part predicated on the rise of market discourse among political scientists and theorists and the capture of “public knowledge” for their own private gain. Political science’s method may best be understood as a fetish of the industrialized production of knowledge within the modern university system. Such knowledge is alienated from the public by its self-referential nature among members of the academy, a referentiality that is reinforced by its interest in epistemological and methodological concerns. This fetishized knowledge appears ideological in that what it produces by way of political knowledge and how it produces this knowledge reinforces the mediating elements of the present status quo.

Political theory has come to rely upon a view of politics and political knowledge that is separate from the public. This separation exists, at least in part, to reproduce that view for trade and reification of political theory's own market and its reward. Political theory, as it is currently practiced in the context of American political science, is conditioned to and content to leave things "as they are" in order not to threaten its market boundaries or viability within the modern university system. What this means in terms of my analytical framework is the following: in the following chapter I analyze the nature of political inquiry within political theory in a dual manner. I first utilize Wolin's definition of "epic" political theory as a means to screen out "epic" political theory from non-epic and then utilize Gunnell's levels of discourse to analyze the non-epic theory and to examine what kind of theory political theorists are producing for the top peer-reviewed political science journals. This begins to fill in, I believe, that "gaps" left open by Ricci and Gunnell in their critique of the discipline. Gunnell goes so far as to admit that he does not investigate empirically what other political theorists do; I do and my investigation reveals the tremendous impact of methodology acting to aid the narrow confines of political theory's market.

My use of Gunnell's discursive typology takes advantage of his categorization of politics as a historic convention and political science as a discursive practice of a different order. The orders in which political science and theory are produced are reproduced by their discourse and reproduced in such a way as to maintain their conventions and rule structures generally apart from the larger public, a reproduction strategy that relies upon the methodism that is so prevalent in today's political science.

Political science focuses on methods because it gains a certain “scientific” legitimacy in so doing; but it also does so because it is rewarded for doing so – focus on methods allows for a high reproduction rate for political theorists. Political theory’s methods interrogate a narrow range of “political” questions or debates from an established body of knowledge within the discipline. This body uses pre-established or accepted norms of political discourse, ones that are “safe,” generally accept the status quo, easily produced given the rules and conventions of the peer-reviewed journal system, and easily traded to build career capital within the modern university knowledge system. Such metadiscourse and 3<sup>rd</sup> order discourses that need not reference the public – they are referenced through their establishment within the university and by their high productive capacities.

“What has defined the epistemological quest,” according to Gunnell, “and continues to shape much of philosophical discourse, is a classic case of alienation, that is, the abstraction and projection of natural or ordinary certainty beyond a theoretical and practical context and then its reification as a realm of transcendental knowledge that is advanced against an equally alienated skepticism” (Gunnell 1998: 208). But to do this it must have legitimacy within the academy and the discipline – it must pay. What the political theorist has sought is transcontextual supradiscursive basis for capturing first order claims to knowledge to make sure that such knowledge will pay in a closed-market of political theorists. What has been achieved, notes Gunnell, “is only fetish” – a fetish ultimately incapable and uninterested in the large societal scope of their “project” or referencing the public. “It is a fetish to which social scientists and social theorists have

been attracted long after much of philosophy has forgotten what it originally represented”

(Gunnell 1998: 208-9).

### CHAPTER 3: MARKET DISCOURSE AND THE (RE)PRODUCTION OF POLITICAL THEORY

In the previous chapter I explored John Gunnell's critique of political science and theory. I praised Gunnell's description of the various "orders of discourse" and the philosophical failings of political theory and the discipline itself. However, as I argued there, there are gaps in Gunnell's work. He is aware that the practice of political science as an academic endeavor occurs within the modern university system, but he fails to explore the behaviors, practices, and norms of that setting and how these come to affect the actual practices of the discipline. This chapter seeks to situate Gunnell's critique in light of these practices and expand upon his arguments regarding the orders of discourse that provide political science with its modern identity.

Much of the modern identity of political science comes about by its being embedded in the modern university system and the modern university system as part of and embedded in late modern, post-industrial capitalism. As I have argued, the modern university system is part of the production of knowledge needed to provide and sustain a "covering" ideology for the production of late modern capitalism. This relationship's profound effect upon knowledge and culture is the subject of my discussion of the work of Fredric Jameson. Jameson argues that cultural production in late-modern capitalism has been subsumed into the means of production – cultural production helps to reproduce capitalism. Art, architecture, culture no longer provide spaces of resistance to capitalism as they once did, according to Jameson. Art has essentially become "depthless," lacking scope and a referent outside of the system of capitalism. Just as art has taken on as their

primary function the reproduction of capitalism, political science and theory as it developed under the behavioral/methodist revolution have taken on as its primary function the reproduction of political science, and in so doing have become depthless as well.

The lack of scope and external reference of political science and theory is the central argument of Sheldon Wolin's 1969 *American Political Science Review* article, "Political Theory as a Vocation." Here Wolin suggests that political theory once provided the "utopian" gesture that Jameson argues art and architecture once did against the ever-growing dominance of technique, method, and marketization of late-modern capitalism. Political theory demanded that political science be responsive to something other than practicality and technique; practicality and technique that served the reproduction of political science and theory but left them unconnected to life outside of the university. Wolin's work demanded that for political theory to fulfill its vocation, it must have political science address levels of discourse that worked beyond the favored discourse of political science. Political science has to look beyond its own production.

I assume Wolin's work to be a clarion call to political science and use it as such. In the final part of this chapter, I review the last thirty years of political theory articles taken from the top five political science journals in an attempt to see if Wolin's view had any resonance with political theorists. The data are not hopeful. Where Wolin hoped that political theory would retain its "epic" status and demand external reference for the work that political theorists and scientists practice, the inward-looking, self-referent methodism of the behavioral revolution has come to dominate political theory. Here it is

not an issue of qualitative versus quantitative methods or approaches, but the fact that 3<sup>rd</sup> order discourse, the discourse of method and market, is the primary discourse engaged in by political theorists. What determines a work as being important in the field is no longer its importance measured by external standards or referent, but rather by its ability to reproduce political theory and science in the academy. How we ask the questions, rather than the importance of such questions, becomes the priority for “political” inquiry. The ability to determine what exactly Locke or Hobbes meant in a lost passage is more important to the theorist than linking what they had to say to our political future or to the public’s understanding of Hobbes or Locke. What is discussed in political science and theory is how we come to understand what someone else has said about politics. We discuss a discussion of politics, twice removed from the actual politics themselves. What is produced then is not a greater understanding of politics, or a universal theory of politics, but more political science. Political science is able to do this by internalizing its referent, itself, and assuming its methods, techniques and discussions to be important. Political theory has obliged itself by adopting the same method: narrowing its scope and cutting itself off from its public intent.

### **Fredric Jameson and the Flattening of Effect**

As seen in the previous chapters, much has been written about the private, insular nature of the community known as the discipline of political science. The cause of this private and isolated character for some was the result of American political science institutionalizing its scientific identity, particularly with the advent of the behavioral

revolution, thereby casting its focus inward upon its methods and techniques, rather than outward to the various political crises and conundrums at hand.<sup>16</sup> Yet, there is something else here that precipitates this separation. As Ricci explores the tension between science and democracy, noting all the while that the tragedy of political science is continuously revisited because of the "discipline's collective shortcoming" of stubbornly insisting on the scientific approach to studying politics, he leaves open the possibility of the effect of market forces upon the process of institutionalization and its subsequent insulation. What appears to be under-theorized, or only briefly touched upon by most of the work concerned with examining the discipline, is the suggestion that much of what has happened with American political science, its turning in on itself and away from the more practical matters of democracy, has had much to do with the 'marketing' or commodification of political science as a discipline.

Ricci introduces the notion of political science as a market community in the introduction to *Tragedy*. Markets come into being, according to Ricci, when the creator of a product or service must offer the fruit of his or her labor to people outside of their immediate workplace; a condition that unavoidably leads the creator to start thinking in terms of the price a potential customer would be willing to pay for his or her product. Focus, then, on the part of the creator is not centered on the actual or real value of the product, but rather on what someone else might be willing to pay for it. Moreover, "there is a market dimension to most professions, where the practitioner seeks status and

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<sup>16</sup> Included here are the following: Easton, "The New Revolution"; Wolin; Ricci; and Tim Duvall, "The Discipline's Community: The Effects of Method and Market on Research

prestige by offering his work for the approval of professional peers, it being clearly understood that willingness to keep a proper profile in their eyes will eventually be translated into vocational rewards" (Ricci 1984: 16). As a consequence of such arrangements, at least in the profession of political science, there is again a turning inward: political scientists concern themselves not with the conditions or state of democracy nor with the intellectual development of the nation's youth, but rather on doing research and publications to be judged by their peers and reap the professional rewards that come with favorable recognition.<sup>17</sup> The production of knowledge then becomes tied to its exchange value among political scientists and not to its value to a greater audience. As Ricci points out,

such is the theory of markets for scientific knowledge among scholars ... Thus when Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus surveyed political scientists ... they discovered that among 'attributes contributing to career success,' the quantity of a scholar's publications was the most important, while their quality was ranked fifth. Yet if professional advancement depends more on the amount of one's writings than on their intrinsic worth, there can be no assurance that the sum total of political science research findings, as published, are enhancing human welfare and not merely occupying library shelf space (Ricci 1984: 211).

The value by which political science is measured is no longer contingent upon its ability to significantly advance our understanding of public life or provide a civic education, but is instead measured in terms of its consumption among a closed community of political

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Relevance," Paper Presented at the American Political Science Association Meeting, Boston (1998) and available <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/tps/e-print/Duvall.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> See Norman W. Storer, *The Social System of Knowledge* (New York: Holt, 1966) and Jerome R. Ravetz, *Scientific Knowledge and Its Special Problems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) for more on the structure of scientific communities.

scientists, who are able to artificially enhance and reduce the exchange value of individual scientists' research and findings.

The collective sense of purpose that was articulated with the founding of American political science as community though has clearly and fundamentally changed since its inception. With the institutionalization of the scientific identity and with the institutionalization of market-like exchanges between political scientists, American political science has turned inward and cut itself off from the larger socio/politico/cultural context in which it is imbedded. Perhaps the most interesting way of conceptualizing the commodification of knowledge and the nature of political science as a community is that provided by Fredric Jameson in his work *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Although Jameson's work is aimed primarily at critiquing 'late' or 'multinational' capitalism through an investigation of its effects upon culture and art, *Postmodernism* provides an excellent overview or 'map' of the relationship between market forces and knowledge and while his work is often cited as 'thick' by first time readers, his argument is by now familiar and straightforward: markets seek to create their own commodities and systems of value to reproduce themselves. Market value is created from the magic of the exchange among its participants (a commodity is a commodity because someone somewhere has been convinced that it is a need and therefore given value) and not from any inherent sense of value in the product itself. As seen in the case of the institutionalization and professionalization of American political science, political scientists have turned away from conceptualizing their work in light of a public interest so as to create a community of "academic commodities" among themselves.

The primary subject of Jameson's essay is the commodification of art in late capitalism, where art is no longer produced for art's sake or as having the potential of creating a space of political and economic resistance, as seen in the culture of modern industrial capitalism. Instead, artistic production within late capitalism, or postmodernity, is art for the sake of exchange and market replication. The word postmodernity itself implies some sort of radical break – a break that Jameson suggests is most often related to “notions of the waning or extinction of the hundred-year-old modern movement (or its ideological or aesthetic repudiation). Thus, abstract expressionism in painting, existentialism in philosophy, the final forms of representation in the novel, the films of the great *auteurs*, or the modernist school of poetry: all these are now seen as the final, extraordinary flowering of a high modernist impulse” that may be understood as having run its course and exhausted its appeal (Jameson 1985: 92). What is left in its wake is the blending of high culture with the mass or commercial culture that Jameson sees as typified by the culture of Readers' Digest, advertising, motels, “B” Hollywood films, and the airport paperback, whose categories range from ghost-written autobiographies to romance novels to works of science fiction. What Jameson hopes to argue in *Postmodernism* is that this blending is a result of culture no longer being conceived as part of the superstructure of capitalism, but is instead understood as a part of the production of capitalism itself.

The phenomenon of culture functioning as a mode of production is the consequence of both the market and monopoly phases of capitalism being surpassed by a third phase of capitalist development (a phase generally left unexplored, according to

Jameson, by Marxist theory prior to the work of Ernest Mandel).<sup>18</sup> This third phase, known also as “late” or “multinational” capitalism or neo-liberalism, is characterized by the growth of multinational corporations, a new international division of labor, the explosion of financial markets and communications media across national boundaries, the advent of currency markets, global gentrification, and the decline of traditional working-class movements.<sup>19</sup> Its key characteristic, however, is its relentless expansion and homogenization throughout the world via new and varied media. According to Jameson, multinational capital weaves a global network of markets and with it new economic and social formations that favor the laws of reproduction and process, rather than “the laws of classical capitalism, (particularly) the primacy of industrial production and the omnipresence of class struggle”(Jay and Flax 1992: 296-310). Jameson refers to what is left as a “purer” stage of capitalism. Where there were once sites immune to the logic of capitalism within its market and monopoly stages, sites generally left untouched by the effects of commodification, no space or institution within this third stage is spared from its commodifying effects.<sup>20</sup> Within this stage there is no separation of superstructure from substructure: everything is subject to the systematizing (commodifying) and unifying forces of multinational capital that are “so *omnipresent as to be invisible*.”<sup>21</sup> For Jameson, this economic transformation goes on to create a series of cultural and

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<sup>18</sup> See Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1975).

<sup>19</sup> Martin Jay and Jane Flax, review of *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, by Fredric Jameson, in *History and Theory* 32:2 (1992), pp. 296-310.

<sup>20</sup> See Jameson’s discussion of John Portman’s Bonaventura Hotel in *Postmodernism*, pp 80-4.

<sup>21</sup> My emphasis.

ideological crises. Subjectivity, culture, and class-consciousness become the “concomitants” of production, while the decentered, global, and dispersed qualities of multinational capital disrupt and undermine the possibilities of aesthetic representation and unitary subjectivity (Jay and Flax 1992: 305). The resulting situation is one in which political, social, and cultural activities, once potentially capable of resisting capitalism and its logic, no longer appear capable because they too are essentially captured by and woven into the multinational web of capital and recast as mere commodities to be reproduced for and consumed by the multinational market.

Aesthetic representation within its modern market-oriented context is the expression of incomplete modernization and monopoly capitalism, according to Jameson, where cultural and economic logics remain separate. As a result of this separation, culture and art are secured from the commodifying effects of capitalism and therefore resistant to what Jameson describes as the new “depthlessness” of postmodern culture, its “waning of affect,” and their deleterious effect upon political and social activities. This modern aesthetic representation, as Jameson describes it, may be viewed as *hermeneutical* in the sense that art in its inert, objective form, is taken as a clue or symptom for some vaster reality which replaces it as its ultimate truth. It is modern art’s ability to provide the viewer with a hermeneutical model or markers identifying the initial, object world that gives such works their depth, i.e., subjectivity, essence, authenticity, and significance. The viewer is included in the presentation of the art itself through the process of recognizing the context from which the content of the work is

derived. The viewer then accompanies the artist in recreating and transforming their landscape into a space unlimited by the present constraints on the objective world. The crux of Jameson's argument is that art within this context demands that the viewer take an active role in the artistic process. This notion of hermeneutics and individual action, however, is lost within the cultural context of postmodernity.

Where, for example, aesthetic representation within the modern context is the expression of incomplete modernization and monopoly capitalism, aesthetic representation within its postmodern context is the expression of modernity completed, where the imbrication of its cultural and economic logics is so tight that it is no longer possible to privilege one as base and the other as superstructure: postmodern culture functions as a mode of production (Jay and Flax 1992: 298). For Jameson, postmodern aesthetics lose their point of reference and therefore their hermeneutical gesture as a result of their "flatness" or "depthlessness" generated by the commodifying effects of late stage capitalism. This loss of real aesthetic representation under the conditions of postmodernity represents the core of Jameson's critique of late capitalism. According to Jameson, the cultural and societal structures that arise and are reified within late capitalism, unlike the first two stages, discourage sites of resistance from which meaningful, genuine political, social, and cultural activities might develop because such activities are captured by and woven into the multinational web of capital. What is of critical importance in this capture for Jameson is the loss of the hermeneutic or "utopian gesture" – the loss of the ability to act willfully against the commodifying effects of multinational capitalism. Where art and its aesthetic representation were able to speak to

the modern subject and imbue that subject with purpose and a sense of agency against the oppressive and domineering realm of the market, the commodification of the object world, the medium through which it is represented, and the diffusion of the unitary actor all under late capitalism has nearly rendered impossible effective critical political commentary or economic action.

### **Sheldon Wolin and Depthless Discourse**

The loss of critical perspective is a central concern of this dissertation, particularly with regard to political theory and political science. How we understand and assess this potential is the subject of Sheldon Wolin's 1969 *American Political Science Review* article "Political Theory as a Vocation," an article that resonates as clearly today as it did three decades ago. Wolin's synthesis of Kuhn's arguments regarding scientific revolutions, Weber's arguments concerning politics and science as vocation, and his call for a reassessment of the importance of political theory should echo throughout the discipline and refocus our attempts to understand the purpose of our work. Wolin provides a compelling argument for self-reflection on the part of political theorists and scientists alike and a perspective that rigorously interrogates the relationship of political theory to political science and political science to the larger community.

Central to Wolin's interrogation, and key to my arguments and understanding of political theory and science as well, is the notion that political science, construed as either knowledge or technique, is first and foremost a profoundly social enterprise, susceptible to a variety of social factors that are bound to have an impact upon its scope and mission.

Knowledge about politics is itself the product of political decisions that may not necessarily in themselves look “political.” Wolin’s article inherits a long tradition of exploring this point. Secondly, while Wolin was writing during a period of intense debate regarding the impact and the role of the “behavioral revolution” upon the social sciences, his second order perspective is still germane, reminding us that “it’s the methodology itself, stupid” that is important in present debates over the discipline’s scope and mission rather than merely a question of qualitative v. quantitative approaches. Finally, “Theory as a Vocation” is important here in that it provides us with a normative statement about political theory and science: it suggests that political theory must act to provide political science with a sense of perspective and direction while allowing it to carry out its scientific endeavor for the public, i.e., it represents the best hope for political science to engage its potential as an “utopian gesture.”

Wolin describes his interest in writing “Theory as a Vocation” as many-fold. He is interested, for example, in the nature of method within the context of the behavioral revolution and an examination of the idea itself in light of both analytical and historical considerations. Yet the underlying question and critical nature of his work lies in his interest in the intellectual, personal, vocational and political prices paid for focusing on the primacy of method. What is at risk, according to Wolin, here echoing early Marxian critiques, is our ability to situate ourselves intellectually to act in a meaningful political and ultimately human manner.

Wolin’s work is about change and the understanding of change as “revolutionary.” The behavioral revolution he is critiquing in his estimation is not

revolutionary in the Kuhnian sense in which one scientific paradigm overtakes another and a new dominant theory is installed. While the behavioral movement ushered in a new era of data collection, evaluation and analysis, the effects of which are still felt today, Wolin believes that describing this as a Kuhnian revolution is mistaken. In his example where he discusses the revolutionary status of “systems theory,” Wolin notes that there was on-going confusion over which of the several versions of the theory were preferred or even useful. To count as a revolution, a theory must be selected to the exclusion of other rival theories. The popularity of systems theory followed rather than generated the behavioral “revolution,” thus “[w]hatever else it may be, a revolution without an initiating theory cannot qualify as a revolution by Kuhn’s criterion” (Wolin 1969: 1063).

This is of course not to say that changes hadn’t taken place. For Wolin, the character and scope of American political science was indeed undergoing a fundamental change, particularly with regard to political theory and its role within the discipline. Much of this change was initiated by and continues to be the struggle over the nature of what “theory” is and what its contribution to the direction and identity of political science would be. Wolin notes that there is a veritable grab-bag of theories that exists from which the political scientist might choose, but to label these as political theories is a “categorical mistake.” Systems theories, communication theories, structural modeling, rational choice frameworks, formal modeling theory, are “unpolitical theories shaped by the desire to explain certain forms of non-political phenomena. They offer no significant choice or critical analysis of the quality, direction, or fate of public life ... they share the

same uncritical – *and therefore untheoretical* – assumptions of the prevailing political ideology which justifies the present ‘authoritative allocation of values’ in our society” (Wolin 1969: 1063).<sup>22</sup> Again, the change or revolution that Wolin felt was upon the discipline, and continues to affect us today, is the molding of political science into an endeavor that reflects a tradition of politics that eschews ideals and principle in favor of practicality and technique. Such an approach, one that focuses on the “how” of inquiry into “political” phenomena, is not neutral. And again, very much like Jameson’s argument regarding the descent of art into the means of production, so too is Wolin aware of the role political science and the academy has in promoting a given productive and distributive societal mode.<sup>23</sup>

The resulting political science, as part of this modern production process, appears depthless to Wolin as well. Part of this is due to political science’s scientific and methodological identity. This scientific identity and much of the Modern “project” is indebted to the work of Descartes in this area of knowledge. Central to a Cartesian approach are doubt and the avoidance of extremes. Radical doubt, according to Descartes, helps clear the mind of excess baggage that might cloud thinking and lead to

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<sup>22</sup> My emphasis.

<sup>23</sup> Ricci also reflects upon this with his notion of political scientists as “functionaries.”

the wrong conclusions. “Before the mind could proceed methodically, it must be turned upon itself, stripping off acquired habits and beliefs and values until compelled to face the primordial truth of the *cogito* whose *sum* now stood divested of its cultural heritage in an ahistorical silence” (Wolin 1969: 1067). Yet, Descartes allowed for “givens” that remained outside his radical approach, particularly questions of morality and practical action. Rather than engage in those kinds of questions which sought to address the notion of “right” action, Descartes allowed for a middle of the road approach that placed one’s conduct “in conformity with the most moderate opinions and those furthest removed from extremes” (Wolin, quoting Descartes, 1969: 1068). For Descartes, and thus American Political Science, the *status quo* comes to best represent those two qualities, for “such a political world snugly fits the methodists need, not only for the security it provides but also for the assured regularities it gives him to investigate” (Wolin 1969: 1068).

Moreover, what is rewarded by this view is not a critical treatment of politics and morals or a commitment to challenge these. “Accordingly, the political scientist tends to follow the Cartesian path extolling the existing as ‘the most moderate’ or ‘further removed from extremes,’ and then defending it as though it were ‘very certain and true’. This has taken the by now familiar form of identifying the American political system with ‘normal politics’ and then seeking to establish by empirical methods the factors which produce it” (Wolin 1969: 1069).

Adding to the staid nature of political inquiry, according to Wolin, is the diffidence and hostility found rooted in American intellectual history and political society towards history and theory itself. As noted, Descartes sought to purge the individual

reliance upon past assumptions held over from childhood or common experience. The methodist does this, according to Wolin, by radically decontextualizing his approach of class, status, occupations, family, religious upbringing, or political attachments. “In so doing,” writes Wolin, “he is performing a true ritual, the reenactment of the archetypal American experience of breaking with the past,” perhaps fulfilling DeTocqueville’s observation in *Democracy in America* that Americans are the first to apply Cartesian principles and the last to have any interest in actually studying them. Just as American intellectual impulses seek a break with the past, they seek a break from the tradition of theory as well, which is not only made up usually of historic Ancient and European theories, something keenly suspect in the practical American mind, but also something that exhibits an unwillingness to fit easily into the scientific scope. “The scientific form represents the search for rigorous formulations which are logically consistent and empirically testable. As a form it has the qualities of compactness, manipulability, and relative independence from context” (Wolin 1969: 1070). Neither political theory nor politics fit neatly in such a form. For Wolin, political theory understood as a composite of other traditions contrasts starkly with science in that its activity is not so much a style of the search as a reflection. “It is mindful of logic, but more so of the incoherence and contradictoriness of experience ... [p]olitical life does not yield its significance to terse hypotheses, but is elusive and hence meaningful statements about it often have to be allusive and intimative. Context becomes supremely important” (Wolin 1969: 1070).

For Wolin, political theory provides context and thus depth and reference for the discipline and perhaps it is just this feature that places it most at odds with political

science. What is most disconcerting about this history and context to the methodist, notes Wolin, “is that it displays the working out of an inherited form” of knowledge (Wolin 1969: 1070). The general approach to science is that great achievements of the past lay the foundation for the present stage of knowledge and understanding, glossing over the discontinuities, dead-ends, and contentious debates. “Here lies the vocation of these who preserve our understanding of past theories, who sharpen our sense of the subtle, complex interplay between political experience and thought, and who preserve our memory of the agonizing efforts of intellect to restate the possibilities and threat posed by political dilemmas of the past” (Wolin 1969: 1077). This in turn calls for serious consideration on the part of the theorist, whose vocation makes tremendous demands upon her “time, attention, energy, and skills” and who is asked to engage in feelings and thinking that resist easy categorization and formulas, for they are asked to judge what is appropriate politically. As Wolin notes,

[a]ppropriateness of judgment cannot be encapsulated into a formula. This is because it depends upon varied forms of knowledge for which there is not natural limit. This dependence is rooted in the basic quest of political and social theory for theoretical knowledge about ‘wholes’ made up of interrelated and interpenetrating provinces of human activity. Whether the primary theoretical task be one of explanation or critical appraisal, the theorist will want to locate ‘division’ in the human world and embody them in theoretical form ... Perforce, a political theory is, among many other things, a sum of judgments, shaped by the theorist’s notion of what matters, and embodying a series of discriminations about where one province begins and another leaves off (Wolin 1969: 1076).

If what is important to theory is the ordering and organizing reality into smaller manageable categories and domains, questioning what is appropriate becomes critical for Wolin. “Given the theorist’s preoccupation with wholes,” he writes

the interconnectedness of human provinces, the values and expectations with which men have invested each of their provinces, and the ultimate bewildering fact that man is single but his provinces are multiple, a theoretical judgment which, by definition, must discriminate can only be restrained from rendering inappropriate determinations if it is civilized by a meditative culture. To be civilized is not only the quality of being sensitive to the claims and characters of many provinces, but, according to an older definition, rendering what is proper to a civil community (Wolin 1969: 1077).

The theorist is able to engage a contextual position and a critical reading of “historical” texts, introduce new students or reintroduce older adherents to the complexity of political questions, address the need for discriminating judgment, open new avenues of theoretical inquiry, and cultivate that “sense of ‘significance’ which, as Weber understood so well, is vital to scientific inquiry but cannot be furnished by scientific methods” (Wolin 1969: 1077).

### **Epic Theory and Market Methodism**

Political theory, Wolin believes, is political science’s best chance of resisting the flattening effects of modern method and modern knowledge production. Traditionally, political theory reminds us that those “key” works from the past do not provide us merely with confirmation of present attitudes or views on politics, but rather they provide strange and provocative approaches; approaches that seek to confound the status quo rather than to merely confirm it. His view of theory is that it represents an appreciation of the historical dimensions and agonies of politics. Or, it is an understanding that political scientists are at their best when rigorously questioning and testing accepted political truths, exploring the ignored, and exploring the ways citizens specify political problems

that underlie public policy and political values and goals. It is an exploration and a defense of “ought,” “should,” and “other.” “The cultivation of political understanding means that one becomes sensitized to the enormous complexities and drama of saying that the political order is the most comprehensive association and ultimately responsible as no other grouping is for sustaining the physical material, cultural, and moral life of its members” (Wolin 1969: 1077). This appears not to be the interest of political science or theory, at least as it is conveyed in its journals and disciplinary discussions.

How best to achieve this political understanding or how to maintain this interest on the part of political science is the central subject of Wolin’s discussion on “epic” political theorists. Wolin and Jameson are both concerned about the interweaving of formerly or potentially resistant traditions into capital production and its ideological system maintenance. Dominant ideology renders the present as acceptable, given, and ahistorical – it is what it is and we should accept it. In this it attempts to dull interrogations into it and render those interrogations “flat” or depthless. This is all the more apparent in Wolin’s discussion of the vocation of the political theorist. As he observes, the characteristic of scientific textbooks is that great achievements in the past prepare the way for present understandings, as if the present understanding was preordained. Failed theories, that were at the time rivals to the eventual “winning” theory, are left unexplored and unremembered, leaving in their wake the dominant idea of science as a rational methodological progression. “How easy it is to impoverish the past by making it appear like the present is suggested by the way in which social scientists have lapsed into the same idiom as ... scientific textbooks ... What seems to have been

forgotten is that one reads past theories not because they are familiar and therefore confirmative, but because they are strange and therefore provocative” (Wolin 1969: 1077). An historical or theoretical study of political theories is itself an appreciation of the historical dimension of politics: political understanding teaches us that the political order is articulated through its history (Wolin 1969: 1077). However, the present state of political inquiry eschews such an approach. Present political science appears to deny its historical context, favoring modes of understanding that “are inherently incapable of building upon historical knowledge” and thus leaves its disciple “to chalk around himself a vicious circle: his methods of study presuppose a *depth of political science which his methods of education destroy*” (Wolin 1969: 1078).<sup>24</sup>

“Epic” political theory, as Wolin describes it, has two fundamental elements that separate it from the methodologism of recent political science. The first of these is its scope. Epic political theory is epic because of the magnitude of its theorizing and its distinguishing purpose and style. In Kuhnian terms, paradigm shifting, or “extraordinary” science, is made up not only of new concepts but new cognitive and normative standards that replace those of the previous paradigm. This is of course not the standard by which I will measure recent political theory, and neither is it the mark that Wolin wishes to set. Rather, what Wolin seeks to take away from the Kuhnian perspective is the magnitude represented by extraordinary science. “By an act of thought, the theorist seeks to reassemble the whole political world. He aims to grasp present structures and interrelationships, and to re-present them in a new way” (Wolin 1969:

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<sup>24</sup> My emphasis.

1078). Such an approach or calling puts forth a new way of looking at the world, its structures, relationships, its normative standards, and human purpose.

In addition, epic political theory is understood as well in light of its “structure of intentions.” For Wolin this discussion of intentions aims at highlighting the controlling purposes of the theorist, “the considerations which determine how the formal features of concept, fact, logic, and interconnection are to be employed so as to heighten the effect of the whole” (Wolin 1969: 1078). The word ‘purposes’ here is employed to convey a recognition that past theorists are found in a variety of contexts and exhibit a variety of approaches to political questions and behaviors. However, Wolin maintains that all of the past political theorists of epic status exhibit a particular feature in their work: all of the major theories in the past were anchored by a “*public concern*,” “a quality which was not incidental to the activity, but fundamental to the very notion of being engaged in *political* theory ... Concern for *res publicae* and *res gestae* are as irreducible and natural to the vocation of theory as a concern for health is to the physician” (Wolin 1969: 1079). This contrasts sharply with the fundamental question proffered by political science today: am I asking the question in the right manner, i.e., one that will not upset the agreed upon methodology of the discipline or its sub-disciplines? Correct procedure and tenure concerns, like publishing, come to dominate the basis of present inquiries and help to form the reproductive strategies of the discipline as seen in Chapter 2.

Correct procedures in this case assume that the interesting questions or problems with political science lie in the manner in which we ask the question. The concept of an anomaly in Kuhn’s revolutionary science reflects a problem with the theory itself: when

nature does not conform to the scientist's expectations, the scientist looks to her theory or technique, not to nature. "The same assumption is echoed," notes Wolin in this case, "by a contemporary behaviorist when he writes, 'If there is a crisis, then, it is a crisis in the theory of representation and not in the institution of representation'" (Wolin, quoting Hans Eulau, 1969: 1079). The assumptions of political theory and the epic theorist in the past have been of a different kind, according to Wolin: the primary questions for the theorist have to do with the problematic state of the political world, not the problematic state of theories about the political world. Or, stated another way, the problem is not in how we collect facts, but rather what kind of political world produces the facts that it does. In this, Wolin cites both Plato and Marx as exemplars of the "epic" theorist. Plato's condemnation of Athenian democracy is not that it produced poor policy, but rather that these policies were bound to occur because the entire polity was organized along faulty lines. Marx's arguments against capitalism are vast in scope, not limited to arguing about the contingency of worker abuse, but aimed "instead at exposing the logic of capitalism which made injustice, alienation, and exploitation inevitabilities rather than [mere] contingencies" (Wolin 1969: 1080).

Like Jameson's ideal modern art, Wolin conceives of epic political theory as providing a gesture or space outside of or less-impacted-by the production of social, economic, and political arrangements that in turn allows for reflection and critique. Yet, he believed such political theorizing was increasingly under attack. The political and social world as Wolin viewed it in the late 1960s was one dominated by large structures "whose premeditated designs represented many of the presuppositions and principles of

methodism. They are deliberately fabricated, their processes are composed of defined 'steps,' and their work is accomplished by a division of specialized labor whose aggregate effect seems marvelously disproportionate to the modest talents which are combined" (Wolin 1969: 1081). Such a world matches well and is served best by a method dominated means of inquiry and in turn produces these mechanical understandings of itself.

### **The Data/Results/Impressions**

What has transpired in the years following Wolin's piece? Has political theory been able to stem the tide of methodism that rose with the behavioral revolution? Has political theory since provided Wolin's "depth" or a Jamesonian "utopian gesture?" The rest of this chapter addresses these questions, explores the nature of political theory by utilizing Wolin's "epic" political theory and applying its standard to works of political theory and science published after 1969, and tries to situate this work in light of its "market" and methodological implications. My approach to exploring Wolin's characterization of political theory and science in the years following "Vocation" is simple and straightforward. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have "operationalized" Wolin's parameters for "epic" theory by asking the following questions of any given work of political theory in the discipline: does the work in question approach Wolin's interest in scope, does it conceive of an alternate world, structures, political relationships, normative standards, and/or human purpose or merely reaffirm the present configuration; also, does the work privilege the public in its investigation or is the

work concerned primarily with the manner in which the question regarding politics is asked?

The search was limited to political science journals and their articles for essentially the following reasons: 1) it is the peer-reviewed journal that has become the vessel into which political science's collective efforts and identity have been poured; 2) the fact that this is a question for political science as a whole and the nature of the more prominent journals available to the political scientist is, at least in name, intradisciplinary, while books are not necessarily so. This is, of course, not to say that books are not important and there are clearly works in book form that may be said to meet Wolin's criteria, but books do not represent the majority of what political scientists contribute to or read.<sup>25</sup> Books do not sustain the discipline within the confines of the modern university system. Finally, journals appear to political science and other social sciences generally as more scientific. Using Robert Merton's account of the professional organization of science as a mechanism for the production of novel, objective, and cumulative knowledge, sociologists of the social sciences argue that such "modern scientific" disciplines as will be comprised of four sets of institutional imperatives: universalism, communism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism (Clemens et al. 1995: 437). "Viewed from this perspective, the system of scientific publication is an instrument for enforcing these imperatives ... the refereed journal is a dynamo at the core of scientific endeavor, eliciting new research, ensuring impartial evaluation, and

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<sup>25</sup> See William C. Baum, "American Political Science Before the Mirror: What our Journals Reveal about the Profession," in *The Journal of Politics* 38:4 (1976) pp 895-917.

disseminating new knowledge” (Clemens et al. 1995: 437-8). The more refereed journals and articles generated by a discipline, the more scientific a discipline becomes, at least in the minds of its own practitioners.

Political scientists themselves provided the journal selection reviewed in this chapter. Utilizing James Garand and Micheal Giles’ 2003 *Political Science and Politics* article “Journals in the Discipline,” I searched those journals that political scientists report as most respected by the discipline, that they read the most, to which they submit their “highest quality work,” and of which they are most familiar. The five journals that consistently topped these lists were the following: *American Political Science Review (APSR)*, *American Journal of Political Science (AJPS)*, *Journal of Politics (JOP)*, *World Politics (WP)* and *Political Theory (PT)*. An interesting note regarding Garand and Giles’ survey is that while *APSR* scored highest in the combined rankings of journal impact, evaluation, and familiarity, it scored the lowest in the overall ranking by political scientists of the five political science journals examined here and 17<sup>th</sup> out of the top 30 social science journals. Another interesting note, in terms of the overall rankings, political scientists scored three journals from outside the discipline as the best journals with *World Politics* as the highest placed political science journal, scoring fourth overall, again out of 30 social science journals. Of course the selection of these five journals nowhere near exhausts the venues in which political scientists and theorists are able to hawk their wares. However, these are the journals that are read across the discipline and are recognized as representing the field as a whole. It is from these five that I determined

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Books that meet the Wolinian criteria set forth here include Crenson and Goldberg, Gorz,

I was most likely to find work representative of the last thirty years or so of political theory.

All five journals have their past articles stored electronically and are readily available for searches of the type outlined by this chapter. The only limit imposed upon this type of search was the fact that these journals have a “moving wall” for their electronic files that keeps them from being completely up-to-date. Most journals have a three-year wall, meaning that I was able to run most of my searches only up through December of 2001, although *APSR* and *JOP* were available only through December 1999. However, I considered using this electronic database search format acceptable for the following reasons: there are not that many political theory pieces published in the first place as suggested by my survey of the literature between 1970 and 2000, which in turn suggests that there should not be a great deal more published between 2001 and 2003; and, the idea that I am looking for general trends and not necessarily a specific instance of an “epic” piece being published. So, while I risk missing an epic piece published after December 2000, its absence from my survey does not undermine my arguments about general trends. The work presented here provides an excellent “snapshot” of the tenor and scope of political theory for the past quarter century up to the present.

The method I used to compose this snapshot, again, was quite simple and straightforward. Utilizing the JSTOR database provided by the University of Arizona library, I searched each journal from the “JSTOR Basic Search” page, under the default keyword search line for “political theory.” The search was limited to those journal

articles published after January 1970 (Wolin's article was published in the December 1969 edition of *APSR*). This search produced the following number of citations per journal searched: *APSR*, 387; *AJPS*, 1,443; *JOP*, 247; *WP*, 56; and *PT*, 798. These citations were then accessed through JSTOR for their abstracts and their text and broken down into the following groups: "metatheory" articles, "3<sup>rd</sup> order" articles, non-theory, and "epic" theory articles. Metatheory articles are those that do not discuss politics directly, but are instead interested in discussing the nature of political studies, how political science is practiced, and/or the nature of political studies in light of philosophy of science. As Gunnell characterizes it, these activities are essentially 4<sup>th</sup> order activities, i.e., a discussion of a discussion of a discussion of an idea/event/fact/etc... 3<sup>rd</sup> order articles are those that generally discuss the work of past authors or theorists and their interpretation of politics, i.e., a discussion of a discussion of an idea/event/fact/etc... They too, like metatheoretical articles, are not responding directly to political activities, but are rather thoughts concerning thoughts on politics. Non-theory articles appeared to be those that had in their title or abstract the word political or theory or book reviews containing the same. These articles were grouped here in that they had nothing to say directly about political theory or were the type of article that would be recognized by members of the discipline as an example of something other than political theory. And finally there were the articles that might be considered "epic" by the criteria explained above.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See introductory remarks to "The Data/Results/Impressions" section of Chapter 3.

There is a clear distinction that may be seen between those articles that meet with or approach Wolin's standard of scope and publicness to be considered epic and those that appear metatheoretical or are of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of discourse. Much of Gunnell's work for example that appears in the *APSR* is metatheoretical, with titles such as "American Political Science, Liberalism, and the Invention of Political Theory" or "Interpretation and the History of Political Thought." These have not the public in mind, nor the expansion of our understanding of *the political per se*, rather they seek to hone the blade of inquiry – they are very narrow in scope indeed, limiting themselves to the realm of epistemology and philosophy of science. Those of the 3<sup>rd</sup> order are clearly interested in understanding generally what a member of the "canon" had to say about politics and then a discussion on the author's part as to why their "take" on this author is the "correct" approach. These articles make up the bulk of political theory as it has been practiced in the past 30 or so years. The titles that follow are typical of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of discourse, particularly in that it is not the author that discusses politics, but the figure in which the author is interested: "Serving God and Mammon: the Lockean Sympathy in Early American Political Thought;" "Hobbes and His Audience;" "The Sovereignless State and Locke's Language of Obligation;" and "A New Guarantee on Earth: Hannah Arendt on Human Dignity and the Politics of Human Rights." Examples of articles that begin to approach Wolin's standards address either the problematic state of the political world such as Melissa Orlie's 1994 *APSR* piece "Thoughtless Assertion and Political Deliberations" and not the problematic state of theories about the political world or John

Dryzek's 1993 *APSR* article "Reconstructive Democratic Theory" that actively seek the active participation of the public in its public role.

Wolin hoped political theory would hold back the tide of methodism that he believed had eroded the character and promise of political science. Did political theory respond to his plea? The numbers suggest not. Of the 387 citations collected from *APSR* from 1970 to 1999, 34 were metatheoretical, 136 were 3<sup>rd</sup> order, 196 were non-theoretical, and 21 were epic. On average, *APSR* has between 10 and 11 articles per edition. This translates into well less than 2% of the articles published in the flagship journal of the discipline as epic, according to Wolin's definition. Of the 1,443 citations generated in this search of *AJPS*, 56 were found to be concerned with political theory. Of these, 11 were metatheoretical, 37 were 3<sup>rd</sup> order, and 8 were epic. Over the span of twenty-eight years, this equals about one half of one percent of the articles of *AJPS* as epic. *JOP* in the past thirty years managed to have just under 1% of its articles concerned with Wolin's epic scope, tallying 12 epic articles, 12 metatheoretical, 93 3<sup>rd</sup> order. *WP* produced 56 citations from the search. Of those 6 were metatheoretical, 4 were 3<sup>rd</sup> order, 4 epic, and the rest non-theory. This translates into less than 1% of *WP* articles falling within Wolin's definition of epic theory over the past thirty years. Finally, *Political Theory*, the most recognized political theory journal for both political theorists and political scientists as a whole, produced 40 metatheoretical articles, 271 3<sup>rd</sup> order articles, and 14 epic articles. This means from 1973, the first year of publication through to 2000,

roughly 2% of the approximately 700 articles published by political theorists, for political theorists, were of the epic sort.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 3.1 – Political Science Journals and Political Theory Types**

<b>Journal</b>	<b>No. of Citations</b>	<b>Meta-theory</b>	<b>3rd Order</b>	<b>Non-Theory</b>	<b>Epic</b>
<i>APSR</i>	387 [1970-99]	34	136	196	21
<i>AJPS</i>	1443 [1973-2001]	11	37	1387	8
<i>JOP</i>	247 [1970-99]	12	93	130	12
<i>WP</i>	56 [1970-2001]	6	4	46	4
<i>PT</i>	798[1973-2000]	40	271	473	14

There is more to these numbers that would seem to undercut Wolin's hopes as well. Of the approximately sixty epic articles gathered by this search, there were only four authors with more than one epic article and of these only one who produced more than two. Only three of the four authors were able to publish their epic works in the same journal (*APSR*) and no more than two epic pieces from these authors were produced there. It is of course reasonable to assume a variety of reasons for this: many authors published in these journals only publish once or move on to other topics perhaps; other journals in political theory might publish their work; or the author simply stopped

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<sup>27</sup> A cursory overview of the *APSR* and the other journals listed here suggests a more "epic" nature to the articles published prior to the 1950s. This would raise expectations that there would be, per *APSR* quarterly for example, at least one article that met at least one of Wolin's elements of "epicness."

publishing. However, a survey of what has been published, in light of Wolin's characterization of the methodological wave that had rocked the social sciences and continues to reverberate through its disciplines, suggests that there are other forces at work here.

The principle force at work in political science I argue is the continued dominance of method brought on by the "behavioral" revolution. It is not, as some have continued to characterize disciplinary infighting, a debate over quantitative or qualitative methods, but the apotheosis of method itself. The dominant discourse in political science is that of the 3<sup>rd</sup> order and this mode of discourse has inundated the shores of political theory. Political theory cannot provide a bulwark against this methodism because it has itself succumbed to its methodological and market allure. Put another way: doing epic political theory simply does not pay. Methodized political theory does. A simple review of the numbers generated by this search bears this out: of the 703 political theory articles categorized above as political theory, an overwhelming 541 of these are 3<sup>rd</sup> order articles or what I like to describe as "market" articles. While these articles attempt to shed light on various thinkers, Locke, Mill, Arendt, Plato or various ideologies or political norms, they lack any reference point other than political theory itself. Locke wrote about politics. Political theorists then write about how they interpret Locke or how Locke's work might illuminate another author considering the legitimacy of certain political norms or institutions. However, the work's reference is at least two steps removed from politics. Such article's most powerful or tangible reference appears to be to the political theory "market": these exist for exchange within the sub-discipline of political theory to assure

its reproduction within the discipline of political science. This is not to say that such articles do not individually have important insights regarding political thought, norms, and ideas, but the nature of this insight is limited to the discipline of political science at most. What is discussed, whether in terms of quantitative means or qualitative ones, is how to discuss what is being discussed. Such political theorizing and “scientizing” serves very nearly only political theorists; it is detached in its own purpose from the larger social context.

This detachment is a central characteristic of social science. As Gunnell points out in his *Orders of Discourse*, political science is not actively political in and of itself. It is at best a second order activity. There is first the activity of politics. Political activities occur whether or not political science exists. Moreover, as Gunnell argues, these activities are social and bound to their historical, political, economic, social, cultural context, so that the political scientist investigating these occurrences is affected by the ebb and flow of her context as well. Political theory at the level of 3<sup>rd</sup> order discourse, or “market” discourse, spends its time discussing those who have discussed politics at the 2<sup>nd</sup> order of discourse, i.e., it spends its time discussing what others have discussed (usually other political scientists or thinkers). In this then, the social science of politics does not parallel the activities of the natural sciences which investigate 1<sup>st</sup> order phenomena. That a volcano erupts is not open to dispute among geologists – it is not a construct of the geologist. Much of what political science discusses is a product of political science, not politics, therefore it is at most a 2<sup>nd</sup> order activity. While the development of scientific theories in the natural sciences is not paralleled symmetrically

by the possibility of unified theories in the social sciences, the social sciences still want the imprimatur that scientific methodology bears. The means of achieving this for the social sciences appears not in scientific rigor of a unified scientific theory, but rather in multiplication and disciplinary reproduction.

Natural sciences utilize the scientific method as an external referent to their understanding 1<sup>st</sup> order phenomena. The natural sciences are able to use Merton's organization of science as a mechanism for the production of novel, objective, and cumulative knowledge for the phenomena examined are not dependent upon social interpretation to exist. The scientific method provides an external referent for the scientific community. Most political science, especially that of 3<sup>rd</sup> order discourse, has no such referent to ensure a scientific identity. In discussing a discussion about a theoretically constructed event, political science is left without a unifying epistemological mooring. It certainly is without unifying scientific moorings. Rather than fully and rigorously engaging this problem, however, political science has managed to get around this "reference problem" through sheer numbers. For natural science, journals are considered part of the modern scientific method; a way of ensuring universalism, communalism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism. For political theory and science, it is a means of ensuring the vast reproduction of 3<sup>rd</sup> order discourse. Simply in terms of the ink spilt, the articles written, the number of journals launched, political science must be taken seriously by the modern university system. What political science lacks in unifying, scientific theory, it makes up for in the number of journal articles. What it lacks in terms of an external referent, it replaces with the importance of its own

reproduction – it is self-referent and reifying. As such, it becomes depthless in both the Wolinian and Jamesonian senses.

The change or revolution that Wolin felt was upon the discipline and which continues to “flatten” political science today is the structuring of the discipline into a practice that eschews ideals, principles, external referents, in favor of practicality and technique. Like all technique-oriented activity, this methodism presupposes that the fundamental purposes and arrangements served by its techniques have been settled and that, accordingly, it reinforces those purposes and arrangements and operates according to a notion of alternatives tightly restricted by these same purposes and arrangements. The methodological technique gains legitimacy through sheer repetition and takes on a givenness that soon fades into the background but shapes a majority of what social scientists do. For Wolin, the change this “methodism” represents is therefore not neutral and bundles within itself, in a generally uncritical way, a number of assumptions about the “givenness” and “correctness” of existing political practices, behaviors, structures, and institutions. But it is also the case that this methodism does the same for the manner in which political inquiry is organized. It assumes that what is important for understanding politics is the discussion of how others have understood politics and this “technique” and its proliferation are what matter to the members of the discipline. “The emphasis upon methods does not signify simply the acquisition of a “kit” of new “tools” but presupposes a viewpoint which has profound implications for ... the vocation, [the discipline], and the education of political scientists and the resources which nourish the theoretical imagination” (Wolin 1969: 1063).

Theoretical imagination is best nourished, according to Wolin, by thinking that is expansive in its scope, i.e., does it conceive of an alternate world, structures, political relationships, normative standards, or human purpose; and seeks external referent, in this case the public, i.e., does the work advance the cause of or defend an interest in the *res publicae*? Such questions however are impractical and eschew a focus on technique. Discussions of technique are in turn efficient for journals in that they are assumed to have a scientific identity and are generally easy to produce and reproduce. The easier the production, the more production may take place, thus easing the burden to refer to an outside source of validity and make up for it in sheer volume, or in the case of journals, volumes. Moreover, journals are not intended to sustain such inquisitiveness; simply look at their design: for those journals reviewed here, there were a minimum of four editions for any given year; they have multiple articles; the average length of these articles is 22 pages. What “scope” can be engaged by such a short piece? Even Wolin’s seminal article is only able to propose the search for scope and external referents; it could not, given the forum, actually engage in such a search itself. By their very nature journals reproduce the depthless scholarship that in turn sustains journal production.

The production of journals themselves is tied to the rise of methodism. Of the top 30 journals listed subjectively by political scientists, only three (*American Economic Review* [1911, ranked 1<sup>st</sup>]; *American Sociological Review* [1885, ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>]; *American Political Science Review* [1903, ranked 17<sup>th</sup>]) existed prior to the rise of methodism and the birth of the behavioral approach in the late 1930s. Sixteen of the journals ranked among the top thirty by political scientists came into being following the behavioral

revolution and have thus come of age during the triumph of method and technique. The legacy of the dominance of method and technique that was borne upon the wave of behavioralism in the modern university system is the peer-reviewed journal. The journal in turn sustains and is sustained by this methodism.

The scope that Wolin hopes to have imbued in political theory is ultimately undone by the format in which it is produced and discussed. The “epic” articles gleaned from the five journals searched for this chapter were chosen not because they met both of Wolin’s criteria of scope and “public” intent, but that they fulfilled one or the other. Moreover, the majority of these were chosen not because of their scope, but rather they sought to move beyond discussions limited to 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> order discourse. And even here, an effort on the part of political theorist to “externalize” their interest is not very popular. Again, of the 700 or so articles reviewed here, only 8%, or about 60 articles looked past the horizon of political theory’s discussion of political theory or theorists. The peer-reviewed format is neither expansive, nor inclusive of extra-disciplinary concerns.

Wolin’s notion of epic theory as engaging and highlighting a “structure of intentions” demands that political theory reference itself to something other than the discipline it critiques. Much like Jameson’s critique of postmodern architecture that highlights the auto-referential nature of its buildings and fails to provide a space that might interrogate the social forces that give rise to such architecture, modern political theory assumes the rightness and givenness of the form in which it reproduces itself. Most political theory and science cannot see past the discipline because the space in which it reproduces itself is dominated by disciplinary reproduction. The 3<sup>rd</sup> order of

discourse is taken as “the” level of discourse in which political theory ought to operate. In his work, Jameson critiques John Portman’s Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles as an example of the collapsing of art and architecture into the means of capital production itself. Upon entering the lobby of the Bonaventure, you are directed by the architecture either to your room or to a new shopping experience. Space is utterly controlled by the architect, very little space may be used by the hotel guest to do anything other than consume. So too is it the case with the peer-reviewed journal. We are moved to accept its technique and purpose. We are moved to accept its assumptions and its scope. Much of the space in *PT* is reserved for pre-arranged discussions of authors and ideas. For example, authors may contribute to such pre-ordained subjects as “Arendt, Politics, and Self,” “Consent and Slavery in Locke,” the “Hobbesian Legacy,” “Hobbes and Religion, Rational Choice and Critique,” “Political Thought and Political Actions: A Symposium on Quentin Skinner,” and “Justice and Difference,” a nod to the cottage industry sparked by John Rawls. The political theorist is channeled into these groupings and is assumed to accept the givenness of these groupings and their inherent importance. They are important in the end because the journals and their peer editors believe them to be important.

The peer-reviewed format allows for the discipline to be on guard against those things that might undermine its own perception of its importance and validity. The 3<sup>rd</sup> order of discourse that comes to dominate political science and theory helps to reinforce this. It is just such insularity that Wolin’s epic theory attempts to rail against. In arguing for a public scope of intentions, Wolin attempts to make political science and theory

accountable to external needs, wants, desires, and value structures. 4<sup>th</sup> order discourse is responsive to the external demands placed upon it by philosophy of science. The 1<sup>st</sup> order discourse of the natural sciences relies upon the scientific method. The 3<sup>rd</sup> order discourse relies upon itself and its ability to overwhelm with the sheer numbers included in its discourse. Into this dark, self-reifying world, Wolin argues for outside consideration: consideration of the public's needs and desires. For Wolin this discussion of intentions aims at highlighting what ought to be the controlling purposes of the theorist. Past theorists, those that have come to dominate the topics of discussion at the 3<sup>rd</sup> order, of epic status exhibit a particular feature in their work: all of the major theories in the past were anchored by a "*public concern*," "a quality which was not incidental to the activity, but fundamental to the very notion of being engaged in *political* theory ... Concern for *res publicae* and *res gestae* are as irreducible and natural to the vocation of theory as a concern for health is to the physician" (Wolin 1969: 1079). In this I am not arguing that there is or ever has been a clearly defined, readily identifiable public. But political science and theory used to behave as though there either was such a public or to operate in light of such a public as existing. Yet, such concern is gone, replaced by the demands of the modern university system and the needs of disciplinary reproduction.

## **Conclusion**

Much of the modern identity of political science comes about by its being embedded in the modern university system and the modern university system as part of and embedded in late modern, post-industrial capitalism, an element under-represented in

Gunnell's work. As I have argued, the modern university system is part of the production of knowledge needed to provide "covering" ideology for the production of late modern capitalism. This relationship's profound effect upon knowledge and culture is the subject of my work here with Fredric Jameson. Jameson's critique of the depthlessness works almost seamlessly with Wolin's critique of methodism and modern political theory. For both, prior sites of resistance to the dominance of a capital worldview are generally rendered ineffectual in critiquing it. As Jameson sees art and architecture transformed by capital production, Wolin warns political science of its effect upon political knowledge. Both fear the depthlessness of modern culture and knowledge under late-modern capitalism, for it lacks scope and an external interest.

The lack of scope and external reference is the central argument of Wolin's "Political Theory" and this chapter. Wolin suggests that political theory once provided the "utopian" gesture that Jameson argues art and architecture once did against the ever-growing dominance of technique, method, and marketization of late-modern capitalism. Political theory demanded that political science be responsive to something other than practicality and technique; practicality and technique that served the reproduction of political science and theory but left them unconnected to life outside of the university. Wolin's work demanded that for political theory to fulfill its vocation, it must have political science address levels of discourse that worked beyond the favored discourse of political science. Political science has to look beyond its own production.

The next chapter explores recent calls in the discipline to examine political science's methods. As the data in this chapter suggest, not much has been done in the

actual work of political theory to stem the tide of methodism. Wolin's faith in political theory as such looks misplaced. Should political scientists and theorists of Wolin's type place their faith in the recent Perestroika/Glasnost movement that claims to argue for methodological pluralism? Or is this movement trapped by its own import as the political science it seeks to critique. Can the movement look beyond the self-imposed importance of method and reach out to an external reference so coveted by Wolin. These questions motivate Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 4: MARKET METHODISM AND WHO GETS WHAT, WHEN, AND HOW

This chapter builds upon the previous chapter's exploration of the nature of the discipline as defined by its peer-reviewed journals. As suggested in Chapter 3, methodism has come to dominate that which we do as a discipline of political scientists, as is evident in these journals. This chapter explores this method as part of the "establishment" of political science and recent attempts on the part of members of the discipline to "reform" our practices in light of this establishment. The first section outlines what political scientists recognize as the most prominent challenge for disciplinary reform, the *Perestroika* movement. The second section highlights recent work on the nature of the discipline's establishment, while the third outlines various methods of understanding disciplinary rules and behavior. The final section assesses the *Perestroika* movement in light of its intent to reform political science and its interest in changing political science's rules concerning disciplinary rewards. Considering the previous chapter and Wolin's call for epic political theory and this chapter's discussion of disciplinary rules and strategies of reproduction, *Perestroika*, as a serious challenge to the methodism and thus establishment of political science, appears woefully inadequate. Rather than an attempt to recast political science in light of a perceived need to address substantive political issues through an ecumenical methodological approach, *Perestroika* appears merely interested in rewriting the rules of the discipline so that its own methods will be considered "appropriate" and thus allow it a share of the discipline's rewards.

### ***Perestroika and the Reign of Methodism***

There has been much made of late within and without the discipline of American political science with regard to the “*Perestroika/Glasnost*” movement, revolution, disturbance, etc...<sup>28</sup> The following is not meant as an exhaustive cataloging of “*Perestroikans*,” their activities, or the various positions held by those claiming to be part of the movement, but rather to highlight what appear to be the central demands their coalition makes upon the American Political Science Association, its journal, the *American Political Science Review*, and the scope of their “insurgency.” Greg Kasza (Indiana University) has written much in the name of the movement and with his September 2001 piece in *PS: Political Science and Politics*’ forum he outlines the movement’s interest in an “ecumenical science.” Such a science, as Kasza describes it, is based upon three principles: “problem-driven research, methodological pluralism, and interdisciplinary inquiry ... [An] ecumenical science will unite scholars of diverse methods and approaches around the study of substantive political problems ... both normative and practical [ones] ... Methodological pluralism is our objective in all matters of hiring, curriculum, and publication” (Kasza 2001: 599). To ensure the practice of these principles, Kasza cites the need for reforming graduate education and reaching out and forming new relationships with other “fields of scholarship.” This he believes is best achieved through the following program: 1) the restoration of “political philosophy to a central place in political studies so that the ends of political life once again become our

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<sup>28</sup> For external comments, see Emily Eakin, “Political Scientists Are in a Revolution,” in *The New York Times*, November 4, 2000. D. W. Miller, “Storming the Palace in Political Science,” in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 21 (September 21, 2001).

common focus”; 2) expanding methodological training “beyond the realms of deductive theory and quantitative research to encompass qualitative research methods”; 3) engaging innovative strategies to reorganize research around the study of substantive problems; 4) stopping the decline of policy studies; 5) revamping professional associations and journals “to emphasize political substance and catholicism with respect to methods and approaches;” 6) renewing “our commitment to study politics of different parts of the world;” and 7) promotion of interdisciplinary research by “educating the next generation of scholars to do it” (Kasza 2001: 599).

Kasza’s letters and responses in the *PS* forum, the original “Mr. *Perestroika*” e-mail, the “*perestroika\_glasnost\_warmhome*” listserv, and discussions in other venues have roused issues that have been sleepily astir deep in the recesses of the collective consciousness of American political science for quite some time. David Easton’s 1969 *APSR* article, an article that followed just after Wolin’s “Political Theory as a Vocation” piece and close on the heels of the founding of the Caucus for a New Political Science, called for the development of a post-behavioralist approach to political science. Political scientists, often from the periphery of the discipline, have since struggled over the nature of such an approach, not satisfied with the primary responses to Easton’s call, increased quantification of political science research and the development of rational choice theory.<sup>29</sup> The *Perestroika* movement attempts to build upon this sense of uneasiness with regard to what political science has apparently become. The question, as I conceive of it,

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<sup>29</sup> See Kariel 1970; Cochran 1974; Baum 1976; Scaff 1980 for some examples

then becomes one concerning innovation: does the *Perestroika* movement add anything new to the debate over the nature of political science?

I do not believe that it does, at least in its practices. Ultimately the *Perestroika* movement remains committed to the status quo in that it does not move beyond “market” orders of discourse and the discipline’s methodism. *Perestroika* does not move its discourse beyond the present dominant approach to politics; one that favors questions of method over questions of substance or that have external reference. The movement often couches its language in revolutionary terms, yet clearly fails to provide epistemological justification for such language. While the term *perestroika* itself appears revolutionary given the scope of its historical precedent, that precedent was the result of unintended consequences. The movement is itself not interested in revolution nor is it interested in reconceptualizing the purpose and scope of political science.<sup>30</sup> It appears instead to be interested in its adherent’s disciplinary position and her/his share of its rewards. In as much as *Perestroikans* appear hostile to the dominance of a rational, quantified, scientific identity for the discipline, they appear to be engaged very much in the kind of politics envisioned by just such an approach: *Perestroika*, taken as a whole, seems concerned not with advancing open or epic or alternative conceptions of politics itself, but is instead generally interested in the questions of who, getting what, and how within the discipline.

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<sup>30</sup> See my reference to Kasza’s posting the *Perestroika* list regarding what *Perestroika* “Deserves got nuthin’ to do with it”

### **Methodism and the “Establishment” of Political Science**

The concern over whom is getting or possessing what and how in political science is the subject of Vanessa Ruget’s 2002 *New Political Science* article “Scientific Capital in American Political Science.” In her article, Ruget employs elements of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s analytical framework to examine the structure of American political science and examine patterns of power manifest in the production and exchange of scientific knowledge. Ruget’s work is interesting in that she employs Bourdieu’s arguments regarding “scientific capital” and scientific exchange as mirroring “capitalist” laws to examine questions concerning the detaining of power and the establishment of orthodoxy within the discipline. Ruget, like me, is interested in these questions given that “the acknowledged purpose of political science is the analysis of power in all its dimensions” (Ruget 2002: 470).

Bourdieu’s analysis of power and the study of social science leads him to suggest that because individuals engaged in such studies tend to have as their clients other scientists, there cannot be neutral parties in this field that have the power to decide what is “truth.” Ruget builds upon Bourdieu’s analysis in her examination of American political science. In her article, she examines in what sense fame, influence, and success are linked to the possession of a symbolic “scientific capital” by political scientists, capital understood in this article is made up of such elements as academic status, research fields, sociological characteristics, and political allegiances. Taken together, and with other factors, these four criteria help to make up a “mechanism of distinction” that in turn

allows us to speak of an establishment within the discipline.<sup>31</sup> In this case, the presidents of the American Political Science Association represent the presence of just such an establishment. Ruget examines the ethnic, academic status, research fields, and political allegiances of the past 50 presidents of the *APSA*. Almost all are white male, moderate to conservative in their political allegiances, all are from “established” graduate programs, and most are from “accepted” research fields (only one being a “pure” political theorist).<sup>32</sup> “Regular published academic rankings (of schools and departments but also of scholars) confer a sort of reality to this establishment,” writes Ruget, “whereas professional conferences and meetings ... usually possess those communal moments in which the whole profession celebrates its heroes” (Ruget 2004: 475). All this works together, as part of the establishment’s Bourdieudian “reproduction strategy,” oriented towards the maintenance of its power and “the mode of reproduction that is inseparable from it.”<sup>33</sup>

Ruget explores the notion that there exists an establishment within the discipline of American political science and that there are reproduction strategies in place designed to maintain it. To this end, the previous chapter cataloged the publication record of the five major political science journals and their treatment of political theory and issues concerning the public’s interest. What is rewarded in political science, what allows it to

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<sup>31</sup> Ruget relies upon Somit and Tanenhaus’ definition here: “the members of a profession who are especially influential in setting the tone and standards of a profession through their control over the apparatus of the central office and of the professional journals and programs and who are likely to have a voice in key appointments” (Ruget, quoting Somit and Tanenhaus, 2004: 475).

<sup>32</sup> See Ruget 2004: 475-6.

<sup>33</sup> See also Silva and Slaughter’s work on the early days of the discipline.

flourish as the discipline it has come to be, is its methodological focus – methodism is part of the establishment of American political science. The narrowing of the discipline’s scope over the past 30 to 40 years toward methodological questions is buttressed in turn by the primacy of peer-reviewed article production that guarantee its preservation. Ruget’s work in this is important with regard to notions of the “establishment,” but her characterization of *Perestroika* as challenging it is too facile. As will be demonstrated in the sections that follow, what is ironic about the “revolution” that the *Perestroika* movement sees itself as leading is that its attention to its own methods merely reaffirms the establishment it believes itself to be critiquing. Ultimately, *Perestroika* may best be understood not through their arguments for their methods *per se*, but rather through their attempts to rewrite the rules of the discipline and its reproduction to gain a greater share of its rewards, leaving the establishment quite ... established.

Ruget’s work is of interest in that she begins to articulate Bourdieu’s approach in light of political science, but does not go deep enough in her analysis with regard to *Perestroika* and the reproduction of its ruling order. I believe the *Perestroika* movement ultimately remains committed to the status quo in that it does not move beyond “market” orders of discourse; a discourse that favors questions of method over questions of substance or those relating to “the ends of political life.” The movement couches its language in terms of a revolution and openness, at times going so far as to address each other as “comrade,” yet clearly fails to provide epistemological justification for such

airs.<sup>34</sup> The movement does not appear open or interested in real reform nor in reconceptualizing the purpose and scope of political science. In its commitment to methodological “pluralism,” the movement reifies the methodism of the discipline and thus undermines its own interest in substantive questions.

*Perestroika* has indeed touched upon issues that have been addressed before, issues that sometimes figured prominently in the discipline’s collective mind and its journals, but has of late been generally seen more at its periphery. Past presidents of the various political science associations have often used their farewell addresses to bemoan the perceived state of the discipline. David Easton’s 1969 *APSR* article is just such an address. Yet, as pivotal as his article appears for some in his calling for a post-behavioral approach, it is the article that directly proceeds it in the same edition that is of interest here: Sheldon Wolin’s “Political Theory as a Vocation” piece. Wolin’s article is important in that it catalogs the rise of methodism with the behavioral revolution, the situating of this methodism at the core of political science, and the marginalization of political theory as a key component of the discipline. It is just this establishment and its reproduction strategies noted by Ruget that ought to be the target of *Perestroika*’s disciplinary interrogation. But, as I shall argue, those questions ultimately fall back upon questions of disciplinary rules, rewards and their distribution.

Central to Wolin’s interrogation, and key to my arguments and understanding of political theory and science, is the notion that political science, construed as either knowledge or technique, is first and foremost a profoundly social enterprise, susceptible

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<sup>34</sup> The first instance of “comrades” use in directly addressing members of the *Perestroika*

to a variety of social factors that are bound to have an impact upon its scope and mission. Knowledge about politics is itself the product of political decisions that may not necessarily in themselves look “political”; Bourdieu’s and Ruget’s points as well. Wolin’s article inherits a long tradition of exploring this fact. Secondly, while Wolin wrote during a period of intense debate regarding the impact and the role of the “behavioral revolution” upon the social sciences, his “market discourse” and methodism perspective is still germane, reminding us that “it’s the methodology itself, stupid” that is important in present debates over the discipline’s scope and mission rather than merely a question of qualitative v. quantitative approaches. Finally, “Theory as a Vocation” is important in that it provides us with a normative statement about political theory, political science, and their methods: it suggests that political theory must act to provide political science with a sense of perspective and direction while allowing it to carry out its scientific endeavor for the public, i.e., it represents the best hope for political science to engage its potential for having an external political meaning or substantive political questions.

For Wolin, the character and scope of American political science have undergone a fundamental change, particularly with regard to political theory and its role within the discipline. Again, these approaches assume a certain world and social relations. Modes of inquiry, rules and rewards are designed to legitimate these societal practices and in turn are protected by rings of rules and procedures to help guarantee their reproduction.

The methodism of political science is one such established practice and one that is rule-bound and protected as well.

Bourdieu's study of scientific, academic, bureaucratic and political power suggests that once "communities" are able to capture a knowledge base and secure a source of funding they are loathe to give either up. Knowledge is power and knowledge that helps to reify those power structures that helped to bring this knowledge into being is jealously guarded. Many of those that live off of the discourse of politics seek to construct a certain knowledge base, rules, and institutions that will help maintain politics as their source of income. Political science is just such a community. Both the university and the discipline of political science reward those who help to win their objectives. The result of this arrangement is a "genuine" political scientist who, "according to his proper vocation" will not engage directly in politics and most importantly, never call into question "the vital interests of the ruling order" (Gerth and Mills 1946: 95). Through its focus on methods, *Perestroika* misses out on the discipline's methodism and the discipline's establishment remains unquestioned.

### **Establishment Rules and Reproduction Strategies**

To assess the rules, behaviors, the institutions that monitor and enforce the establishment of political science, and thus assess the behavior the *Perestroika* movement, I turn briefly to the "Institutional Analysis Design" (IAD) framework of Elinor Ostrom. Ostrom's intellectual background is in public choice theory but argues that her framework approach is itself essentially theory neutral. Whether or not it is

neutral, it is useful in illuminating market behavior, as Bourdieu sees in academic disciplines such as political science. The IAD is particularly useful here because it is designed to address multiple levels of analysis, allowing the analyst a variety of approaches to questions regarding the nature and behavior of institutions, markets, and “scientific communities.”

The IAD uses in its institutional analysis the identification of its prime conceptual unit – the *action arena*. This arena is made up of two components: the *action situation* which refers to “the social space where individuals interact, exchange goods and services, engage in appropriation and provision activities, solve problems, or fight;” and the *actor* component that includes participants who have preferences, information-processing capabilities, selection criteria, and various resources and capital (Ostrom 1997: 28-9). The variables that make up an action situation include participants, positions, actions, potential outcomes, information, and the costs and benefits of the actions and outcomes and the rules that govern these.<sup>35</sup> The primary advantage of the IAD is that while many

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<sup>35</sup> Ostrom defines these as “rules-in-use” and the “attributes” of community. Ostrom describes rules as “prescriptions that define what actions are *required*, *prohibited*, or *permitted*, and the sanctions authorized if the rules are not followed. All rules are the result of implicit or explicit efforts to achieve order and predictability among humans by creating classes of persons (positions) who are then required, permitted, or forbidden to take classes of actions in relation to required, permitted, or forbidden states of the world (Ostrom 1997: 38). Rules provide information about what actions an actor, must, mustn’t, or may perform. Ostrom identifies seven types of broad rules that help to configure the structure of an action situation: position rules (how many participants may hold a position; boundary rules (specify how many participants may enter or leave these positions); authority rules (specify which set of actions is assigned to which position); aggregation rules specify the transformation function (help to map actions into intermediate or final outcomes); scope rules (specify the set of outcomes that may be affected); information rules (help determine what information is available and to whom);

of these individual variables are complex, allowing for tremendous variety of action situations, the framework stresses “a universality of working parts ... [and] enables theorists to analyze unique combinations of these universal working parts. Further, each of these parts are [sic] constituted by combinations of ... cultural, and rule-ordered attributes” (Ostrom 1997: 29).

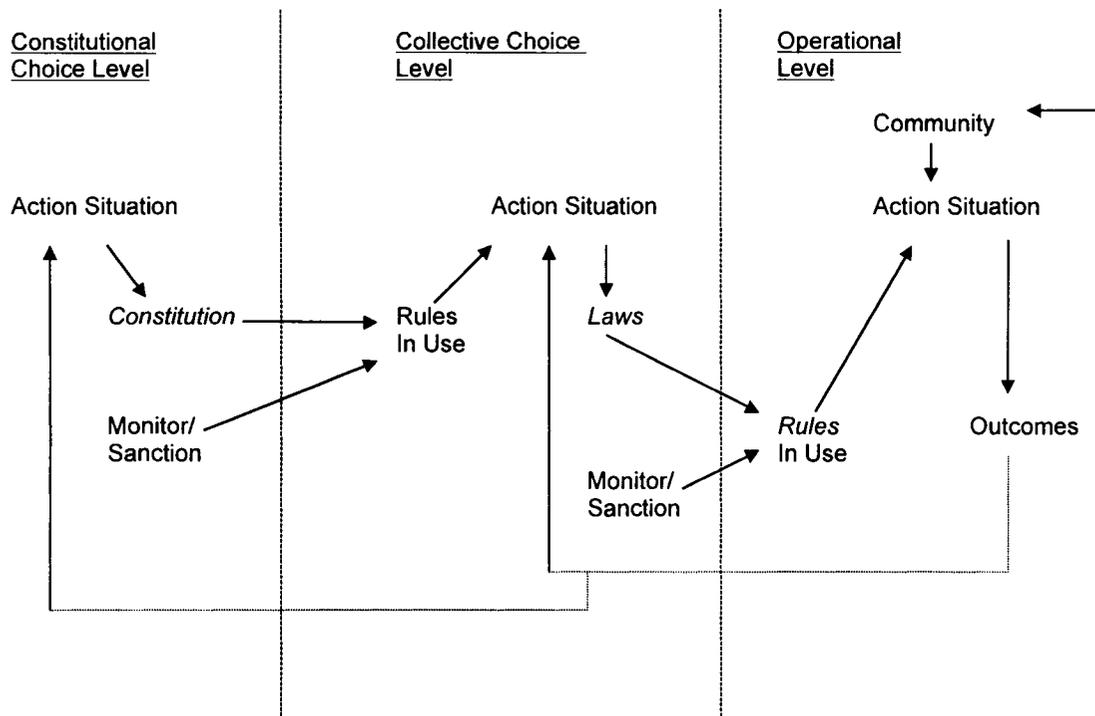
What is of interest here are the rules that govern behavior in the market that is the discipline of political science. The IAD is useful in that it allows for multiple levels of analysis in terms of the rules-in-use. The IAD as a framework organizes analysis across several levels of action situations or arenas with various rules-in-use designed to preserve the next level of rules. Changes in the rules at one level or action situation are in turn determined by the rules provided by the action situation in which it is nested. “Changes in *deeper-level rules usually are more difficult and more costly to accomplish*, thus increasing the stability of mutual expectations among individuals interacting according to a set of rules” (Ostrom 1997: 46).<sup>36</sup> Any outcome setting is made up of various levels of rules embedded in each other, thus having a cumulative effect upon that setting.

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and payoff rules (deal with the benefits and costs that are required , permitted or forbidden to actors).

<sup>36</sup> My emphasis.

**Figure 4.1 – Ostrom’s Linking Levels of Analysis**



The IAD posits three essential rule levels that govern an outcome (see Figure 4.1):

1. *Operational rules* – affect directly the day to day decision making by participants in any setting [Operational Level]
2. *Collective-choice rules* – come to affect operational activities and results through their effects in determining who is eligible and the specific rules to be used in changing operational rules [Collective-Choice Level]
3. *Constitutional-choice rules* – affect operational activities and their effects in determining who is eligible and the rules to be used in crafting the set of collective-choice rules that in turn affect the set of operational rules [Constitutional Level] (Ostrom 1997: 46-7).

There may be multiple action situations within the various levels themselves. Such situations need not necessarily be formal settings, but can include various markets, bureaucracies, legislatures, scientific communities, universities, and academic disciplines.

Ostrom's framework and the arrangement of various rule levels can in turn inform Bourdieu's conceptualization of scientific communities or academic disciplines. At the core of the community are constitutional-choice rules, rules aimed at protecting the existence and the validity of the community's purpose. Access to this rule level is the most limited and rule changes at this level are the most costly and time-consuming. It is here that Ruget's and Bourdieu's "establishment" ultimately resides. Those factors that Ruget cites as contributing to scientific capital such as "elite" academic status, the "right" research fields, the "appropriate" sociological characteristics, and "proper" political allegiances are determined here. It is also here that the unofficial, dominant body of knowledge resides. This is not to suggest the existence of a "Star Chamber" for political science or smoky backroom shenanigans with secret handshakes among a select few. However, there are rules, both official and unofficial, that shape the access rules to this constitutional level. These are the least discussed, most taken for granted, the most shielded from the public access.<sup>37</sup> All those participating within the discipline recognize them, or are at least made aware of them through such elements as either their coursework or other various modes of "professionalization." To maintain membership and reap its rewards, one must adhere to the rules. These rules, those that go on to lay the foundations for the rules of the collective-choice arena and action arena, are then a part of

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<sup>37</sup> See Bourdieu 1996: 272-3

Bourdieu's "strategy of reproduction." They are designed to determine access, agenda, and dissemination of the community's collective identity, purpose, and rewards – and they are designed for reproduction with a minimum of cost.

Ostrom's "constitutional" level, or Ruget's Bourdieudian establishment, sets the rules of exchange within the scientific community, or in this case, political science. The medium of exchange for political science is the peer-reviewed journal article, the exchange of which takes place in the collective-choice level. The rules governing rule production are in part determined by the discipline's need to reproduce itself. These rules have in turn over the years ensured a type of knowledge that essentially leaves this arrangement - these rules - generally unquestioned and untouched. One's stature within the discipline is determined primarily by the ability to produce this type of article. One's career is tied to the reproduction of the discipline – the more journal articles produced by the disciple, the more rewarded the disciple. The more journal articles produced in the aggregate, the more productive and important the discipline appears, thus the more rewarded the discipline.<sup>38</sup>

Bourdieu assumes that a discipline's primary task is its reproduction. Here a discipline justifies itself to itself. Its rules are arranged to make this justification as easy and cost effective as possible: it assumes as a discipline that its work is important and internalizes this question. There is almost no other external referent other than university

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<sup>38</sup> The most recent offering from the University of Arizona's Social and Behavioral College, "Doorways to the World" is symptomatic of this. Of the nineteen departments listed, thirteen make mention of their publication record in the field and/or their national rankings (which are in turn based in part of their publication record). The Department of

community or elite government decision makers. There is no recourse to the larger public that it seeks, at least in theory, to understand. Production of peer reviewed journal articles, i.e., articles that have the appearance of an external referent for the author (other disciples), but that really lack a true external referent and therefore pose little cost to the disciple and even less to the disciple particularly in terms of having to justify the work, are rewarded. To reduce the time and therefore the cost of producing these journals, the discipline settles on a format or course of acceptable types of inquiry – most notably those that are the easiest to reproduce. This allows for the individual disciple to keep its costs of production low and allow the discipline as a whole to keep the number of articles written in its behalf high. Those articles that fail to do this are quickly penalized and the status of the disciple is placed at risk of losing disciplinary rewards.

What has come to be established then in the field of political science is the importance of method. How one asks one's question has eclipsed the question about what one is really inquiring. There are a variety of hugely philosophical, epistemological, and ontological implications of this. However, I would like to discuss this trend in light of Ostrom's and Bourdieu's approaches to rules and the behavior of academic communities, particularly political science and *Perestroika's* critique of it. Questions relating to method are easy to reproduce: as long as they refer briefly or appear to agree with the scientific method (this costs nothing, for the method is generally regarded as *the* epistemological referent for the social sciences), the discipline and university system will accept them; they reward the discipline in that accepted methods

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Political Science was quite conspicuous in this regard noting that it “[r]anks 6<sup>th</sup> among all

fail to challenge the constitutional level of the discipline and are easily reproduced by disciples; and such questions reward disciples in that they can produce many articles (and thus be rewarded) and can reify the authors themselves (how I ask this question about Kant, Locke, etc ... sheds new light on the particular author and, more importantly, it is *my* understanding, *my* interpretation to trade for disciplinary status). Disciples need not approach the scope or public character of the work interrogated. Disciples are saved the cost of having to justify their work to a larger audience because the community's rules are organized such that the disciples need only to immediately satisfy their peers.

The rise of journals and the importance of journal publications parallel the rise of methodism in the social sciences. The explosion of production at this level is made possible in part by the focus of the social sciences upon questions of methodology. The focus on methodological questions allows for the easy production of peer-reviewed journal articles. The production of peer-reviewed journals in the name of the discipline reproduces the discipline, which may in turn reward the authors for their contributions. Those being rewarded will ensure that the system and its rules remain as such. Quantitative methods appear to be the choice of these social sciences in that they appear to describe more accurately and predict social behavior. However, it is also the case that the focus on methods is easily reproduced and is used to determine the worth of the community's participants: an author's worth is measured by quantity of output, not quality. It is far easier to count the number of a scholar's publications than it is to assess that scholar's impact in the wide public scope. Again, the rules of the various action

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political science departments in the country in research productivity.”

levels, the rewards they envision, all come to reinforce the best way to ensure the reproduction of these rules, these rewards and thus the discipline.

### ***Perestroika and Making Sure Who Gets What and How***

The previous sections have examined our interest in the existence of an establishment or “ruling order” in political science dominated by methodism and have proposed a framework aimed at understanding how this establishment organizes various rules, institutions, and behaviors, to preserve itself. Just as the operational rules of political science exist within a larger, societal, collective-action context/arena, political science itself is an action arena with its own constitutional, collective-action, and operational levels/arenas and their rules-in-use. As political science is rewarded for its helping to reproduce a given societal order, it in turn has organized its rules and rewards to reproduce itself. The core of the discipline, Ostrom’s constitutional level, Bourdieu’s *habitus*, has its practitioners arrange rules in such a way as to make access to this core difficult and reward those who leave it unmolested. Ostrom’s “payoff rules” may be understood in light of Bourdieu’s reproduction strategy and *vice versa*. Such rules along with other clusters of rules such as the boundary rules that govern peer-review publication help to channel energy away from such questioning that might transpire at the collective action level by ultimately making the costs of such inquiry too much to bear.

*Perestroika*, at least in Kasza’s envisioning it, aims at reforming the practice of political science. The practice of political science is dominated by methodological questions. Yet, as much as Kasza and, one would think, other *Perestroikans* hope to

restore questions of “political life once again [and make them] our common focus” and move away from the dominance of methodism that comes to define political science’s establishment, their focus on their own methods and rules that define the collective-choice action level of political science ultimately reinforce the discipline’s lack of interest in substantive issue and undermine their revolutionary claims. An investigation of the dialogue among *Perestroikans* and their contributions to political science journals reveals this trend among members of the movement.

To investigate the nature of the movement, I rely upon the following as my primary sources of evidence: recent contributions to *PS: Political Science and Politics* and messages exchanged among members of the “*perestroika\_glasnost\_warmhome*” listserv. To begin with the listserv, I recognize that there are limits to such data sources: these authors presented here may not speak or act for the movement as a whole; and listserv messages are often informal and are meant to act as a give and take between member scholars and often result in the lack of a clear resolution of positions. There is also the issue of the *Perestroika*’s identity as a movement. Some people contributing to the listserv clearly are not members; rather they are simply looking to follow up on debates concerning “methodological pluralism.” Others seem to argue that the listserv is merely a forum for like-minded individuals to commiserate about the trials and tribulations of life within academia. Others, Kasza among them, believe *Perestroika* to be a movement of scholars, with a clear agenda, united in their interest to reform the study of political science. These are indeed issues of which one ought to be concerned. However, given the newness of the movement and its means of communication, this

appears to be an appropriate place to begin. Moreover, there is a consistency in the contributors to the listserv, the messages and the discussions, and the articles appearing in the name of *Perestroika*, that seems worth discussing given current trends in the discipline.

What is consistent on the part of contributions to the *Perestroika* listserv is their adherence to political science's establishment on several levels. Utilizing the IAD framework, I examine the comments and discussions posted on the *Perestroika* listserv with regard to this consistency. The following selections are taken from my collection of the missives sent to the *Perestroika* listserv, beginning with Mr. Perestroika's "manifesto" dated October 15, 2000 up through February 2004. It not a complete list of all the electronic exchanges that have taken place over the four years or so. I do not believe the entire list was made privy to all the discussions that took place among its co-founders. It is a list of those messages that I received as a result of my signing on to the listserv or messages forwarded to me from other members of the listserv. I have collected just over 600 of these exchanges. I have read through them all and I have in turn ordered them in light of their discussion concerning disciplinary and movement rules by the various levels depicted in Ostrom's framework: operational, collective-action, and constitutional levels.

It should not come as a surprise that political scientists are very interested in rules, rule making and their institutions, given their interest in power. What is perhaps of even more interest is how political scientists approach these various rule-settings as they perceive and experience them first hand within the discipline. Of the 600 plus messages

perused here, 18 dealt directly with the notion of an establishment within political science that favors certain methodological approaches and that the movement need address this at a fundamental, constitutional level. None of these, however, broached the topic of addressing the rules that govern the constitutional level. While Perestroika considers itself to be committed to a “pluralist methodology,” not one message or posting addressed the epistemological foundations or arguments for such an approach. The importance of method simply trumps all other questions. Interest here does not seem to move beyond questions concerning the validity of the qualitative approach to political science versus the quantitative approach; methodism is thus “naturalized.” The following exchange is a typical example of just how easily questions concerning the establishment are redirected to issues concerning reproduction and reward:

*Constitutional Question*

Dated: Monday, October 14, 2002

A continuing theme of those committed to reviving the status of qualitative methods and a broader range of approaches to knowledge--in other words, members of Perestroika--is that scholars of politics have lost sight of "significant" and "substantial" questions, or that seeking answers to those questions has become less important than demonstrating technical competence.

This begs an important question: what are the significant and substantial questions of the day? At the APSA meeting, we heard eloquent arguments for "relevant" scholarship and in defense of the scholarly pursuit of esoteric knowledge. Esoteric knowledge can, of course, involve substantial questions, such as the origins and nature of modernity. Relevant scholarship can involve relatively trivial issues.

I wonder how members of the list come down on what the "important" questions we need to be exploring are. Any thoughts? Opinions?

The one response I am able to find to this posting is as follows:

*Collective-Action Response*

Dated: Friday, October 18, 2002

I must confess to being bemused by colleagues who profess not to know what the important questions are in the profession. One can only wonder what they say to their students. In this regard, there is one interesting recent development that has an undeniable significance for all political scientists. The University of California Press has decided not to publish books in political science. They took this action despite the fact that they had two distinguished series in political science about a decade ago.

Interestingly, the Press will also publish books on politics but not political science. I would guess that the directors of the press and the editors have a pretty good idea about what are the important scholarly questions to be addressed in their books. The decision to stop publishing political science suggests to me, at least, that they have decided our discipline is not successfully addressing those questions.<sup>39</sup>

Ignore for a moment the incendiary tone of the opening lines and note how quickly the commentator moves away from addressing the question of substance, i.e., the establishment, to the question of publication. “In this regard, there is one interesting recent development that has an undeniable significance for all political scientists. The University of California Press has decided not to publish books in political science.” Questions regarding the central purpose of political science are not of undeniable significance for all political scientists? Never mind that the question of a change of rules

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<sup>39</sup> It is interesting to note that this response was offered by one of the chief contributors/supporters of the *Perestroika* movement

regarding the scope, boundaries, or payoff rules was never broached here by the first posting. What is clearly of importance and significance for the respondent is the potential loss of an outlet for the reproduction of political science. The purpose of political science is taken as a given. Its reproduction strategies, channeled through the publication process, is paramount and apparently above reproach. There is, to date, no response to this second posting.

There are a few other provocative pieces that attempt to address the establishment and issues at the constitutional level of the discipline. Despite these often very interesting posts, no discussion of the constitution of the discipline and its rules are ever fully engaged by other members in a sustained manner. As such, most discussion takes place at the collective-action level of the discipline. One such piece appears to sum up *Perestroika's* frustration not necessarily with the establishment *per se*, but with its collective distribution of rewards:

*Collective-Action Query*

Dated: Monday, March 3, 2003

My message is simple: in political science, ideas do not prosper because they are good ideas. Ideas prosper thanks to the promotional efforts of those who espouse them. One set of ideas does not defeat another for being better ideas. Ideas win out thanks to aggressive marketing and politicking ...

When I was a graduate student, no one told me, "[I]f you want people to notice your ideas, you have to go out there and sell them." I thought people became scholars because they didn't want to be salesmen. Now I know better. The quality of ideas does not decide the outcome of scholarly debates, any more than virtuous living decided who won gunfights in the Old West. Ideas spread thanks to the salesmanship of their sponsors. "Deserves got nuthin' to do with it ..."

I admire the way that rational choice theorists promote their ideas; so much, in fact, that I now strive to emulate them. *That is what the Perestroika movement is about...*<sup>40</sup>

What are the implications of this discovery? For graduate students ... you cannot assume that what you find in our most prestigious journals is outstanding research. The ideas filling our lectures and journals have not triumphed in some objective competition of ideas. What you read and hear is a product of marketing, not the result of any neutral judgment that these ideas are the best ...

For those of us who do qualitative research, the message is even more dire. Unless we act to promote our ideas, qualitative research will soon be extinct, as it is in economics. The problem in political science is not that hard scientists promote their work - why should they not? The problem is that we who do qualitative research have not acted to promote ours ...<sup>41</sup>

This posting is important in that it summarizes the inherently contradictory nature of the *Perestroika* movement. *Perestroika* as a movement wants to return to substantive issue and questions concerning the study of politics. Yet, if we take this comrade's position to heart, and if this is indeed what the *Perestroika* movement is really about, i.e., marketing strategies for qualitative methods, that concern is necessarily subverted; substantive questions of politics must move beyond mere questions of method. What might appear at first as a provocative question directed at the constitutional level is in turn quickly betrayed by the commentator's inability to move beyond issues of the collective-action arena. *Perestroika*'s questions of substance appear no longer to be about whether or not their methods are sound or have something to contribute to the wider understanding of

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<sup>40</sup> My emphasis

<sup>41</sup> It is interesting to note that this posting too was offered by one of the chief contributors to the *Perestroika* movement, although a different contributor/supporter than noted above.

politics, but rather appear to be about changing the pay-off rules at the collective-action level so that disciplinary rewards are shared with advocates of “ecumenical” methods.

The postings offered above by “founding” members of the movement are consonant with the tenor and general discussion that takes place on the *Perestroika* listserv. As a matter of practicality, not all the missives may be presented here; these must act as proxies. Yet again, they are important in that they reflect the majority of the “ink” spilt by this movement. Most of the discussions offered up by the forum are concerned with rule changes at the collective-action level. Content analysis reveals that at a minimum, 120 of these postings dealt either directly or indirectly with questions of marketing an “ecumenical” methodology for political science. While many of these addressed issues regarding peer-review article publication, the role publication had in the reproduction of methodism itself was *never* questioned. Instead, the importance of peer-reviewed articles was reaffirmed, and then discussion moved to addressing rule-changes to gain access to boundary rules, authority rules, scope rules, and pay-off rules to reward those who wish to publish non-quantitative political science.

**Table 4.1 – IAD Framework and Perstroika Postings**

<b>Rule Level</b>	<b>Action Arena</b>	<b>Number of <i>Perestroika</i> Listserv Postings</b>
<i>Constitutional</i>	Political Science Discipline	18
<i>Collective-Action</i>	Publishing/Market Interests	270
<i>Operational</i>	Group Membership/Activities	302
<i>Other</i>	Job Announcements, etc ...	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>Through February 2004</b>	<b>626</b>

Another 150 of these postings dealt with attempts on the part of the members of the *Perestroika* movement to place a candidate in a decision making position on the board

of the American Political Science Association. While such strategy appears to favor rule changes at the constitutional or establishment level of the discipline, discussions of changes to the rules at this level here fall far short of the movement's claim for substantive change. While members clamored to change constitutional rules for open elections to APSA's governing executive board, the rules they really hoped to have changed as a result of constitutional rule changes again were at the collective-action level of publication rewards. Again, little to no work here offered epistemological arguments favoring the movement's "alternative" methods and no work at all identified their position as potentially compromised by their focus on method and peer-review publication.

The remaining posts, when not advertising conferences or openings in various departments, dealt primarily with the operational level of the *Perestroika* movement itself. This is understandable in that as a new movement, members wanted to set boundaries and determine the scope of their "insurrection." Questions over who would be allowed to post, what would be discussed, and if there was to be an "editorial" board of a sort to control the content of the listserv dominated the rest of the discussions, often at a fevered pitch. It seems that the first order of business of any new movement is to determine what members ought to talk about and who the heretics are; a particularly ironic situation given the "pluralism" embraced by the founders of the movement.

As much as certain founding members wanted to avoid the charge that their behavior appeared congruent with present theories concerning rational choice and rule-making within closed markets, their behavior is just that. Note the following post:

*Collective-Action Post (Thinking its Constitutional)*

Dated: Wednesday, May 28, 2003

I have a schizophrenic reaction to [the previous] comment. On the one hand, I applaud his analysis as an example of analysis based on sociology of knowledge--that is, acknowledging the ways in which knowledge production is bound up with status, careers, gender, race, etc. The social sciences need more of such analysis and more awareness of its implications.

On the other hand, cartel and blockade analysis, growing out of a neoclassical tradition, has us buying into those assumptions of self-interest.

I prefer to start with the assumption that most scholars genuinely care about producing useful knowledge and that the scholarly networks have to do, in part, with different epistemological understandings of what counts as knowledge. So, while I do find the implication of point 1 (lower standards among cartels of rational choice or behavioral scholarship scholars) amusing, I think it is a misdiagnosis of part of what is going on. That is, scholars who are trained in narrow ways, such that they cannot imagine how research is conducted outside of a "variables mindset," genuinely believe that their group / network is producing "the best kind" of knowledge.

What makes many humanistic scholars different from many traditionalists /positivists is their broader understanding of and exposure to (and practice of) alternative approaches to knowledge making. Thus, there is an asymmetry: humanistic scholars understand and, where warranted, appreciate what behavioral scholars do; but behavioral scholars too often dismiss what humanistic scholars contribute. And, that has consequences for who and what gets published.

Again, this is a posting from another member involved intimately with the founding of the movement. While this person is "amused" by the assertion that the neoclassical model might be at work within the movement, this could not possibly be the case because humanist scholars are above such collective-action concerns. This person argues that scholars are genuinely interested in interesting scholarship. Yet at the closing of this post, the author refers directly back to collective-action rules in noticing that the

dismissal of what humanist scholars contribute has “consequences for who and what gets published.”

Unfortunately, recent contributions to the APSA’s *PS: Political Science and Politics*, as seen in June 2002’s symposium “Shaking Things Up: Thoughts about the Future of Political Science” and in July 2003’s symposium on methodological pluralism do little to move beyond the discourse seen on *Perestroika*’s listserv. John Dryzek characterizes the “debate” found in the 2002 symposium and its result for the discipline to be much like James Bond’s martini, shaken but not stirred, and thus unchanged. “One common theme that emerges from the symposium,” writes Dryzek, “is the degree to which the contributors point to their own work as a model. Asked to reflect upon the shape of discipline, these distinguished political scientists reflect mainly on, and implicitly advocate, their own work” (Dryzek 2003: 1).<sup>42</sup> While Rogers Smith, a regular contributor to the *Perestroika* listserv, does bring up epistemological concerns in light of the ongoing methodological debate within the discipline, his remarks regarding the established core of practices within the discipline, its reproduction, and any attempts to bring issues of “substance” to the fore are either non-existent, peripheral, or lacking the necessary attempts at providing a strategy to bring about such substance.<sup>43</sup>

PS’s July 2003 symposium appears just as disappointing. Smith appears again in the symposium forum seeking to make an argument for methodological pluralism. His

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<sup>42</sup> A good example of this is Ostrom 2002: 191-2.

<sup>43</sup> See Smith 2002: 199-201.

article is refreshing in that he does begin to address establishment issues, as seen in his discussion of the classic sub-dividing of the discipline when he writes that “departments still structure hiring in this way chiefly because they want to be staffed to train students in ways that will enable them to be hired in the many departments and published in the many journals that are still structured with those fields. And the journals structure themselves that way because the profession structures itself that way. So on we go, perpetuating a disciplinary division of labor that often works against the development of broad political understanding and insight” (Smith 2003: 396). Smith suggests that changes in hiring rules at Yale and Penn eschew this traditional disciplinary approach in the hopes that these departments will organize around the “greatest contemporary and enduring” political problems that we might face. Again the implication here is that simple disciplinary rule changes will help to justify the plural methods endorsed by the *Perestroika* movement and not an appeal to the difficult epistemological work that is called for in this case or an appeal to an external referent that might help to judge the merits of the work conducted by the various divisions within political science.<sup>44</sup>

An appeal to pluralism is the subject of Peregrine Schwartz-Shea’s contribution to the 2003 symposium as well. Schwartz-Shea, like Smith, contributed early and regularly to *Perestroika* and like Smith offers little here beyond the movement’s interest in rules and rewards. Schwartz-Shea is aware of the dominance of quantitative methods given her survey of 57 graduate programs and their approach to research methods. While aware that the field is dominated by the assumption that methods classes are quantitative

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<sup>44</sup> Before you level the charge at me dear reader, know that such difficult work is the

research methods courses and that there is a palpable “lack of respect” for non-quantitative research methods, her epistemological argument for methodological pluralism and non-quantitative methods is meager at best. The only such defense of plurality in this regard may be seen in her noting, “qualitative methodologies may be indispensable for accessing the kinds of ‘local or practical knowledge’ that quantification overlooks or erases” (Schwartz-Shea 2003: 384). There is no explanation as to why these are important – simply that they are and that apparently only the qualitative approaches (whatever they may be) can access such knowledge.<sup>45</sup> While Schwartz-Shea’s discussion section outlines the need for a debate to be “conducted with a self-consciousness concerning the implicit stereotypes about the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities that often imperil genuine communication across epistemological divides,” there is nothing in her article that remotely represents the facilitation of such a debate, a paucity that is eminently apparent in much of the work conducted under the aegis of the *Perestroika* movement. *Perestroika*, as much as it would like to ring in a new, substantive approach to political science, seems as though it cannot move beyond

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subject of Chs 2 and 5.

<sup>45</sup> In a recent discussion at the 2004 annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association between Schwartz-Shea and Professor Tim Duvall of St. John’s University, it was noted that what Schwartz-Shea was actually arguing for was a recognition that qualitative methods are actually scientific and thus worthy of disciplinary rewards. When pushed on the issue of the “correctness” of the scientific approach or identity of the discipline, Schwartz-Shea agreed that it was important to interrogate the “givenness” of the scientific model for political science, but never questioned the need for qualitative approaches to mirror science. “Science is where the power lay,” she noted. Thus again the Perestroikan argument turns not on necessary but difficult epistemological questions, but rather on disciplinary reward.

Lasswell's assumptions that politics and thus political science is ultimately who getting what and how.

### **Conclusion**

Ruget's work is creative in its application of Bourdieu, its attempts to examine the nature of an "establishment" within the *APSA*, and how its rewards system may be seen as part of a larger reproduction strategy. It is useful too in that it provides access to one of the premier thinkers in the area of modern sociology of science. Utilizing her notion of "establishment" along with Bourdieu's interest in reproduction strategies, I have examined the *Perestroika* movement and its critique of American political science. As I have demonstrated here, I do not believe that Ruget goes deep enough in her Bourdieudian analysis of the movement. While she is correct in noting that the movement challenges the dominance of quantitative methods in political science and has won over such "luminaries" as *APSA* president Theda Skocpol, the movement fails to challenge the dominance of methodology itself. In as much as it hopes to be revolutionary, the *Perestroika* movement fails to question its own embeddedness in the reproduction strategy of American political science. In failing to question the orthodoxy of methodism itself, in seeking to define its methodology within the discipline, the *Perestroika* movement legitimizes the discipline's "establishment" and may be seen as merely trying to redefine the "how" and the "who" without seriously questioning the "what."

I have argued here that 1) there is an establishment within the discipline that is in part comprised of its commitment to methodism and 2) that this methodism is reinforced by the various rules-in-use that define its “reproduction strategy,” particularly the rules governing peer-reviewed journals. What is clear from the listserv is that *Perestroika*’s members are aware of these elements, both at the constitutional level of the establishment and the collective-action level of journal production. As outlined above, this is not new information. Is *Perestroika*’s response to this establishment and these extant rules new or innovative? Do their proposed rule changes move the discipline closer to questions of substance? The evidence provided by the movement itself and examined here suggests not.

## CHAPTER 5: WEBER, DEWEY, AND GORZ – RENEWING THE EPIC

What have we to this point? We have seen in Chapter 1 the generally accepted notion that political theory as part of the larger discipline of political science has been in “decline” for quite some time. As political science has come to mature and develop within the modern university system, political theory as a whole has been pushed to the margins of the discipline as being too concerned with philosophical, historical, or non-scientific questions. I argue in Chapter 2 that this decline may best be understood in light of the work of Karl Marx, Sheldon Wolin and John Gunnell. Wolin argues that political theory has come to be dominated by questions of method rather than of scope and *res publicae*. The domination of method comes to inform the work of Gunnell as well where he argues that political theory (and political science more generally) is too far removed from the original level of politics by methodological question to be of use to anyone save for those producing it. These in turn mirror the contentions made by Marx in his early work with regard to industrial production and alienation. Political theory as a discipline has captured the notion of the “public” and politics, alienated political thought from the public thought, and commodified it for use among political theorists; political theory and thought is, in Marxist parlance, fetishized. Political thought is divided labor, essentially privately held and traded in the journals, books, and conferences that come to make up the market place and professional lives of those who seek to keep it a viable trade, thus shielding it from an increasingly skeptical public. Chapter 3 demonstrated how peer-reviewed journals, the “marketplace of ideas,” have in the past 30 years become more and

more narrowed in the pursuit of method, eschewing the epic theory outlined by Wolin in 1969. While there have been recent rumblings of protest from the periphery by the likes of the *Perestroika* Movement, Chapter 4 demonstrates the depth and strength of methodism's foundations in political theory and science. Those that seek to protest the domination of political science by a "scientific" identity, are themselves too swept up by the bright lights and tenure rewards offered by the rarified air of the peer-vetted, career production machine that is the tightly guarded world of the academic journal.

The decline as I have conceived of here is due in large part to the industrialized and commodified nature of the modern university system, of which our discipline of political science is a part. How we as political theorists and scientists view and convey the world of politics and our place in it is certainly conditioned by the structure of university. That structure was forged in the age of the industrial revolution and our thinking and approach to politics bears the stamp of this heritage. Of particular import to any industrialized, capitalist system is its high productive capacity to maintain value. Political theory and science have come to reflect this interest in productive capacity on at least two levels. There is the interest in production in terms of the professional setting of political science, the "how" of production: conferences and professional journals. There is also the level of what gets produced; peer-reviewed articles that in turn do nothing to seriously challenge the how and what of production itself. Wolin's "methodism", the focus on how "political" questions are asked, allows for high productive capacity on the part of the discipline: article length becomes limited and content becomes standardized as well as the expectations of those that "consume" these articles. This is borne out in

Gunnell's critique of theory. Rather than actually engaging the public directly or discussing the hugely problematic nature of the public and its interests, it is far easier to discuss how you are going to discuss and construct a public, a public that will never itself be allowed to enter in a serious debate with the theorists and scientists who are studying it. The essential loss of Wolin's "epic theory" is seen then in the rise of methodism - a market methodism that dominates Gunnell's levels of discourse. These various levels are played out and reinforced in the production of an alienated, depthless discipline through its obsession with peer-review and its own reproduction.

I have sought earlier in this work to provide a brief overview of recent arguments concerning the development of political science as a distinct discipline within the modern university system. I stated that these arguments, while compelling, failed to address the importance of the development of political science in light of the rise of professionalism and the commodification of political knowledge. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the foundations of the rise of political science as a profession and those key elements that allow for its development. There are two authors that may be seen as primary sources motivating my critique as it is presented here: Max Weber and John Dewey. Weber's concern lies with the rational development of modern society based upon the ethic of ascetic Protestantism. This ethic helps society to breed a science that when coupled with the process of secular rationalization replaces method for ends and separates the public from its own highest values. In contrast, Dewey's concern lies with "the Public's" awareness of itself as a public and of discerning its own values in a cogent democratic manner. However like Weber, Dewey's interest is with the separation of the

public from its own concerns. Thus a discussion of these authors is essential in that they recognize the importance of the relationship between industrial knowledge, science, politics, and the university. Yet there is in reading these authors an underlying sense of failure on their part to fully address the importance that their theories have in helping us to understand more thoroughly the relationship between political science as a professional discipline and the public's understanding of its own political identity. The purpose of this chapter is to build upon the critiques of modern political science as implied by Weber and Dewey here in their work on science, vocation, and ethics and Wolin and Gunnell from their work on political science and theory. By synthesizing the logic of their critiques through the work of the political theorist André Gorz, this chapter demonstrates that political science is both symptomatic of and a contributing factor to an ever professionalized, rationalized, scientized endeavor located in the modern university that helps to separate the public from its own values and disrupt its sense of community.

### **Protestantism, Vocation, and the Triumph of Method**

In his work *Intellectuals and the Crisis of Modernity*, Carl Boggs describes the ideological and material reproduction of power structures within modern society as fundamentally mediated through the control of knowledge, communication, and information. "In this milieu the universities, and education in general, occupy a decisive position with the knowledge industry consuming an ever-increasing share of resources, with 'research and development' an indispensable feature of high-tech development, and with the ubiquitous mass media and cultural apparatus shaping popular consciousness to

a greater extent than ever. Intellectual and cultural capital takes on a new meaning alongside the more familiar accumulation process” (Boggs 1993: ix). He goes on to note that while the debate over the political role of the intellectual never seems to be resolved, it is clear that intellectuals in various groupings have “commonly provided a linkage between power and knowledge, governance and legitimacy, movements and ideology; in other words, they have been indispensable historical actors” (Boggs 1993: 1). Yet, as much as they might influence the political, cultural, and economic setting in which they find themselves, this setting comes to influence them as well. Just as intellectuals played a key role in defining the modern era, they came and continue to be shaped by the major forces of the modern era as well: professionalization and corporate capitalism.

Within roughly the past thirty years a number of historians and sociologists have argued powerfully for the connection between corporate capitalism and what has been described here and elsewhere as the “culture of professionalism.” The impulse of these authors and their attempts to make this connection perhaps are best understood in light of the work of Max Weber and his efforts to understand the relationship between modernity, science, politics, culture, and the rise of the professional. The following section is not meant as an exhaustive exegesis on the colossal scope that is Weber’s legacy, but rather represents a cognitive map to the complex relations that make up the character of modern society utilizing a number of Weber’s key insights. Weber offered the student of modern society a number of critical insights into its nature; the following are of primary interest here: the Protestant ethic and his lectures regarding science as a vocation.

The purpose of this dissertation is not to test the validity of Weber's theory positing a causal connection between the development of Protestantism in Western Europe and the rise of capitalism. Weber's work itself has spawned a veritable sub-field within sociology, much of which is dedicated to such tests. Instead, Weber's classic sociological work on the nature of modern life under capitalism is used here merely as a powerful description of modern professional life and for how modern institutions such as professionalism, bureaucracy, and the university are all able to reify themselves in very similar and interrelated manners. His work is also taken into consideration here in that it informs many of the critiques and works upon which this dissertation relies.

Weber's work was born out of a Nietzschean impulse that sought to critique the loss of meaning and value in the modern age. The modern world for the likes of Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Weber was left a bleak, "icy darkness" following the "disenchanting" of the world through the rapid advance of secular rationalism and the demise of the Christian ethic. The irony of this loss, according to Weber, is that what precipitates Christianity's demise is its own metaphysical underpinnings of meaning and understanding. Weber, informed very much by Nietzsche in this matter, notes that Christianity undermines its own faith and purpose and that the systems of knowledge and meaning they are based upon are themselves compromised. God is dead and we have killed him. However, not only is God dead, but also much of the ability to gain meaning and value in the modern age are killed as well in Weber's schema. What the modern individual is left with then is not the pursuit of meaning, but only means. And thus, the means take on purpose in and of themselves, the old ends of value, meaning, and

knowledge are left forsaken as are concepts relating to the idea of a public or community. It is into this void that Weber, John Dewey, and recent commentators of the American Academy see the onrushing tide of professionalism.

Weber's "Science as a Vocation" is not merely an inquiry into the nature of modern vocation as conditioned by the Protestant work ethic. It is also an investigation of how modern vocation and professionalism affect the role of the individual within the academy and how this in turn helps to separate the public from its values. Again, as with Nietzsche, Weber's approach is genealogical in the sense that he wants to understand how ideas come to affect individuals in their social setting and how these ideas help to predispose society to them in the future. Ascetic Protestantism makes the notion of the modern vocation masking values and meaning in work or substituting meaning with work possible. The academic professionalism described in "Science" shows the fruitful dialectic between scientific vocation and professional values in this regard.

Weber's discussion of the relationship between the academy, science, and professional vocation focuses on the role of the capitalist state and bureaucracy, specialization and scientific "calling," and the academy's commitment to progress through science. Weber was aware of the strengthening relationship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries between the growing capitalist state and the university. While the United States attempted to model its quest for statehood on the Prussian model, by the time Weber wrote "Science" Germany was modeling a number of elements in its university system upon the American one, particularly those of the natural sciences and medicine. These he notes cannot be managed without the monetary funding power of the

state. The result of the infusion of capitalist financing into the university system has the same results as the infusion of capitalism in any sector: the separation of the worker from the means, value, and purpose of production. “The worker, that is, the assistant (as Weber describes the employee in the American system) is dependent upon the implements that the state puts at his disposal; hence he is just as dependent upon the head of the institute as is the employee in a factory upon the management ... Thus the assistant’s position is often as precarious as is that of any ‘quasi-proletarian’ existence” (Gerth and Mill 1946: 131).

The movement toward the university as a part of the capitalist enterprise had a profound effect upon the nature of education. While Weber recognized that capitalism and bureaucratization had “indubitable advantages,” “the ‘spirit’ that rules these affairs is different from the historical atmosphere of the German university. An extraordinarily wide gulf, externally and internally, exists between the chief of these large, capitalist, university enterprises and the usual full professor ... Inwardly as well as externally, the old university constitution has become fictitious” (Gerth and Mills 1946: 131). In this, Weber echoes the complaints of Marx in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Marx’s primary interest there, and Weber’s in “Science,” is the recognition of work as a social activity with social or public consequences. As the capitalist mode of production develops, the social nature of work becomes alienated from both the worker and the work itself. Work, as Marx describes it, becomes mediated through various elements of the capitalist relations of production such as the division of labor, the development or privileging of exchange value, and most importantly, private property.

Labor takes on the properties of private ownership and the relations and forces that produce the capital mode of production thus mask and deny labor's social nature. Labor is stripped of its public or social meaning and understood as a private "thing." "This development," Weber notes, "corresponds entirely to what happened to the artisan of the past and it is now fully under way" in the modern university system (Gerth and Mills 1946: 131).

This ideological and actual separation of individual labor from its social and public nature is further reinforced through the specialization of various research programs that are in turn buttressed by the siren call of science as *the* modern vocation. The nature of science and knowledge as it develops in parallel with capitalism demands specialization, according to Weber. Again, Weber sees the seedbed of scientific creativity first sown with the individual ascetic provided by Protestantism. Universal meaning and achievement have already been assigned by God. The only thing left is for the individual to understand or research his understanding in light of the predetermined whole. Rather than try to understand the meaning of the world, to think "horizontally" *per se*, the task at hand for the individual is a very private, "vertical," individual understanding of his very narrow part in God's plan. This verticality however, does not reach outward to God, but turns inward on the individual. Science takes on just such characteristics, just as capitalism does. This makes for great scientific and technical achievements on the part of science, but they are understood as something that was preordained or something taken as a given in the "progressive" nature of science. Moreover, while individual achievements add up and promote this progress, they are the

result of individual labor acting for the individual and are not done so out of concern for their social or public consequences. As Weber describes it, “[o]nly by strict specialization can the scientific worker become fully conscious, for once and perhaps never again in his lifetime, that he has achieved something that will endure. A really definitive and good accomplishment is today always a specialized accomplishment” (Gerth and Mills 1946: 135). The only way to accomplish this feat is to blind oneself to the social context in which one is embedded and live for the “calling” of science. “Inner devotion to the task, and that alone, should lift the scientist to the height of dignity of the subject he pretends to serve” (Gerth and Mills 1946: 137).

Service to the subject, science and with it the modern academy, is motivated, according to Weber, by an unwavering belief in progress, the third element that mediates the relationship between the academy, science, and professional vocation. Science in the modern age is distinguished from previous endeavors into understanding and meaning by its being chained to “the course of progress; whereas in the realm of art [for example] there is no progress in the same sense” (Gerth and Mills 1946: 137). Those that participate in science understand by its very nature that the work they do will be outdated soon after the completion of their work. For each question answered, more questions are raised. As with the ascetic Christian, this is an isolated lonely position for the individual researcher and teacher to find him or herself in – to know that one’s hard work means very little in a very large scheme. What gives meaning to both is the fulfillment of calling to science and the university based upon the notion of service to progress. Because the notion of progress remains as fleeting as the notion of “electedness,” all that

is left for the individual in each case to do is delve deeper and deeper into work in the hope that this might provide meaning in what is a continuously rationalized, disenchanted, and potentially meaningless world.

The Protestant ethic is clearly at work in the motivating schemes of science and the academy. The academy's and science's commitment to an ethic of progress parallels ascetic Protestantism's belief in work and "calling" and these take on the characteristics of being ends in themselves. The adherents in each belief system work within rationalized fields, the rationalization of which operates "through the construction of the norms governing scientific activity, where these norms are simply those which maximize scientific" and academic productivity (Owens 1994: 115). With regard to the idea of specialization, Owens observes that both research and teaching, aimed at maximizing resources, is part of this process of "normative rationalization." "Needless to say," notes Owens

a condition of this organizational rationalization is the construction of autonomous institutions (i.e., universities) in which this process is facilitated; this implies, for example, the separation of the administrative from the research and teaching functions! The Protestant ethic thus manifests itself with respect to scientific activity in terms of a rationalization of both the institutional conditions of this activity and the mode of the activity itself. This rationalization of the mode of scientific activity has, moreover, a further dimension in that, in so far as science undermines the Protestant worldview, it loses ground of its legitimation, but this loss of worldview also has implications for the *direction* of scientific activity ... the undermining of the Protestant worldview both renders scientific activity 'objectively' meaningless and undermines the ideal interest governing its direction. The implication of the latter point with respect to modernity is that the direction of rationalized science is increasingly determined purely and simply by material interests (Owens 1994: 116).

What must be read into Weber's and Owens's account of the relationship among science, the academy and the process of institutional rationalization is that at the most fundamental level the social context in which these operate appears to be obliterated. Science and the academy, as represented by the modern university, aid in developing a modern world that is disenchanting, where the primary forms of knowledge cannot provide a modicum of meaning, and most importantly that these forms are separated from public inquiry into its own highest values. The scientific enterprise and the organization of the modern university in modernity both have the form of rational domination. "Here we are confronted with the breeding ground of 'specialists without Spirit'" and institutions that lack a fundamental sense of a larger community (Owen 1994: 116).

The loss of a larger sense of community, its relationship to the rise of professionalism, and its impact upon knowledge and politics comes to inform not only Weber's work, but also the work of one of America's premier educational and democratic theorists, John Dewey. While Dewey differs greatly in his view of politics and on the intellectual's role in pursuing politics from Weber, both are keenly aware of the impact that the belief in the modern capitalist state and its organs were having on politics and the modern individual. Both are aware and motivated as well to address the impact that the concomitant rise of science, division of labor, and professionalism have on the public's interest and ability to engage in discourse and affect their highest values.

Dewey viewed democracy as a way of life. As Robert Westbrook describes Dewey and his approach, the question of democracy and its impact upon modern society informed his inquiries in even the remotest fields of interest such as aesthetics and logic.

“At the same time,” writes Westbrook, “Dewey insisted that an adequate democratic theory required a deep-seated philosophical anthropology that addressed the fundamental features of human experience. He remarked that ‘any theory or activity in social and moral matters, liberal or other wise, which is not grounded in a comprehensive philosophy seems to me to be only a projection of arbitrary personal preference’” (Westbrook 1991: x). In this he was very similar in his concerns, as was Weber, with the loss of public control and direction over important social enterprises with potentially tremendous direct and indirect consequences to that society, such as science.

Dewey was present during the birth and early development of the modern university system and American political science and was affected by the rationalization, professionalization, and scientization of each. Some might even argue that Dewey became just the sort of specialist without spirit that Weber outlined in his *Protestant Ethic*. Although he was very much committed to science, what sets Dewey apart from his contemporaries interested in modern liberal democratic society was that he was an advocate of participatory democracy, or as Westbrook describes it, “the belief that democracy as an ethical ideal calls upon men and women to build communities in which the necessary opportunities and resources are available for every individual to realize fully his or her particular capacities and powers through participation in political, social, and cultural life” (Westbrook 1991: xv). Such democracy was buttressed by a “faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment and action if proper conditions are furnished” and which is “so deeply embedded in the methods which are intrinsic to

democracy that when a professed democrat denies the faith he convicts himself to treachery to his profession” (Westbrook, quoting Dewey, 1991: xv).

Many of Dewey’s contemporaries endorsed Joseph Schumpeter’s narrow characterization of democracy as a very limited means of keeping elites in check. Democracy has become for the liberal faithful a means merely of provisioning society with a minimal level of welfare through a state-regulated corporate capitalist economy. What is socially good becomes associated almost exclusively with the proffering of goods to society. Moreover, as Westbrook conceives of it:

[c]ulturally, liberals have left it to conservatives to worry over the absence of common culture grounded in a widely shared understanding of the good life and adopted a studied neutrality in ethics and art which favor a segmented market of competing ‘life styles’ in which the good life is reduced, both morally and aesthetically, to a set of more or less arbitrary preferences among bundles of signifying commodities ... they have hoped thereby to render the ordinary citizen the passive beneficiary of decisions made by the leaders of competing interest groups: at best government *for* but not *by* the people (Westbrook 1991: xv-xvi).

For Dewey the greatest threat to participatory democracy, society, and the individual is the loss of understanding and appreciation for a sense of community, a loss precipitated by the rise of the technical administrator and the professional.

Fundamental to understanding Weber’s and Dewey’s critiques, and thus the recent arguments against the modern university system and political science, are their characterizations of the most prominent force in modern life – capitalism. For both, capitalism and its dialectical relationship with science and rationality represent the loss of a larger sense of community. For Weber, the individual within modern capitalist society turns inward, as do the institutions, disciplines and enterprises for meaning. In seeking

inward meaning, individuals, disciplines and enterprises each capture the method and the meaning for itself as conditioned by ascetic Protestantism. Activity becomes separated from the larger social context and may be understood only privately. Thus, part of Weber's idea of the disenchantment of the world must be taken to mean the loss of conceptualizing a larger social context to one's actions. Dewey sees the same process at work in his discussion of the state and the eclipse of the public.

Dewey's *Public and Its Problems* represents perhaps the core of the author's formal political philosophy.<sup>46</sup> As a democratic political philosopher and political scientist Dewey believed himself to be charged with determining the "theoretical conditions essential for a public life consonant with democratic ideals, to point out the obstacles to the establishment of these conditions, and to suggest 'political technologies' that might remove these obstacles and sustain the conditions for democracy" (Westbrook 1991: 301). To serve his charge, Dewey begins with a discussion of the state and its relationship with "the public." Dewey conceives of the state as a secondary function to the political nature of the public. The public is aware of itself politically which gives rise to its public nature. Political awareness for Dewey is the recognition on the part of individuals that their actions have indirect consequences. Individuals seek to maintain an environment with as few "maladjustments" as possible. Politics represents the attempt on the part of individuals to do just that. Individuals acting in such a manner create the public. At its core, Dewey's public represents the age-old attempt in Western political thought to balance the universal with the particular: Dewey's democratic "ontology" has

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<sup>46</sup> In concert with his *Liberalism and Social Action*.

the individual aware of his or her individual condition as one with indirect social consequences in need of mediation. “There is no sense in asking how individuals come to be associated. They exist and operate in association” according to Dewey (Dewey 1954: 23). The public organizes itself and effectively addresses maladjustments by means of representatives “who as guardians of custom, as legislators, as executives, judges, etc., care for its especial interests by methods intended to regulate the conjoint actions of individuals and groups. Then and in so far, association adds to itself political organization, and something which may be government comes into being: the public is a political state” (Dewey 1954: 35). The public, society, and the state thus all are understood by Dewey in the following way: the public is a group of individuals that recognizes individual activity as having social consequences and whose primary interest is the mediation of those consequences; the state is *the* organization of the public affected through officials for the protection of the interests shared by its members; the measure of the goodness of a state and its politics is its ability to relieve individuals from the waste of negative struggle and needless conflict that arise in social contexts (Dewey 1954: 33,72).

For the modern state to remain committed to its service of the public, it had to avoid the capture of its public machinery by private interests. The best way to do that in the modern era, according to Dewey, was to invest the people with the ability to select their representatives on a regular basis. Political democracy was the best way politically to maintain the “insight, loyalty, and energies” of its public servants toward a public end. However, the “existing forms of democratic government became obsolete almost from

the moment they were created, victims of forces unleashed by the economic activities of the very class that created them ... the industrial revolution had created a 'Great Society' in modern nations marked by vast and impersonal webs of interdependent relationships" (Westbrook 1991: 307). The public within this new society was unable to keep pace with institutions needed to address new forms of maladjustments and indirect consequences.

Dewey says as much, noting:

Indirect, extensive, enduring and serious consequences of conjoint and interacting behavior call a public into existence having a common interest in controlling these consequences. But the machine age has so enormously expanded, multiplied, intensified and complicated the scope of the indirect consequences, has formed such immense and consolidated unions in action, on an impersonal rather than a community basis, that the resultant public cannot identify and distinguish itself. And this discovery is obviously an antecedent condition of any effective organization on its part (Dewey 1954: 126).

The Great Society failed to produce a commensurate Great Community. For Dewey, the state is effective in addressing public concerns when there is "the" public. The problem with the Great Society and modern society is that there are too many publics and too many varied concerns for existing political resources to deal with. "Our concern at this time is to state how it is that the machine age in developing the Great Society has invaded and partially disintegrated the small communities of former times" without creating a public aware of or concerned with its own indirect consequences (Dewey 1954: 143-153).

For Dewey and Weber alike, the arrival of the machine age has not come without costs. Each author recognizes that much of this cost stems from the nature of labor as defined by modern capitalism undergirded by the Protestant ethic, science and secular

rationalism, and the demise of the public. Work for Weber under the capitalist enterprise is done for the sake of work, method becoming end, legitimized by the notion of the calling or vocationization of capitalist labor. While Weber describes this in his work on science, it is a description of the modern profession as well. Just as the individual researcher takes on the calling of the ascetic Protestant, so too does the laborer and the academic. Where the researcher is tied to the notion of progress, the academic, the political scientist is tied to the reproduction of the discipline seeking to advance knowledge. Because this is based upon the process of secular rationalization, this process is not about meaning or public values for those have been replaced with method and means as the ultimate ends of professions. In Dewey's scheme, these professions have replaced much of the "the Public" with a variety of sub-publics. They too may be directed toward addressing indirect consequences, but those consequences are not understood in light of a broader community – they are limited to the community of professionals and technicians motivated by the methods endorsed by their disciplines to provide individual meaning for those disciplines and their adherents. Both Dewey and Weber understand that the principle cost of the modern age has been the Great Community that is able to understand itself in terms of a Deweyian public – the public and its values have been eclipsed.

### **Market Rationality, Gorzian Democracy and Political Theory re-Scoped**

As was suggested at the beginning of this chapter, the modern university system was envisioned as part of the Great Society, providing it with the knowledge and

technicians to manage its progress. Yet, the modern university system organized under the rational principles outlined by Weber helps to usher in the demise of the Deweyian public and its public discourse concerning its highest values, leading to the subversion of the public as a Great Community. What has replaced community is profession and market rationality. This rationalization and professionalization is the primary characteristic of the modern university and its various disciplines. As American political science was fostered and reared under the tutelage of the modern university system and was from its inception charged with fomenting a healthy democratic polity, many have expressed dismay over political science's gradual acceptance of the public's eclipse and the inward turn political theory and science have made in accepting a market "identity."

This market identity on the part of political theory comes in part of its being able to alienate itself through the various levels of Gunnell's discourse and production. This in turn is predicated on alienated labor, i.e., the separation or division of mental and physical labor as outlined in Chapter Two. An underlying theme throughout this dissertation has been the notion of the public separated from the intellectual work that occurs in political theory. One of the foundation elements of modern political thought is that the individual, once freed of the heteronomic power found in feudalism, would be his or her own political thinker. This is also one of the tenets of democracy. The separation of the public from its own intellectual prerogatives is indeed very much the subject of Weber's and Dewey's arguments regarding modern political systems and in their accounting, one of modernity's greatest failures. Democracy needs a political theory not

just in the sense of individuals thinking about democracy via market impulses but political theory as it might be practiced by the public.

This notion of putting the public back into democratic intellectual thought is the subject of much of André Gorz's work. Gorz, former editor of *Les Temps Modernes*, has written extensively on the pervasiveness of the market and economic rationality and is very critical of the separation of intellectual work from the public and the privileging of political theory into the hands of a few. Like Cox in his "Market as God," Gorz is critical of the impact of marketology on our thinking, noting that "[p]articularly in periods of radical change and accelerated technical innovation, capitalism breaks down the social order, shatters cohesion and 'identities,' and sweeps away traditional norms and values and dissolves those communities, allegiances and exchanges that were formerly felt to be entirely natural by bringing them under a system of technical constraints and legal formalization" (Gorz 1994: 16).<sup>47</sup> And where Crenson and Ginsberg are critical of the rise of the administrative, professional nature of private politics that have come to dominate the late-modern epoch, Gorz argues too that "an ever denser net of legal norms of governmental and para-governmental bureaucracies is spread over the daily life of its potential and actual clients" and that "the lifeworld is regimented, dissected, controlled, and watched over" by "normalization and surveillance ... down to its very finest capillary ramifications in everyday communication" (Gorz, quoting Habermas, 1994: 18). It is this deleterious mix of governmental/societal structures against which Gorz rails, particularly their assumption of "neutral" or "free" market forces they have come to represent simply

because “they [appear to] lie beyond the scope and conscious determination of human beings” (Gorz 1994: 19). Gorz, like Cox, is wary of the omnipresence of marketology and its economic rationality.

Gorz seeks to reconceptualize socialism to resist the pervasiveness of economic rationality and its steady creep via its pervasive normalization in the lifeworld. Socialism is ultimately rendered otiose if it fails to move beyond its traditional heritage of an attempt to restore “pre-modern, undifferentiated unity of the individual, community and functional spheres of paid work and self-determined activities” – the end product of which is stability. If, however, socialism and its “contents” are understood in light of their relationship with present conditions, their meaning remains clear: limit the logic of profit and the market. “The point,” Gorz argues, “is to subject economic and technical development to a pattern and orientations which have been thought through and *democratically* debated; to tie in the goals of the economy with the free public expression of felt needs, instead of creating needs for the sole purpose of enabling capital to expand and commerce to develop” (Gorz 1994: 8).<sup>47</sup> Without the assumptions of “givenness” or “naturalness” of marketology, production could never have had as its goal “the accumulation of ... an ‘economic surplus,’ the creation of endlessly expanding needs and continually reborn desires” (Gorz, quoting Baran and Sweezy 1994: 9).

The autonomy of market rationality becomes inevitable in part through the alienation of mental labor from the majority. “The fact of the social apparatuses of

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<sup>47</sup> According to Gorz, this is what Jürgen Habermas describes as the “colonization of the lifeworld” by “economic and administrative subsystems.”

<sup>48</sup> My emphasis.

production becoming autonomous from individuals and the self-referentiality of those developmental forces are the preconditions *both* for the capacity of modern societies to evolve and for the destructiveness of the developmental tendency which is set in train within them,” notes Gorz, also arguing “[t]he systems regulatory mechanisms choose from among the potential innovations those which best permit the autonomized economic system to consolidate and reproduce itself. Technics and technology, ecology and transport systems, urbanization, towns and municipalities, and work all evolve in such a way as to ensure the growth and effectiveness of the autonomous production process” (Gorz, quoting Land 1994: 9). This is not to say that Gorz envisions a socialist economy replacing a capitalist one – “there is no other science of management – no other micro-economic rationality – than the capitalist one” – but rather determining to what extent the criteria of economic and market rationality should be subordinated to other forms of rationality. As it stands, marketology attempts to deny this determination by reinforcing the divide between its reigning ideology and the public.

What is at stake, according to Gorz, “in the conflict between capitalism and socialism is not economic rationality as such, but the extent of the sphere in which economic rationality may exert its effects” (Gorz 1994: 30). Gorz defines an economically rational action as one where that action seeks to maximize the efficiency with which the factors of production are employed and that these means are distinct from the objectives pursued (yet the latter are themselves the means of valorizing capital). “A society remains capitalist,” writes Gorz, “so long as the relations shaped by economic rationality and functional to the valorization of capital are preponderant and mould the

lives and activities, their scale of values and culture” – a society where everything is essentially for sale (Gorz 1994: 30).

Gorz conceives of the problem as consisting in preserving the relative autonomy of the market, culture, legal system, and the press without surrendering the aim of shaping and reorientating economic and technical development in a truly public direction. The aim of the economy must be surrendered to the public while the public and its instruments must not seek to determine the exact path of development. “For it to be possible for development to be shaped and directed, the most important point is that processes of innovation and selection should be tied in to the aspirations and life interests of individuals, i.e., that procedures of political participation should be established which allow individuals to bring the ‘autonomized social machine’ into line with and place it in the service of – their life interests” (Gorz, quoting Land 1994: 10). The aim as Gorz sees it is to democratize economic decisions.

At the heart of political conflict within the modern epoch is the fundamental question of the extent of the free play of economic rationality and market mechanisms. Commodity relations, where the individual is free to pursue his or her own immediate interests, tend to destroy both civil society and the conditions that make civil society possible, necessitating the restriction on these pursuits by law (Gorz 1994: 83). However, as Gorz points out, “[t]he basic problem is that this way of limiting and correcting market mechanisms does not prevent the destruction of civil society. The welfare state can, to a certain extent, limit the scope of that destruction, but overall it functions as a substitute for a civil society that is in the process of withering away” (Gorz 1994: 83). For Gorz

there cannot be socialism without democracy and democracy needs the public in touch with its intellectual tools and a set of self-organized public activities recognized and protected by law and a strong public identity. Only when socialism embraces this democratic ideal will it really be socialist: “Socialism must be conceived as the binding of capitalist rationality within a democratically defined framework, which should serve the achievement of democratically determined goals, and also, of course, be reflected in the limitation of economic rationality” within civil society (Gorz 1994: 77).

It is just this expanded sense of democracy, a reinvigorated civil society, and the public’s control over the aims and purpose of production in Gorz’s vision of socialism that I wish to employ in exploring alternatives to the alienated production of political theory and political studies outlined in this dissertation. In this, I hope to offer at least a glimmer of the “epicness” of Gorz’s work: it is epic in the sense that *res publicae* remain squarely at the center of his thinking. In this Gorz reflects not only the theoretical interests of Wolin, but the theoretical and practical interests of Weber and Dewey as well. It is epic too in the sense of its expanded scope of democracy. Too often today in political science texts and treatises democracy is considered an endpoint, something to be reached merely through institutional arrangements and “free and fair” elections. Gorz posits something much broader in vision for democracy, a reconnection of the public with its civic identity, with its democratic, intellectual work.

What if the public was represented in the peer review process? What if the public had a greater say or even a direct say in the production of political science or theory? What if the referent of our work was not ourselves or the scientific method, but a

reinvigorated public with the time and energy to engage in questions, ideas, and identities captured by political theorists and scientists? How would what we write and engage in change? What if our production was democratized or made part of a broader sense of the public and its interest? Read in light of Weber, Dewey, and Wolin, Gorz's work on democracy can easily be turned to interrogate just this kind of industrial academic production. Given the imbrication of the university system with the present industrialization of knowledge and impoverishing of the civic life, political theory and science taken as whole may easily be cast in Gorz's analysis as part colonizing tools of the lifeworld. What would happen then if his democratic ideals were applied to our disciplinary production?

I do not aim here at Gorz's goal of revitalizing socialism. What I am interested in exploring is the connection between the political thought of the academy as part of the modern university system and the demise of political, public thinking on the part of civil society. The extent of market rationality is pervasive and the seepage of marketology into academics is understood by most, but little discussed in "professional" forums. We may even use the notion of private property and the internalization of costs when considering academic production. Demsetz argued in his work on property rights, that commodities and resources are husbanded and cared for when ownership rights internalize the cost of their maintenance. Political theory has internalized the cost of thinking politically. Political ideas and public identities are captured by those in academia, jealously guarded by various layers of boundary and access rules that have built up around the university system. Careers, tenure, and other individual personal

choices are tied to these commodities so that the individual will maintain them as though they were his or her own, all the while maintaining the (re)production of these ideas within their alienated form. This alienation is produced time and time again through the peer review journal and the exclusionary nature of the university. Production of political theory takes on not the utopian gesture or epicness of Jameson or Wolin, but the economic rationale and belief system of the Market as God.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of The Enlightenment, as Immanuel Kant envisioned it, was the freedom of the individual and society from its own “self-imposed tutelage.” The notion held that individuals, freed by their own reason, would shrug off the heteronomous power of the Church and feudal hierarchy and become their own thinking, moral beings. Marx, Weber, Dewey, Wolin, Jameson, and Gunnell all seem to want to remind us of our own productive power to recreate this tutelage and the need to resist such an urge. It appears that political thought as produced by “professionals” has slipped back into a form of tutelage - the “givens” and “principles” of the market. How often is it the case that graduate students seeking to write something original and critical of the status quo are told “this won’t sell”? The rules and procedures that govern our production seek to legitimate it through its auto-referentiality. Peers convincing peers that their particular view or take on a political question is valued and the peer system in turn being girded by the rules and procedures governing the production of the modern university. The costs of rule making and production are borne by the privatizing and methodizing of the

“political” questions being asked. The idea of the public and its politics becomes a very private thing – a privacy that has become our modern tutelage at the cost of our civic, public identity.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of modern thinking, with its Kantian inheritance and his urging us “*aude sapere*,” is its positing the notion that we as humans are the authors of our times. We are the producers of the past, present and future. We produce how we produce. Hegel notes this in his philosophy of history. Mill urges us to understand our place in history in order to understand the progression of truth. Marx synthesizes Hegelian dialectics in order to prepare us for the freedom represented through just this knowledge – not only do we know we reproduce ourselves socially, we can control how we produce ourselves socially. This “epic” theory opens the scope of political thought to posit new ways of understanding ourselves so long as we free ourselves from the “givens” of superstition and historically ingrained thinking. Marketology as Cox describes it, economic rationality for Gorz, both cut against the grain of just this kind of thinking. “The Market” takes on, through its omnipotence, omnipresence, and omnipresence the kind of power and inertia that Kant and the moderns were hoping to undermine. Weber, Dewey, Wolin, and Gunnell remind us of this power and though they do not connect it directly with market rationality, they provide us with the telltale signs of our steady march back towards our own self-imposed tutelage.

## **CHAPTER 6: WEBER, DEWEY, AND WOLIN - A COMMITMENT TO THE VOCATION OF DEMOCRACY**

The purpose of political science and theory is the analysis of power in all its dimensions. This dissertation examines the power of market rationality on our very understanding of power as it is portrayed by political theory. I argue that political theory's position to comment on the nature of power is itself compromised by the dominance of market methodism in its primary arena of professional exchange: the peer-reviewed journal. Political theory's critical distance from the dominant method of political science has been narrowed considerably in the past thirty to forty years by the rise in the importance of the peer-reviewed article for "professional development." These market developments have in turn narrowed the scope of political theory and turned its interests from questions of the public concern to that of a professional identity removed from the civic sphere. In order for political theory to engage the expansive, critical position of epic theory it must address the issue and problems presented by the nature of "progress" in the social sciences and must come to engage an ethic of responsibility to democracy.

### **Science, Society, and Context: Framing Our Questions**

Much of my work presented here has been an attempt to situate the efforts of political theorists in the context of the modern American academy with the understanding that the academy itself is subject to various societal pressures. The advancement of the importance of methodism mirrors the rise of and appears justified in part by the

dominance of market rationality. The narrowness of political theory questions reflects the import that methods play in our disciplinary identity. Method forefronts an author's view or take on a particular "political" question, posed usually by someone else engaged in more direct political analysis. What is important is not the original author taken on his or her own merits but the theorist's approach and method of understanding a particular text or section of the original author's views. While science seeks reproduction of various findings and observations, it is itself continuously reproduced in our use of it as the only way to question the political world. Science makes this reproduction easy by having a "clear," communally acceptable method to its results. Market rationality attempts to take advantage of this reproduction by convincing us of the idea that more is better. Methodism provides the means to quantity of production. Positions that question the centrality of these principles are generally discouraged by the discipline and cast aside. In order to keep production high and legitimize itself within the discipline, political theory has had to take on its methodism, to the exclusion of more expansive and inclusive questions.

My purpose here is to expand questions regarding how we do what we do as political theorists in the hopes of re-igniting interest in Wolin's call for inclusive approaches to political science. In this, I am not proposing anything new *per se* about the conduct and nature of social scientific endeavors. Weber in his *Methodology of the Social Sciences* stresses the historicity of the scientific method noting that

[a]ll research in the cultural sciences in an age of specialization, once it is orientated towards a given subject matter though particular settings of problems and has established its methodological principles, will consider the analysis of data as an end in itself. It will discontinue assessing the

value of the individual facts in terms of their relationships to ultimate value-ideas. Indeed, it will lose its awareness of its ultimate rootedness in value-ideas in general ... but there comes a moment when the atmosphere changes. The significance of the unreflectively utilized viewpoints becomes uncertain and the road is lost in twilight. The light of the great cultural problems moves on. Then science too prepares to change its standpoint and its analytical apparatus to view the streams of events from the heights of thought (Weber 1949: 113).

Weber, along with Thomas Kuhn, problematizes the notion of steady, rational progress in science. As John Dryzek argues, “progress of that sort cannot occur in political science because any comparisons among research traditions can only proceed in the context of a empirical problems which are socially determined ... the rationality of any choice among research traditions is therefore historically contingent” (Dryzek 1986: 301).

What I have tried to advance in this study is the historically contingent connection between the primacy of method and its close relationship with market ideology. Ricci’s study is extremely important and useful in its “sociological” approach to understanding the nature of political science and its push for a scientific identity. Gunnell’s work is important in its discussion of the philosophical shortcomings of political theory. But both of these critiques, I believe, fall short in exploring the pervasiveness of Cox’s market ideology or marketology. Both authors do a superb job of exploring the development of political science in light of the advancement of state-centric thinking and in light of the impact of the scientific approach. What is underdeveloped is their understanding of the importance of the neoliberal context and the emergence of methodism as fundamental components of the nature of political theory as it is practiced today. The theory that gains reward in the discipline’s highest rated journals is the most methodologically narrow in its scope and limits its reach to the well-established fodder of the Western canon. In

limiting its scope, authors not only reproduce the method, but the importance of the canon itself and thereby political theory's own importance. Much of political theory's work goes back to reifying the status of the canon to keep its storehouse for reproduction well-stocked. This much at least seems to be at work in Gunnell's *Orders of Discourse* where he chastises political theorists in general for being far too interested in the minutiae of their own discourse and that fails to move beyond apparently age-old, respected but socially "inert" questions. Conceived of in light of Ricci's critique, political theory no longer circulates among his three "poles" of disciplinary concern (politics, scientific scholarship, and the objectives of democratic society). Rather the circular motion Ricci ascribes to political science in general and I ascribe to political theory in particular rotates around three new poles: market concerns for the production and reproduction of a political theory that is very narrowly construed; the methods that engender this type theory and gives it value; and the theorists' own isolated, alienated market identity.

### **A Civic Presence: Progress, Vocation, Democracy, the Re(pole)ing of the Public**

Are Ricci's "poles" now closed? Is there no escape from the market gravity of the orbit described above? I do not wish to suggest an utter lack of creative, expansive theory on the part of the journals or their contributing political theorists for indeed there have been important contributions to political theory by the likes of Seyla Benhabib, John Dryzek, Amy Gutmann, Tim Luke, and Ido Oren to name a few. What is clear, however, is that science, method, and market provide much of the context in which political theory and theorists reside. If we have an interest in moving political theory and science

towards Ricci's democratic pole or a wider engagement of Wolin's epic theory, there must be, I believe, widespread recognition of the limits on "progress" in our social science and some sort of recognition on the part of our peer-review process of an ethic of responsibility to democracy.

Weber is very much aware of the problematic nature of "progress" in the social sciences, an awareness that prompted him to pen *Methodology of the Social Sciences* and propose his "ideal types." Karl Löwith observed of Weber that he recognized the "questionable character not merely of modern science and culture but of our present orientation to life in general" and sought a means to engage a "radical demolition of [such] 'illusions'" (Scaff, quoting Löwith 1989: 76). Weber is aware as well that this puts him at odds with much of the social sciences, arguing that it is without grounding in any ultimate, universal sense. Scaff is quick to point out that Weber does not have a solution to our condition in the sense of a firm or final remedy, "as the predicament is embedded in our culture and thus incapable of solution or even definition from an Archimedean standpoint outside that culture. Just as one cannot hope independently to invent cultural values without courting absurdity, so one cannot expect to solve such problems without the luxury of a solipsism that is 'not of this world'" (Scaff 1989: 77). Instead, progress in social science, in political science and theory, must be understood in light of its historically contingent, constitutive research traditions that define empirical problems through their socially mediated lenses. Or, as Dryzek argues, "problem definition in political science cannot secure autonomy from external social forces. Hence

the discipline can never exhibit ‘vertical’ progress of the form with which we are familiar in the natural sciences” (Dryzek 1986: 318).

Weber’s “ideal types” is in part his attempt to deal with this lack of objective meaning and vertical progress on the part of social science. In *Methodology* he argues that this science “involves ‘subjective’ presuppositions in so far as it concerns itself only with those components of reality which have some relationship, however indirect, to events to which we attach cultural *significance*” (Weber 1949: 82). The implication of Weber’s position is “that the selection of the subject matter of cultural science cannot be guided by ‘inter-subjective’ values, let alone ‘objective’ values, but rather is dependent on the particular evaluative ideas of specific researchers concerning both the determination of cultural significance and the ranking of phenomena in terms of their cultural significance” (Owen 1994: 92). “All knowledge of cultural [and social] reality,” writes Weber, “is always knowledge from *particular points of view* ... [social scientists] must understand how to relate the events of the real world consciously or unconsciously to universal ‘cultural values’ and to select out those relationships which are significant to us” (Weber 1949: 81-2). In this, Weber hopes to allow the human agent within the framework of science and modernity to address the world with “clear-eyed” judgement free of illusion. “As this person, one [is] released to one’s own resources for action and knowledge by a culture incapable of asserting objectively valid substantive meaning. ‘Objectivity’ was attached to the reconstruction of ‘the empirically given’ on the basis of ‘evaluative ideas,’ and not to empirical things-in-themselves, which could never demonstrate the validity of such ideas” (Scaff 1989: 77).

The social scientist's "value-perspective" determines the nature and scope of the ideal-type employed, "that is the aspect of the phenomena that the investigator sees as culturally significant" (Owen 1994: 93). One implication of the ideal type then is that it assumes that the value-perspective of the researcher is always at odd with other distinct value-perspectives and accounts of the "empirically given" of other researchers. "The struggle of worldviews which Weber locates as a consequence of the withdrawal of the ultimate values from the public sphere thus extends into the nature of scientific method itself" (Owen 1994: 93).

One of the central problems of this withdrawal for Weber is the "sense that a unified experience lies beyond the grasp of the modern self and that malaise and self-conscious guilt have become inextricably intertwined with 'culture,'" "rationalized" society, and their study (Scaff 1989: 80). As such, the ability of the individual to act in any significant way is understood always in the context and constraints of rationality, as it has pushed aside value. This Weber refers to, at the end of his *Protestant Ethic*, as the "iron cage." The cage represents the individual's impotence before "the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order ... which today determine[s] the lives of all who are born into this mechanism (Wolin, quoting Weber, 1994: 300). "The cage is iron," argues Wolin, "because the main forces of modern life, science, capitalism, and bureaucratic organization are triumphs of rationality and so the mind has no purchase point to attack them. They *are* mind incarnated into legal codes and administrative organizations that promise order, predictable decision, regularity of procedures, and responsible, objective, and qualified officials" or experts (Wolin 1994: 300). The power

and productive capacity of rationalization are so overwhelming as to appear as immutable, and according to Weber, activity within it rests not upon spiritual, ethical, or political ideals, but rather upon mechanical responses to an empty “economic compulsion.”

As Wolin notes, this emptiness or meaninglessness clearly plays a central role in Weber’s work, particularly with regard to methodology and the social sciences. “Capitalism and bureaucratization may have produced the social and political structures of rationalization but the equation of rationalization with meaninglessness was the special responsibility of modern science. Science has attacked religious, moral, and metaphysical beliefs and had insisted that everything could ... be reduced to rational explanation” (Wolin 1994: 300). The result is Weber’s conception of a “disenchanted” world, one that does not need religion, metaphysics, or God: a world emptied of meaning. “Science deals with fact, material reality, and rational demonstration. It is so helpless to restore what it has destroyed that, *qua* science, it cannot even justify its own value ... The inherent limitations of science, its inability to make good the deficiencies of the world’s meaning, provide the backdrop [then] to the ... role of the methodologist” (Wolin 1994: 300-1). As Wolin describes it, Weber situates in the ideal type the chance for the methodologist of social science to gain footing on this uneven ground and engage in meaningful action in their chosen realm.

Wolin characterized the immediate realm of the political theorist in 1969 as embedded in a discipline of the social sciences dominated by the methods of the “behavioral revolution.” “Epic” political theory was his ideal type response to this

“value-neutral” landscape. In valuing epic theory, Wolin hoped to channel the culturally valued norms of original, meaningful and expansive scholarship directed toward issues concerning the public good back into political science and theory. Or, understood in light of Ricci’s analysis, Wolin hoped to have political theory re-orbit the three poles of politics, scientific scholarship, and democracy. In this Wolin echoes Weber’s argument that empirical inquiry is based not on the data provided by the inquiry but from “the meta-empirical validity of ultimate final values in which the meaning of our existence is rooted ... The ‘objectivity’ of the social sciences depends ... on the fact that the empirical data are always related to those evaluative ideas which along make them worth knowing and the significance of the empirical data is derived from these evaluative ideas” (Weber 1949: 111). These evaluative ideas are brought to social science by the conscientious social scientist who in turn is informed by cultural norms and interests.

My work characterizes the immediate realm of the political theorist as presently embedded in a discipline of the social sciences dominated by market methodism, production for peer-review, and regularly insulated from such norms and interests. I argue as well for Wolin’s ideal type of epic political theory with its focus on scope and *res publicae*, if there is to be meaningful “footing” and progress within the discipline. Yet if we are to break orbit and return to Ricci’s “traditional” poles, particular that which is interested in democratic objectives, we must imbue our Weberian/Wolinian “vocation of epic political theory” with an ethic of responsibility toward democracy.

“The positive moment of Weber’s project,” notes Owen, “requires the specification of an ideal capable of resisting the disenchantment of the age and the

growth of the dominance of rational discipline” (Owen 1994: 123). Wolin sees this ideal in epic political theory. Yet Weber’s ideal is embodied as well in his notion of vocation, or calling. In his “Politics as Vocation,” Weber warns those wishing to enter politics that its primary medium is power and that this power is backed by “the ‘right’ to use violence” (Gerth and Mills 1946: 78). If one is to act in a meaningful way in the modern political realm, one must understand this primary condition. Central to this understanding Weber argues are the components of his vocational ethic: passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion (Weber 1946: 115). “In the sphere of politics, passionate devotion to one’s ultimate values is expressed through ‘devotion to a ‘cause,’ to the god or demon who is overlord” (Owen, quoting Weber, 1994: 129). This vocational ethic can be understood then as Weber’s attempt to integrate, “the passionate commitment to ultimate values with the dispassionate analysis of alternative means of pursuing them,” e.g., an ethic of responsibility (Owen, quoting Brubaker, 1994: 132). Wolin seeks the same type of vocational ethic for political theory. However, if we are to re-pole political theory our responsibility must include a commitment to democracy and not just a passion for politics.

As Weber serves as warning for those wishing to participate in politics, Wolin serves as warning for those who choose political theory as their realm. For those wishing to pursue the ideal of epic political theory, Wolin expresses the need to know on the part of the theorist the “lay of the land,” those forces arrayed against the epic theorist’s responsibility to scope and public concerns. But Wolin’s call for a vocation of epic theory is not enough given Ricci’s analysis. What is particularly troubling about the past

thirty years or so of the political theory presented in the discipline's primary journals is its compromising Ricci's traditional third pole of concern, the objectives of democratic society.

Generally, there is very little presence of a civic concern or responsibility to democracy at all in political theory. Our peer-review process strains the public out in favor of the judiciousness and excellence perceived by the historically contingent knowledge market that has developed out of political theory. The question of whether an author's contribution is excellent, that it contributes to the public's well-being or a set of democratic ideals, is placed not in the presence of a civic interest in any democratic sense, but rather before a self-selected group of academic peers. The "excellence" of our present political thought is determined by another set of sources and does not stem from the public choices or a civic rationale. Understood this way, we can see a much greater role for market rationality in Ricci's observations regarding the discipline's scientific identity and methods. "Quantity versus quality of publications, the propensity to specialize, the proliferation and endless refinement of techniques, rewards for novelty rather than the truth, distortions of the truth, the retreat from [civic] reason, the loss of wisdom, ... [and abandonment of] the public interest" – there is a logical progression in these and it starts with the logic of the market, fused with political science's scientific heritage, and the commodification of political thought. There is also the logical market progression at work in Gunnell's "orders of discourse." Again, we see Gunnell's assertion that political theory has become a narrowly construed, insular activity, that is disconnected from authentically political concerns.

If we are to engage Ricci's interest in the objectives of democratic society as political theorists we must take it on as vocation as outlined by Weber and Wolin. We must be aware of the parameters and limits exerted by iron cage of peer-review, market methodism, and production. We must have passion, responsibility, and a sense of proportion. These we will not find in the realm of the journal but for what we bring to it. Yet our vocation must include the added responsibility outlined by John Dewey that holds democracy as an ethical conception, or an ethic of responsibility to democracy.

In examining the character of political theory as it has developed in the thirty years since his *APSR* piece, Sheldon Wolin cites Theodore Adorno's conception of the importance of political knowledge and theory:

[K]nowledge must indeed present the fatally rectilinear succession of victory and defeat, but should also address itself to those things which were not embraced by this dynamic, which fell by the wayside – what might be called the waste products and blind spots that have escaped the dialectic. It is in the nature of the defeated to appear, in their impotence, irrelevant, eccentric, derisory. What transcends the ruling society is not only the potentiality which it develops but also that which did not fit properly into the laws of historical movement. Theory must needs deal with *cross-grained*, opaque, unassimilated material, which as such admittedly has from the start an anachronistic quality, but is not wholly obsolete since it has outwitted the historical dynamic (Wolin, quoting Adorno, 2000: 4).<sup>49</sup>

Wolin notes that he is interested in this passage because it says much of the history of political theory in American political science, particularly in terms of loss and defeat. However, it also “pictures the triumphant movement as shoving aside, ignoring, the

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<sup>49</sup> My emphasis.

‘defeated’ – the defeated as that which even the ‘dialectic’ has refused to appropriate, that which is not merely superseded, but surpassed, ‘anachronistic’” (Wolin 2000: 4). What is left is something that is left undigested and unassimilated that appears as “cross-grained” to the dominant system.

Epic theory, with its expansive scope and concern for the public, is for Wolin this “cross-grained” material; ideas and thinking that did not easily succumb to the “behavioral revolution” or market methodology – it is a resistant, indigestible lump that sticks in the craw of American political science. It would be made more so with a commitment to a Deweyian “ethics of democracy.” Dewey, like Wolin, wants to engage in a political theory that resists easy rationalization. In the introduction to his *Ethics of Democracy* he writes that “apparent contradictions always demand attention. When the contradiction is between a manner of life seemingly becoming universal, and a theory of this manner which makes it almost worthless, it is yet more striking” (Dewey 1969: 228). The contradiction of which Dewey writes is that between elite arguments against democracy as “only a form of government,” devoid of any historical meaning and lacking the realization of any ideas, and a more robust, cross-grained version of democracy that suggests an organic whole.

Dewey’s critique is aimed at Henry Maine’s 1885 work, *Popular Government*, where Maine argues that democracy is destructive and unstable, incapable of generating consensus save for that authored by demagogues or corruption. “Judging from past experience it always ‘ends in producing monstrous and morbid forms of monarchy and aristocracy ... Its legislation is a wild burst of destructive wantonness; an arbitrary

overthrow of all existing institutions, followed by a longer period in which its principle put an end to all social and political activity ... The establishment of the masses in power is the blackest omen for all legislation” (Dewey, quoting Maine, 1969: 228). Maine’s critique “was based on a purely instrumental conception of democracy as a set of political institutions and on criteria of judgement heavily weighted toward social order and stability” (Westbrook 1991: 38). In this view “democracy is but a numerical aggregate” incapable of manifesting a manageable, united will.

Dewey, like Wolin, appears suspicious of those seeking the ease represented by “manageability.” Maine complains of democracy being little more than anarchy in noting that it is simply the rule of the many and no intelligible sense can be made of a multitude wielding a will. It butts up against the rationality of the social scientist trying to apply scientific standards to it. The ideal of democracy, understood beyond mere instrumental concepts, is difficult to study. It forces the theorist, truly interested in epic theory, to resist easy methods that would make it mere process. It does not sit well at ease within market methods that require easy reproduction. Dewey’s democracy is not merely about numbers, nor is Wolin’s epic theory. Democracy is itself cross-grained.

It was not enough, for Dewey, to simply demonstrate that democracy as a form of government “was the most effective means of organizing consensus and preserving stability ... for to evaluate it simply in these instrumental terms ... was to miss the more fundamental significance of democracy as an end, as an ethical ideal” (Westbrook 1991: 41). “A government springs from a vast mass of sentiments, many vague, some defined, of instincts, of aspirations, of ideas, of hopes and fears, of purposes. It is their reflex and

their incorporation; their projection and their outgrowth ... To say that democracy is only a form of government is like saying that home is a more or less geometrical arrangement of bricks and mortar” (Dewey 1969: 240). Democracy in this case is a way of life, a vocation, “a form of moral and spiritual associations.” It is the ideal type of government.

Democracy does not differ from aristocracy in its goal. The end is not mere assertion of the individual will as individual; it is not disregard of law, of the universal; it is complete realization of the law, namely of the unified spirit of the community. Democracy differs as to its means. This universal, this law, this unity of purpose, this fulfilling of function in devotion to the interests of the social organism, is not to be put into a man from without. It must begin in man himself, however much the good and the wise of society contribute. Personal responsibility, individual initiation, these are the notes of democracy ... democracy [implies] that the actual state of society exists for the sake of realizing an end which is ethical ... [it] holds that the ideal is already at work in every personality, and must be trusted to care for itself. There is an individualism in democracy ... but it is an ethical, not a numerical individualism of freedom, of responsibility, of initiative to and for the ethical ideal (Dewey 1969: 243-4).

In this, Dewey mirrors the importance Weber and Wolin place upon the individual seeking meaningful interaction with their chosen fields. A responsibility toward an ethic of democracy seems a natural step to those interested in the ideal of an epic theory concerned with public interests:

In one word democracy means that *personality* is the first and final reality. It admits that the full significance of personality can be learned by the individual only as it is already presented to him in objective form in society; it admits that the chief stimuli and encouragements to the realization of personality come from society; but it holds none the less, to the fact that personality cannot be procured for any one, however degraded and feeble, by anyone else, however wise and strong (Dewey 1969: 244).

The democratic ethic only strengthens the expansive imperative of Wolin’s epic theory.

It comes to reflect our interest in the development of the individual within ethically bound

social organizations while it envisions the individual in very much the same way as Weber's social scientist engaged with the ideal type. Moreover, conceived of as an organic whole, it resists the relative ease of dissection of market methodism. The ethic of democracy is at the very heart of a vocation to epic theory.

Weber warns the methodologist and those interested in politics that their realms of choice have been evacuated of ultimate or universal senses of meaning or value. The bearings and values that individual practitioners bring with them via vocation in the form of ideals are their only protection from the ever-shifting value and moral grounds of the modern world. Wolin too calls for vocation and the service of an ideal type, "epic" political theory, as a guide through the disciplined, methodized landscape of modern political science and theory's realm. I hope here to warn political theorists and scientists as well that their chosen realm has come to be dominated by the market methodology of the peer-review process. Meaning in modern political theory has been overrun by method and technique. I too call for a vocation of epic political theory but one that is informed by an ideal ethic of responsibility to democracy that seeks to stem this tide. As Weber and Wolin seek to have us aware and engaged in communal values, I argue that as political theorists we need to bring these communal values as well as democratic ones with us to our chosen realm.

Political theory has not of late been informed by the objectives of democratic society. These will not spontaneously spring forth in the realm of peer-review. If we are to treat seriously Ricci's democratic third pole, political theorists need to engage a responsibility towards democracy as an ethic. Maine's chiding of democracy seems an

apt description of the practice of political science and theory today – nothing more than an interest in numerical aggregates and conglomeration of units – we come to resemble that which “study.” Our vocation deals in communal values and public judgment. To often these wilt under the constant pressure from the iron cage of our private professional peer-review process. Substantive democratic issues and debate cannot survive meaningfully in this realm without our commitment to them at a fundamental, ethical level.

Like Weber, Dewey, and Wolin, my interests lie with a critical politics of resistance. “Theory as a Vocation” is a survey of those threats to the theorist’s ability to engage a mission that resists the effects of the discipline’s market methodism. Wolin and I both envision a political theorist who is able to act “against the grain,” much like Weber’s charismatic politician or devoted scientist. Weber is keenly aware that the charismatic politician engaged in vocation of ideals is intimately engaged with the values of the community at large and that its well being is directly responsible for his insights and foothold in his realm of choice: “the people’s voice is God’s voice” (Gerth and Mills 1946: 249).

## **Conclusion**

This is not to say that there has not been some hope for change. Political science and theory are far from being monolithic. There have been rumblings from the periphery that political science and theory have failed to address real political issues and public concern. The recent addition of *Perspectives on Politics* as offered by the American

Political Science association is one such hope. The editor of the Association's flagship journal, the *American Political Science Review*, Lee Sigelman, has actively sought to bring in more qualitatively oriented political perspectives that challenge the quantitative dominance of the journal. However, it is too early to tell if political scientists will take this venture seriously. There too is the problem with the alienated reproduction of simply more peer-reviewed articles. It is not surprising the APSA's response to critical cries from their own members brings about the response it did: create another peer-reviewed journal. Those clamoring for publication lines in their *curricula vitae* are made happy that they may publish, though they may still perish. It also helps political science as a whole to maintain the private, alienated nature of the whole enterprise. At this point, time will tell if such a journal might move beyond the market methodism of its older siblings.

Another potential challenge, and one featured in Chapter Four, is the *Perestroika* movement. It is promising in that it recognizes the problem with the hegemony of the market production of peer-review and has at times seemed to want to challenge just this sort of format as counterproductive to making advances in political studies. The greatest disappointment however is its failure to separate methodism from the dominance of market rationality. Their insistence on the importance of qualitative methods versus quantitative is telling. While a few have argued on the movement's listserv to resist the easy reproduction of endless journal articles that wind up simply as paeans to the author's own methodological preferences, no *Perestroikan* has engaged a sustained critique

against the alienated nature of the enterprise of political science. *Perestroika* seems comfortable with the internalization and privatization of the political.

Weber warns of the danger of those living off of politics. Dewey warns of the loss of civic identity through the creeping marketization of modern life. Wolin begins to synthesize for us Weberian calls for a vocation that stands opposed to the homogenizing of political thought via methodism. Gunnell builds upon these, cataloging the divide between politics and knowledge about politics. Dewey aims to place an interest in democracy at the very heart of our project of inquiry. Gorz seeks to reinvigorate our notions of democracy and move them from simply arguments about procedure to arguments regarding the control of production. The loss of public and civic identity can only be stemmed if public concerns return to political thought and vision. Politics is the science of give and take. It is by definition a social, public thing. For too long it has been understood in a limited, alienated way that runs counter to our democratic political heritage. Perhaps the greatest fear articulated consistently in Western political thought is the capture of public goods for private gain. In case of the practice of political theory this is a very real threat: the idea of the public has almost entirely been captured for the production of an alienated discipline governed by very private aims. Until the peer-review is reigned in, until the public is represented through a responsibility toward a democratic ethic in the production of political ideas and knowledge, political theory and science will be very alien things unrecognizable to the public to which they are “dedicated.”

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