

# Political Realism and Wisdom

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## CHAPTER 1

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# What Is Political Realism?

### Zero or the Democratic Order

We need to find a vantage point for the treatment of the subject usually denoted as “political realism” in political thought. In the study of human matters, it is hard or even impossible to detect such a vantage point. It would amount to the invention of zero in arithmetic. Zero is one of the most relevant inventions of the human intellect. The history of zero is not only exciting from the Indian roots through the Arab mathematicians down to Fibonacci and Descartes but also points toward the meaning of zero: it represents the power of human understanding and creativity, namely, something can be made out of nothing, and an absolute vantage point is needed to create anything new. Without zero our understanding of the world would be different.

In political thought there is no such absolute or unrivalled vantage point—though the idea of forms of government has come down to us as a common approach to the realm of politics. As if this idea were to be the most exact and least disputable way of providing a vantage point for talking about politics at any place and time. Machiavelli, probably the first “political realist” thinker also began his major work *The Prince* by saying that “[a]ll states, all dominions that have held and do hold empire over men have been and are either republics or principalities.”<sup>1</sup> It is also a matter of fact that David Hume in his essay “That Politics May Be Reduced to a Science” connected the problem of the forms of government with the possibility of turning political knowledge to a science: “It is a question with several whether there be any essential difference between one form of government and another, and whether every form may not become good or bad, according as it is well or ill

administered?”<sup>2</sup> And as a result of a short and classical consideration, he preserved the original idea that any form of government can be good if it is administered well: “It may, therefore, be pronounced as a universal axiom in politics *that a hereditary prince, a nobility without vassals, and a people voting by their representatives form the best monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.*”<sup>3</sup> Whether this “universal axiom” satisfies the standards of science is open to discussion, but it is undeniable that the issue of the forms of government served for the zero in political studies—up until the rise of modern democracy after which it is an anathema to suggest that any other form of government can be better than democracy.

Yet we are not entitled to say that the idea of the forms of government serves as a universal and absolute vantage point in political thought. All we can say is that the forms of government should be included in any serious essay on politics or political constitution. Plato suggested justice to be the first issue of politics; Aristotle first discussed man as *zoon politikon* in his book on politics; Thomas Hobbes begins his *Leviathan* by the categorization of sciences searching for the most adequate place for political science; Rousseau had a universal moral statement about man’s lost and missing natural freedom. The number of examples is unlimited. Today it would be an error to overlook the simple observation that the concept of *democratic order* is the zero and coordinate a political system whereby we can judge political issues universally. It implies at least two requirements: the majority principle and constitutionalism or rule of law. Because democratic order is taken for granted, the original question or classification of the forms of government does not have the appeal that it used to have. Allegedly the democratic form of government is the best compared to other ones. Because the scope of this book is political realism, we are compelled to accept this state of affairs.

The recent renewed interest in political realism warns us to try to understand what went wrong in political science that provoked a number of titles to contribute to answer this question.<sup>4</sup> The need for political realism arose in response to the more and more formalized arrangement of political knowledge losing contact with actual political issues and creating a normative context for them simply by blurring the natural connection of thought and action. In this normative context, democracy is opportunistically taken for granted as the best form of government, moral norms are mandatory for political agents, institutions are more relevant than persons, yet political action must be distinguished from political science. While looking for a vantage point of the discussion of political realism, we must remind ourselves that Europe is still in the shadow of the horrendous experience of WWII, a burden

that influences, and sometimes almost hinders, our direct approach to politics. The assumption is that as long as you can increase economic development and resultant welfare, each state would stay away from applying classical means like war, ethnic conflicts, and cultural intolerance. Free market economy replaced the old Marxian term; capitalism that has become global and economic could easily challenge any local political intentions. The world can be “flat,” but the deep-seated problem of politics, that is, power, would exert its impact, and finally, some of us bitterly may end up with an insight that politics is neither primarily about economics nor about cultural hegemony or fundamentalist human rights doctrines. It is about power, and power is about action. Action is of various sorts, but in the case of politicians, delivering speeches is the most common form of political action.

### **Distinction between Political Action and Thought**

In the focus of political realism there is political action—no lofty theories, no large-scale or covering conceptions, and no analytical laws, only insights mostly grounded on direct perceptions. The guiding line of political action is power—its acquisition and preservation. Modern political science, however, distinguishes itself from the knowledge of political action and has opted for a direction that intentionally contrasts itself to political action—to put it simply, if you are concerned with political action, you cannot be taken seriously scientifically, and vice versa, if someone chooses modern political science, this would be regarded a useless and self-centered course of investigation about human behavior that has hardly anything to do with real politics. Thus political knowledge and action have departed to an extent where it is almost impossible to reconcile the intentions of the two intellectual aspirations. The only problem is that the common ground of both is what we call politics or the life of the polity.

Anyone concerned with political action should also be concerned with the success of political action. To be honest, Machiavelli was and remains to be the only one who could combine the aspects of political success, political morality, and political wisdom. Even Hobbes, whose perspective came close to that of Machiavelli, remained within the confines of political philosophy that did not want to deal with the direct issues of political action. Thus at least one of the three components of political knowledge is missing from all other political thinkers. Machiavelli concentrated on political action as such, but travelled on the land of morality and political wisdom. Not that Machiavelli

has never become the standard of political thought; the contrary is true. Actually both political agents and political theorists would like, intentionally or unintentionally, to achieve the quality and success of Machiavelli's work. Today all we can do is to remind ourselves that Machiavelli's works are a treasury of elements of factors in the broadest sense affecting the success of political action. In contrast to today's political realists, Machiavelli did not have to discover power as the subject of political inquiry, because he eliminated all ingredients of utopian political philosophy. The major difference is that Machiavelli did not know what normative theory is, and today's theorists regard political action as the measurement of political thought.

Political reality, that is, what happens in politics by whom, is the point of departure of all analysis about what the political is and what we can achieve by political means. The original conflict between what there is and what there should be according to reason remains to be the major source of both individual and communal tensions in politics. The role of political realism is to measure up the focus of political reality and the possibility of political action. But political realism is not a sheer view of the political or one of the possible approaches to politics but a metaphysical interpretation of the basis of politics. Political realism is an overt claim to provide the grounds of political action and thought. Therefore it needs to have philosophical underpinnings—it is not a paradox but instead the stretching of the intellect to its boundaries in order to define what politics or, rather, the political is.

### Strife and Necessity

Most political realists would start to discuss political realism by pointing at Thomas Hobbes who published his seminal work, the *Leviathan*, during the English Civil War and was abhorred and inspired by the repugnance of the civil war caused by mutual hostility among compatriots. But political realism has a more far-reaching and metaphysical consideration and argument to be traced back to Heraclitus's fragments. Almost all of his fragments need to be interpreted and carefully explained requiring some knowledge of ancient Greek language and culture. Precisely this is the problem with his Fragment 80, which can be understood as metaphysics of politics, that is, the first questions of politics: "It is necessary to know that war is common and right is strife and that all things happen by strife and necessity."<sup>5</sup>

I regard this fragment crucial from the point of view of political realism. This is not only a view on man's limited scope of public action

but also a challenge for later political thinkers to take a stand whether Heraclitus is right in terms of whether war is the natural condition of human life, or it can be averted. By “natural” I mean that whatever man does drawing on his rational abilities, conflict and ensuing war is inevitable. It is in stark contradiction to what modern Enlightenment thinkers like Kant suggested especially in his “Perpetual Peace.” What comes after modern Enlightenment is the product of a paradox that has tried to conceal, rather than to solve, the problem arising out of two opposite experiences of man, namely that the world around us shows signs of permanence and of change, too. Logical constructions do not help since we have ample evidence to contradict both sides arguing either about the permanent substance of being or the changes in flux. By practice or realist thinking, that is, grounding our views on what has happened so far, all we can say is that our basic experience is that strife seems eternal, and peace is only casual or transitory, and even periods of peace are full of strife, conflicts, and enmities. Let us not tackle the problem now that war and peace are complementary, or neither peace nor war is total; they exist side by side even at a particular place and time.

The core question is whether Heraclitus captured the metaphysics of politics by stating that the whole world is subject to constant changes, what is more, they do exist and anything else is just a passing phenomenon including our logical inferences that there must be something permanent to ground the possibility of changes, therefore strife is a concept of possessing the power of being and does not enjoy its existence to the excellence of *logos*. Strife can only attain absolute existence if it is based on the ineluctable rivalry between two opposites. Heraclitus is consistent on this point by claiming that the world consists of opposites. We have several fragments by Heraclitus in which he expresses the fundamental dichotomy of all things. For instance, “The path up and down is one and the same.”<sup>6</sup> Or “God is day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger [. . .]”<sup>7</sup> The term “same” is, however, misleading as it is pointed out by Kirk, Raven, and Schofield: “Other references to Heraclitus in Aristotle attack him for denying the law of contradiction in his assertions that opposites are <same>. Again, this is a misinterpretation by Aristotle, who applied his own tight logical standards anachronistically; by the <same> Heraclitus evidently meant not <identical> so much as <not essentially distinct>.”<sup>8</sup> If we raise the issue of what is real, then Heraclitus has a metaphysical addition because if strife were not, the world would not be either. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield have an important proposition here: “[I]f strife—that is, the action and reaction between opposed substances—were to cease, then the victor in every

contest of extremes would establish a permanent domination, and the world as such would be destroyed.”<sup>9</sup> So without opposites, there is no existence at all. And opposites are the products of perpetual flux like a river. All we, human beings can experience is that changes cannot be stopped, they are not simply phenomena waiting to be observed by us but are given just as the sun or other stars in the universe. Strife is unavoidable or ineradicable due to constant minor changes in the world in and around us.

But strife is only the first element of political realism. The second one is necessity, which I regard as a sure sign of political realism in later texts, too. For Heraclitus, “necessity” accomplishes or adds to “strife.” What is necessary will have to be evolving or has to be done now. It has been debated for long whether the original Greek word is “chreómena” or “chreón.” The latter one was chosen by Diels and accordingly by Kirk et al., too.<sup>10</sup> It is important since “chreón” should be translated as “necessity,” although the Greek word could also mean “fate” and “destiny.” Necessity suggests that one has to do something in order to stay alive or there is an internal urge, like sexual desire, hunger, etc., which is indispensable for living or unavoidable only at a price that is contrary to one’s character. Necessity is a trump in various contexts when someone wants to explain why a particular action has to be carried out. Necessity is a form of constraint the source of which is beyond man’s reach; understandably the other meanings—fate or destiny—are closely related to the basic or real problem: you are either compelled to do something, or you yourself would choose to do something because there is no other alternative. We have another decisive case here to present. Plato wrote: “[A]nd yet the true creator is necessity, who is the mother of our invention.”<sup>11</sup> The word for “necessity” Plato uses is “chreia,” that is, the first thing one has to do when thinking about the best state is the acknowledgment of necessity as the first duty one has to fulfill. But necessity here may mean not only one obvious thing (i.e., one has to eat, to dwell etc.), but also that it is necessary to think. Thus necessity has a twofold meaning: necessity arises in connection with body needs, but also in terms of mental activities, which involve thinking and communicating. It is also implicit that necessities can be infinite though very often they must be limited in order to get accommodated to the possibilities of conditions and the acknowledgement of others’ necessities grounding the basis of a talk about justice.

In the metaphysical sense, political realism rests on these two concepts: strife and necessity. Relying on these two concepts we can distinguish two sorts of political realists: the semirealist or reluctant realist



political thinker who applies either of the two, and the full-fledged thinker or agent who applies both of them. Obviously Machiavelli applied both concepts with a stress on necessity, and even if strife is not treated by him distinctively, all he says is implicitly rooted in the idea of conflict. An obvious example for the semirealist is Thomas Hobbes, who saw an eternal strife in politics. A less obvious stance is that of Leo Strauss, who stressed that European culture would have long lost its philosophical character and appeal to other cultures unless the strife between Athens and Jerusalem, that is, rationality and faith, did not exist together. But we can also mention Nietzsche, who was deeply influenced by Heraclitus's conception of the opposites. Or Marx must have borrowed the idea of change from Heraclitus or other Greek philosophers as a fundamental feature of living.<sup>12</sup> Briefly, political realism can only be taken seriously if we apply the ideas of strife and necessity seriously. Without metaphysical underpinning political realism would only be one of the possible interpretations of political action and thought. Conflict that is often mentioned as a characteristic of political realism unites these two basic concepts: strife and necessity.

### Change

Anyone concerned with politics must bear in mind that change is the most relevant features of both political action and its political understanding. This is how Walter Bagehot started his book *The English Constitution*: "There is a great difficulty in the way of a writer who attempts to sketch a living Constitution,—a Constitution that is in actual work and power. The difficulty is that the object is in constant change."<sup>13</sup> Bagehot suggests that a constitution, which is the core of political institutions, is "living" to the extent that it is "actual" in terms of action and power. "Living" here means that the constitution is in a flux or change—it is not really the quality of politics but it is politics itself, that is, politics is change. Bagehot keeps repeating all through his book that "there have been many changes," thus indicating his commitment to understand the political life of his age by concentrating on change. The idea of change always raises the question of revolution at least in modern times. Bagehot has a definition for "revolution": "The change since 1865 is a change not in one point, but in a thousand points; it is a change not of particular details, but of pervading spirit."<sup>14</sup> Revolution is, then, concentrated change appearing "in a thousand points" and is concerned not with certain particulars but with "a pervading spirit." It is not enough to have many changes; they should evince spiritual

character, and, we could add, also reveals some predetermined intention to achieve something new.

That change as a substantial element of politics was already stressed by Machiavelli as well. Since change is inevitable in politics, too, the better for the prince is to be able to read the timing and direction of changes, all the more so, because he is compelled to accommodate himself to changes; what is more, it is he who should stand in the forefront of changes. According to Machiavelli, a prince would fail if he cannot control change: “And above all, a prince should live amongst his subjects so that no single accident whether bad or good has to make him change; for when necessities come in adverse times you will not be in time for evil, and the good that you do does not help you. [...]”<sup>15</sup> Change in this rendering is the enemy of the prince, or it is Fortuna or chance in a disguise (“fortune being changeful”), unless it is he who beholds in time the compelling circumstances and acts accordingly. Change is potentially threatening if it comes unexpectedly in time and space. And even the good can be overturned if change is not served well by the prince, because “the affairs of the world are so changeable.”

No wonder all modern politicians are initiators of changes—they are proud of suggesting changes for the future, and deliberate change is in the focus of most electoral campaigns. For instance, Barack Obama’s central slogan was “Change we can believe in” in 2008, and he won the election. But it would be too easy or simplistic to think that change itself is enough to grasp the meaning of political reality. The wish for change is counterbalanced roughly in equal measure to the wish for preservation. Leo Strauss has this fundamental insight: “All political action aims at either preservation or change. When desiring to preserve, we wish to prevent a change to the worse; when desiring to change, we wish to bring about something better.”<sup>16</sup> To capture the meaning of change in politics, Strauss, in an Aristotelian vein, combined the idea of change in political action with moral considerations—we act in order to achieve some good ends. What is important in this proposition, actually in all ancient political propositions, is the meaningfulness of political action. Change is not for itself, even less so, since change is essentially the political, but it should somehow conquer the future, thus giving hope that things remain or become stable, secure, and prosperous. Political action can be deprived of moral aspects; no one really dares to do that, but an action will become political if it involves elements of promises, hopes, and at least one general goal. Change could be annoying, and all of us may yearn for permanence and stability, yet a

prudent political agent should have to concentrate incessantly on future changes that may occur or the ones that he wants to initiate.

### Acquisition

Immediately next to strife, necessity and change it is acquisition that bears a clear concern with realism. All the three concepts are tied to political action. Strife expresses the unavoidable character of human interactions, necessity refers to the vitals of maintaining mere existence, and acquisition stands for action to settle strives and fulfill requirements posed by necessity. All the three are joined by power. When it is fixed as basic motivation of man, political realism has a chance to confront two fundamental urges of man: the natural, or instinctual, and the rational. Hobbes had a decisive point here: “So that in the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death. And the cause of this is not always that a man hopes for a more intensive delight than he has already attained to, or that he cannot be content with a moderate power, but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more.”<sup>17</sup> We have to distinguish, however, between necessities and desires. Hobbes calls the striving for power as “restless desire” suggesting that it comes from within man, the sources of which is difficult to clinch, but we know that it is something belonging to an inner inclination or urge. Desires are various and change from man to man, and what is conspicuous is that desire lacks any moral justification—desire is natural exempt from moral considerations. In contrast to desire, necessity has an outer control: when you are needy, for example, you are starving, when you need a shelter in order to save your body etc., your external conditions compel you to act in order to provide yourself with vitals. Also, necessity as an outer condition often implies moral constrain or duty, whereas desire can be completely devoid of them. Strangely enough Hobbes seems to have mixed up the two. And it does not really help if we designate his political philosophy as a hedonist one, for he was to ground his political community on real terms. If man is but a hedonistic creature, then the concept of good is an empty concept. Hobbes had wanted to put forward “his own reading,”<sup>18</sup> that is, suggesting new ideas, also wishing to find universal knowledge of good, man, politics, etc. The common ground is provided by man’s rationality: “all men by nature reason alike, and well, when they have good principles.”<sup>19</sup> So goodness is provided by reason—appetite, desire,

necessity, and the like are outside or beyond it, they are to be mastered by reason. So if man's motivation is desire, the synonym of which is wish, then man is to be ruled by good principles which are, due to the universality of reason, can be summed up in natural laws. This is how Hobbes arrives at the core of his own anthropology in his enumeration with natural law no. 7, which is preceded by a lengthy description of man's various passions. This is where he explicitly tells us what good is. Here are Hobbes's words:

But whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calleth good; and the object of his hate and aversion, evil; and of his contempt, vile and inconsiderable. For these words of good, evil, and contemptible are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: there being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common rule of good and evil to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves; but from the person of the man, where there is no Commonwealth; or, in a Commonwealth, from the person that representeth it; or from an arbitrator or judge, whom men disagreeing shall by consent set up and make his sentence the rule thereof.<sup>20</sup>

Primarily good is derived from personal appetite or desire, and evil from hate and aversion, but to avoid a complete relativism, Hobbes also refers to "common rule of good and evil" by which he presumes that man is able to reconcile numerous and diverse views or opinions on good and evil. Perfection can only be attained through reasonable compromise on good and evil. This conception fits Hobbes's later statement that "there is no such *finis ultimus* (utmost aim) nor *summum bonum* (greatest good) as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers."<sup>21</sup> Hobbes not only neglects the ultimate aim or context of "old moral philosophers" but strengthens the idea of the modern individual as a pleasure-seeker who is always striving toward the acquisition of power to avert violent death and secure as much pleasure as possible over as long a time as it is available. In brief, Hobbes contributed to the enfolding development of stripping man of his communal character, making man an autonomous, that is, self-ruling being, who maintains himself through harnessing pleasure. His moral character would be formed accordingly, that is, all his moral traits can be reduced to the individual's behavior governed by contention for acquiring pleasure, enmity, and war. Competition is necessary because man is under constraint to satisfy his desires; competition leads to enmity and war, and the purposes of wars are acquisition. The dividing line between outside-conditioned necessities and personal longing for satisfying one's desires has not been clarified by

Hobbes. There have been regimes that deliberately sought to make this distinction by setting the measurements of what is necessary and what is not. All regulations throughout history, from Sparta down to modern communism, we have seen efforts to set limits to acquisition in various forms like using iron money like in Sparta or implementing a policy in which private property is confiscated by the rule of and continuously denying the grassroots to amass private property in gold or real estate by the force of law. If acquisition is a must, then the defense of the institution of private property is but an extension of acquisition. Paper money without the gold standard dropped in early 1970s just symbolizes the possibility of infinite acquisition and wealth, which were limited by any objective standard.

Unlike Machiavelli Hobbes was not concerned with political action. He replaced the political agent by the concept of human nature, necessity by desire, and Fortuna by reason. It was natural that Hobbes, enamored by the potentials of human reason, at one point artificially switched over to a norm-utopianism by stating that “[d]esire of knowledge, and arts of peace, inclineth men to obey a common power: for such desire containeth a desire of leisure, and consequently protection from some other power than their own.”<sup>22</sup> From political realism’s point of view, Hobbes’s turn is tenable if we could explain why there is a desire for peace at all. Not in real or common sense terms, all living creatures want to live rather than die, but from a theoretical aspect. For Hobbes war is natural in a state of nature, which is an inferred proposition, not an empirical one. Therefore as long as the conditions of Commonwealth are unable to control the state of nature, war is imminent. Therefore peace is exceptional, and war is common. To change it one must make a good use of “desire of knowledge, and arts of peace,” the two are compatible and indispensable. Arts of peace grow out of desire of knowledge—what else? If Hobbes were a true realist, he would have had to extend the latent potential of competition, conflict, and war over to the actual conditions of man. Competition is inherent in the necessities of life, therefore only reasonableness in conducting conflicts and arranging competitions cannot really serve the goal of attaining peace at least not more than earlier in history irrespective of his teachings or insights. Peace is simply necessary because of self-preservation, and leisure is the condition of acquisition of knowledge and certain distance from power. Hobbes reshuffled the cards of political concepts: since nothing is absolute, the only resort of man is to seek peace that leaves some space and chance for man to maintain his life. The duality of war and peace is inevitable, or given, the rationality

with which man can dispose of mandates to men to agree among themselves. Rationality offers the possibility to achieve agreement, thus justice is nothing else but to abide by the words of a compact. The question is whether rationality is capable of maintaining itself in the face of other constituents of human nature. Or what is rational at one point may turn into irrational if it is repeated endlessly, ideologically charged, and stripped of its original arguments or context of arguments.

On a Christian basis, Marsilius of Padua beheld the major cause of war in the different views of transcendence—the religious and the secular have utterly opposing views on how man should live. Extinguishing the conflict between the religious and the secular, more precisely the conflict between the Church and the Emperor, war could result in peace. Marsilius wished “to demonstrate that Christ wished to exclude and did exclude both Himself and His apostles from the office of ruler”<sup>23</sup>—Christianity never wanted to interfere with ruling or worldly power.

Machiavelli was not a philosopher in intent because he did not make any attempt to define or clarify any of his terms (he did not directly address the “what is . . . ?”—type questions). His special terms are not special by assuming new meanings; if they do, it is achieved through the context he presents. Necessity, acquisition, Fortune, and his other frequently used terms obtain their meanings by relations to each other. Power has many forms, but it must be acquired irrespective of the form of the government. Classical political philosophers kept searching man’s communal life from the angle of how man can become happy, which by and large depends on man’s perfection with a strong emphasis on the idea of good. Modern political theorists, however, are more concerned with the institutions of government than with political action, because they believe that the form of government, especially principles of a government based on constitutionalism, would ultimately determine political action.

But contrary to what is expected as a simple explanation according to what is natural is clearly the opposition of what is artful, Hobbes, if he is a realist at all, and other political realists look at the rational as an extension of the natural: the natural cannot be either destroyed or sidelined, instead we try to calculate with it when planning our actions. Utopians, however, tacitly assume that the natural can and should be mastered and thus disregarded.

### Enemy

Enemy is created in a natural or an artificial way. In most cases we are born to have an enemy, we inherit our enemies from the past and

ancestors. But in politics it is very common to appoint an enemy which is part of the formation of political aims. My political aim is much more accentuated and understandable if I can present the enemy, thus forging unity among my supporters. It is such a trivial political instrument that most of us fail to recognize it when applied. The main reason for this is that smear campaigns and denigration are part and parcel of political struggle. But the enemy is more than a hated rival politician or party. The enemy is an important justification why we are doing what we do.

So the enemy is created in many ways. But basically it is connected with fundamental necessity. Machiavelli observed one particularly necessary source of enmity. The following quote is from Chapter 3 of *The Prince*, which can be regarded as a fundamental one for the understanding the relationship between necessity, acquisition, and enemy. This relationship is not logical but real, because it is grounded on repeated experience: “That follows from another natural and ordinary necessity which requires that one must always offend those over whom he becomes a new prince, both with men-at-arms and with infinite other injuries that the new acquisition brings in its wake. So you have enemies all those whom you have offended in seizing that principality, and you can keep as friends those who have put you there because you cannot satisfy them in the mode they had presumed and because you cannot use strong medicines against them, since you are obligated to them.”<sup>24</sup> First, “natural” refers to the origin of enmity among men; second “ordinary” is meant to say that it is common and repeated. Against these two there is hardly anything to do. Even more important is that the action of acquisition inheres offense. In order to achieve or accomplish any aim one must collect supporters, active or passive, but since it is the nature of common activities, you need to have a leader of the action. As long as the goal is not achieved, the latent conflict between the leader and the supporters remains dormant. But the conflict is in there. After success, let alone failure, the unity will break up even if the leader is able to preserve the majority of his supporters. It is impossible to satisfy the needs of the supporters; accordingly friends may turn to be foes. When Carl Schmitt within his political theology grounded his concept of the political on an ever present conflict in every field of human life, he endorsed Heraclitus’s metaphysics and conceptualized it by calling the political as the relationship of friends and foes.

That politics has a final reality or metaphysically determined is supported by the phenomenon of war. War strips politics to its bare nature or laws of its existence. War and peace have similar relationship as the conception of friends and foes does. According to Clausewitz, “Two

motives lead men to war: instinctive hostility and hostile intention.”<sup>25</sup> Although metaphysically the first motive would be more to the point, Clausewitz declared that hatred as instinctual is not a necessary condition of war, because “hostile intentions may often exist without being accompanied by any, or at all events by any extreme, hostility of feeling.”<sup>26</sup> Even though “hostility of feeling” is not indispensable of “hostile intentions,” “In short, even the most civilized nations may burn with passionate hatred of each other.”<sup>27</sup> Despite the distinction between “instinctual” and “intentional” hostility, the main issue is the relationship of war with political reality, and with peace. If someone could provide enough evidence that war is abolished, and eternal peace is not only possible but could obtain reality then the whole metaphysics of hostility and enemy-creation would become a mere playing with historical events. Clausewitz was conscious of the difference between what is abstract and what is real: “everything takes a different shape when we pass from abstractions to reality.”<sup>28</sup> When we pass over to war, which is “an act of violence pushed to its utmost bounds,” that is, war is the extreme of politics, there remains no place for abstractions in the world of which “everything must be subject to optimism.”<sup>29</sup> When we have, however, peace, man is capable of forming as many ideas as he wishes. War is reality itself produced by man driven by necessities and creative intentions to acquire.

Enemy should be treated as follows: most of your enemies gain their self-confidence by believing that they are smarter than you are. Let them keep their belief. Let your enemy believe that he is smarter than you are. It is in accordance with Plato’s common sense view of justice according to which justice is “the art which gives good to friends and evil to enemies.” Without an enemy you have only a limited identity of your own. If there is nothing to oppose your own way of defining yourself—you are nothing; you hardly exist as a political agent. One owes a lot to the enemy who unreflectively justifies your aims and actions. Funnily enough, one has to say thanks to his enemies. In politics you are an agent to the extent your enemies regard you as a person outside their sphere of influence. A smear campaign against someone may help him to articulate himself to other people.

For all ages, based on the experience of what Thomas Hobbes called human nature, he framed all the possible sources and forms of enemy-creation: “we find three principall causes of quarrel. First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory. The first, maketh men invade for Gain; the second, for Safety; and the third, for Reputation. The first use Violence, to make themselves Masters of other men’s persons, wives,



children, and cattle; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other signe of under-value, either direct in their Persons, or by reflexion in their Kindred, their Friends, their Nation, their Profession, or their Name.<sup>30</sup> Strangely enough, but competition is so natural that it is to be found mainly among women. Most of us would say that it is men who are prone to competition and struggle, but it is mainly women who compete, which is irrelevant from a political point of view since the question is whether competition can be eliminated or whether it should be eliminated at all. The issue is again about what is natural, that is, something cannot ultimately be controlled, and what is controllable by human means. Competition might mean that neither of us can be sure of providing the necessary means of maintaining one's life, we may add that on a higher level, or it can also mean that we compete with each other for acknowledgment, for something spiritual or glorious. All of us need gain, safety, and reputation. What is new today is that other men's opinions are transmitted in a technologically infinite way, that is, most men have a by far greatest opportunity to express their views on fellow creatures' behavior and ideas, thus opening up a possibility to hurt anyone and turning him into an enemy. Technology simply augments both good and evil but never obliterates either of them.

Another important observation is that of Nietzsche who elaborated the classical master and slave relationship in a way that explained the behavior of the slave toward the master. The whole issue is whether the slave, that is, the subordinated, under what conditions would accept his plight. Since he is unable to change the character of the relationship, he develops the attitude of resentment that withdraws his appreciation from the master's attitude and intentions, be it benevolent or not. Ressentiment, or resentment, is a clear expression of why enmity is inevitable not only on natural basis but also due to man's second nature, which is interwoven with aspects of community life causing detriment to the individual how he should or could live his life.

### **Revenge**

One of the greatest motivations of political action is vengeance or revenge—as it is in private matters, too. There is hardly anything more natural than revenge. Since revenge is a basic form of doing alleged justice, it cannot be discussed as a psychological problem. It is part of the issue what is just discussed on rational grounds. It is a political problem. Although it can be likened to the deep drive of sexual instinct, it seems

that revenge could be tamed more successfully than sexual drive. How serious the issue is is reflected in both the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible. We all know the most relevant warnings about vengeance in the Bible, but concerning the central problem wrapped up in the act of revenge, here is Romans 12:19 (St. Paul): “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord,” and Matthew 5:38–39: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Among several commands of the Bible, the admonition against vengeance is obviously a way of facing evil. Vengeance cannot end up with reconciliation or victory because vengeance begets countervengeance endlessly thus creating a spiral of terror and violence. It seems that no price, even in stark contrast to human passions, is too dear to stop the spiral of revenge.

Among passions it is anger that can be devastating, and according to Aristotle, only the good-tempered man is able to handle it, “for the good-tempered man is not revengeful, but rather tends to make allowances.”<sup>31</sup> What is wrong, then, with revenge? The problem is that it is linked to the issue of justice. Private revenge always surfaces when justice fails someone in the public realm. All literary works, like the revenge plays with Hamlet as the most well-known one, and modern films tend to emphasize public effete-ness to defend one’s life or rightful interests. The subject of revenge is apt to highlight the precarious nature of the dividing line between the private and the public. In a state of nature we are all entitled to defend ourselves individually no matter how. But in a commonwealth, according to the proposition of compact theories, we relinquish our natural right to judge matters, instead we transfer it to the public—the trouble is that no public institution can wholly and always represent our fundamental interests or stand up for the individual. Taking justice into one’s hands usually leads to actual revenge. Revenge is just as rampant and frequent than legal cases of retaliation. Thus revenge threatens on a daily basis the sovereignty of the commonwealth expressed by Francis Bacon thus: “Revenge is a kind of wild justice; which the more man’s nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong, putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince’s part to pardon.”<sup>32</sup>

No one can deny the motivation of revenge in politics. But it is more than simply doing justice or retaliate, for in politics power rests on

maintaining the actuality of force or strength. Showing the muscles paves the way for revenge in politics. Since power is also about strength and weakness (economic, military, social, spiritual), revenge is just as common as any other political means. So next to hurt suffered by somebody else, in politics revenge serves the achievement of one's political goals. But it is never used in its nakedness. Like other motives, which betray neglect of moral or legal admonitions, revenge must be clad in moral terms and motivations. Despite Bacon's argument in defense of the law, we feel sympathy for the lonely avenger or vigilante like Charles Bronson in *Death Wish*, a film that heroizes law enforcement without legal authority. The viewer cannot help siding with the vigilante; what is more, in the first episode, even the police authorities would let him escape.

In politics either law or personal will dictates. If there is rule of law, then no crime can be left unpunished irrespective who commits the crime. But law is too rigid, restricted, and slow compared to the harm caused by someone's unjust behavior. And it is an experience that with the lapse of time the chance for rectifying an unjust deed diminishes to the extent that nothing can be done against it. It is a historical fact that if enough time passes by the most unjust political deeds would remain in effect by declaring things to be irrevocable to their original stance. One example is how communist nationalizations took place. Private properties were confiscated on a national scale; some property owners were also arrested as the enemies of the "people's democracy." After 40–50 years of communism when the regime collapsed, the original propriety structure could not be restored, what is more, practically a symbolic restitution was carried out in most postcommunist countries. But privatization was in full swing after the regime change, but this time the excommunists, the ones who carried out the nationalization process, could much more easily privatize due to their political and social status at the moment of the regime change. A society tormented by such elementary issues of justice cannot hope to surpass the ever present wishes for revenge. This is political realism vis-à-vis institutionalized political science. Or we can take the case of September 11, 2001, and its aftermath. The US government could rightly claim revenge for the hideous act of the terrorists. The problem with it was who could be made the object of retaliation? "Terrorism," of course. But revenge has to have a particular person, group of people, or country. Revenge can only achieve its goal if it is particular or concrete—symbolic revenge does not produce real satisfaction. The renewed invasion of Iraq after 9/11 was an act of revenge clad in moral and political intentions. All

political actions must be begirded by moral justification, otherwise even a just cause may turn out to be a particular instance of one's individual vengeance, which cannot be just any more.

### **Power Seen as Political Action and Subject of Political Philosophy**

Raymond Geuss is particularly sensitive to contemporary issues of liberal dominance over the interpretation of politics and power. Geuss's realist approach to politics is based on his intention to get "power" back in the focus of political knowledge. It is Thomas Hobbes whom he regards as the founding father of modern political realism: "What I wish to call <the realist approach to political philosophy> develops this basically Hobbesian insight. It is centered on the study of historically instantiated forms of collective action with special attention to the variety of ways in which people can structure and organize their action so as to limit and control forms of disorder that they might find excessive or intolerable for other reasons."<sup>33</sup> The author's preference is political realism *within* political philosophy, and not political action *as* the foundation of real politics. What combines the two possible approaches to political realism is power. Tacitly Geuss confronts the liberal negligence of power with a deliberate criticism of John Rawls's political philosophy ("Rawls's view is seriously deficient, because it does not thematise power."<sup>34</sup>) and Lenin's view on power ("Lenin defines politics with characteristic clarity and pithiness when he say that it is concerned with the question that keeps recurring in our political life: 'Who whom?'"<sup>35</sup>) One of the most burning issues of this book is exactly the question whether political philosophy is not by its very nature anti-realist, because it does not directly addresses the problems of political action. If there is a real dividing line between political thought and political action, then there must also be a dividing line between political philosophy and political writings concerned with political action—the core of which is power. Methodologically the concept of power gives way to some sort of an answer to this vital question. Political action is possible because there is always a competition for power—in that Lenin is right in saying that politics is about who overpowers the other. If it were not true, politics would be questioned or transformed into something else as Carl Schmitt poignantly described it.<sup>36</sup> But power remains and recreates itself all the time, because order has to be organized in one way or another. Realistically speaking Lenin described power as it is. Historically speaking Lenin had a goal to realize, and it was to

change Russia in accordance with the communist ideals. Morally speaking Lenin could resort to the Marxian principles and comments on the progress of history, exploitation of the masses, etc. to justify his major goal. By the dint of its utopian, that is, purely rational and individualistic approach, political philosophy can delineate an order other than what is available or has ever been experienced. If political philosophy's utopianism can be softened by getting its focus concentrated on power and it is sometimes labeled as a "realistic approach," still we should not fail to notice the difference between reality of political action and the realistic approach of political philosophy. Political philosophy as such cannot be the source of direct political action and the one that is meant to be a shift of focus within political philosophy.

### **Power, Law, and the Spirit of the People**

Focus on power is the core of political realism. Ancient philosophers had very little to say directly about political action; therefore actual power was not part of their intellectual pursuit. In contrast, history writers studied political action, some of them with a generalizing vein as Thucydides, for instance. Pascal captured the essence of the relationship of ancient philosophers with politics when he wrote this: "We can only think of Plato and Aristotle in grand academic robes. They were honest men, like others, laughing with their friends, and when they diverted themselves with writing their *Laws* and the *Politics*, they did it as an amusement. That part of their life was the least philosophic and the least serious; the most philosophic was to live simply and quietly. If they wrote on politics, it was as if laying down rules for a lunatic asylum, and if they presented the appearance of speaking of a great matter, it was because they knew that the madmen, to whom they spoke, thought they were kings and emperors. They entered into their principles in order to make their madness as little harmful as possible."<sup>37</sup>

Pascal's own view on politics cannot be illustrated better than by the way he depicted the ancient philosophers' attitude toward political action. It is obvious that the dilemma of each citizen whether to live a secluded life or regularly participate in managing public matters has always faced the philosopher with an option between an active and a contemplative life. All men have to answer this question, but the philosopher has a real option because he knows that he has a real choice: entering the public life or refraining from such activities. Plato was the first to rationalize on the problem of living a life of contemplation or to act in favor of his country. In his Seventh Letter he clearly stated what

was implicit in his Republic: you either choose a higher eligible life called philosophic life, or you must emerge in everyday political clashes, which are deprived of higher considerations, or as Pascal puts it, politics is “a lunatic asylum” in which “madmen,” that is, kings and emperors, lived. According to Plato, it is hardly possible that the dwellers of the “lunatic asylum” can really embrace philosophic principles. This is an issue of politics that can never be solved, only the particular forms of the conflict between philosophy and politics do change, not the essence of it. Plato had this to write about the issue in his Seventh Letter:

It was by urging these and other like truths that I convinced Dion, and it is I who have the best right to be angered with his murderers in much the same way as I have with Dionysios. For both they and he have done the greatest injury to me, and I might almost say to all mankind, they by slaying the man that was willing to act righteously, and he by refusing to act righteously during the whole of his rule, when he held supreme power, in which rule if philosophy and power had really met together, it would have sent forth a light to all men, Greeks and barbarians, establishing fully for all the true belief that there can be no happiness either for the community or for the individual man, unless he passes his life under the rule of righteousness with the guidance of wisdom, either possessing these virtues in himself, or living under the rule of godly men and having received a right training and education in morals.<sup>38</sup>

These are Plato’s direct words on political action as actual power. Whereas the man of contemplation feels secure on moral grounds, the man of action, that is, the statesman, has different preferences. What appears “lunatic” in the eyes of the philosopher, would amount to rational behavior from the political agent’s point of view. Plato made it clear that a statesman should have to acquire wisdom in order to make power sane and illuminated. Even people should be enlightened, otherwise the rule of the wise would lead to disaster, or at least happiness would fail the community and the individual as well. The final teaching of Plato on the relationship of philosophy and politics is voiced in his line that “in which rule if philosophy and power had really met together” by which he meant that as long as philosophy and power are not reconciled there is no chance of power to be judged favorably or useful. Again, from a political realistic point of view, all we can say is that philosophy acts as a destructive force, and the utopian tendencies of political philosophy cannot be mitigated by pure realism, for utopianism is rational, attractive, provides hope, and has a say in how and in what direction we should go. Utopianism goes hand in hand with the

possibilities of education and enlightenment. This was true in ancient and modern times, too. Sound realism does not deny the opportunity of getting things in better conditions, but is skeptical about what is called pure reason and purely processed enlightened political decisions. The conflict between what is philosophically, that is, rationally, tenable and what should actually be done differs all the time. The philosopher as a rule has taken the direction of a secluded life and left the public life to its own destiny. It means that human reason is unable to avert the worst to happen to the people. Modern reason is proud of suggesting it can achieve the self-created goal, but the problem is that reality speaks against reason: two world wars in the twentieth century, never seen combination of technological development and modern forms of tyranny, which are natural, swept over the civilization. One might argue that after WWII the liberal democracy, sometimes even extolled as the end of history, has created a world order that could prevent repeated wars in Western civilization, and although the United States has been in wars several times after WWII, peace could be maintained for the Western man. Is it not strange that peace can only be ensured by wars? The only question is who bears the brunt of peace—America giving up her splendid isolation undertook becoming the umpire of the world and had to confront the realities of the world. Europe still being under the shock of WWII and the spell of her own utopianism often believes that it is possible to govern or wield power without confronting the realities of power. America is right in challenging Europe in terms of political realism. Can we say that the United States has been trying more successfully to acquiesce the real needs of power with our moral demands that are also inherent in our political thought? In Western culture the dichotomy between reason and political action seems unsolvable, which will always open a space for political realism. It is political realism that tries to bridge the gap between rational utopianism and actual political actions. This is one of the peculiarities of Western political tradition.

Looking at Machiavelli's *The Prince* five hundred years later in a context of dominant institutionalized-minded political science and knowledge, it seems exhilarating to read the Italian's propositions about political action and related power. It was he who first tackled power not only historically but as an institution of human will and ability to carry out an intention. He did not bother about the meaning and interpretation of power—power means potential (*potenzia*) and as such is a matter of fact for him. Chapter X of *The Prince*, for instance, clearly speaks for the author in terms of what we should know about power, or more precisely, how we can measure it. The title of the chapter is

“In What Mode the Forces of All Principalities Should Be Measured.” The size or strength of power is characterized first and foremost by whether “a prince has enough of a state that he can rule by himself when he needed to, or whether he is always under the necessity of being defended by others.”<sup>39</sup> A prince is powerful enough by himself if he has an “abundance of either men or money” to recruit an army, and he can best defend himself when “he has a strong town and is not hated by the people.” Clearly, in Machiavelli’s time the prince or ruler was a classic leader whose personal abilities mattered a lot more than today when trust is mainly placed in the workings of institutions. For Machiavelli the practical elements of power were easier to detect—personal qualities, material basis, his relationship with the people, and the organization of his immediate surroundings. German cities, for example, were “very free,” because “they are so well fortified that everyone thinks their capture would be toilsome and difficult.” The key of power was whether you could feed the people and give them work in employments “that are the nerve and the life of that city and of the industries from which the plebs is fed.”<sup>40</sup> The ruler’s relationship with the *plebs* or people is the only key to all power: the ruler should have to know how his people think, feel, and react to political developments and in hard times. To maintain the spirit of his people is indispensable during periods of war but “it should not be difficult for a prudent prince to keep the spirits of his citizens firm in the siege.”<sup>41</sup> The question remains whether to what extent the harmony between the ruler and the people can be maintained in modern democracy.

There is no reason to suggest that the relationship of the leader and the ruler would be changed depending on the form of government. The core of political action is not to be sought in the form of the government, for it only sets the limits and scope of political action and not the nature of the relationship a leader must establish with the people. Montesquieu was also aware of the relevance of this relationship. He wrote: “Laws should be so appropriate to the people for whom they are made that it is very unlikely that the laws of one nation can suit another.”<sup>42</sup> This view may become obsolete if someone strongly committed to the recently widespread idea of constitutional institutionalism. Still no one can deny, for instance, that capital punishment is preserved in the United States, whereas in Europe it is outdated, thus the spirit of the laws suggests different attitudes within similar constitutional arrangements. It would be an interesting research to find out what kinds of politicians are elected under democratic conditions in different countries. One would have to hypothesize that not only do the particular circumstances affect



who is to be elected but also this somewhat mystical relationship that is established all the time between the ruler and the ruled. That the prince or any leader must master the skills of how one can manipulate the people was already known to Quintus Tullius Cicero who published a manual entitled “How to Win an Election: An Ancient Guide for Modern Politicians” in ancient Roman times, which is often likened to Machiavelli’s seminal work. From a realistic point of view, election campaigns are concentrated events of political manipulation, which is a fountain of instances in each country of what people think about the possibilities of politics and their leaders.

That power is a form of relationship is seized by the conception that power is a “concerted action”; so the beginning of power is not strength, for it is the outcome of it. But it is real to assume that force, or strength, versus weakness can be used to describe what happens in politics all of the time. Despite postmodern thinkers’ attempts to deconstruct the concept of power, intellectual instruments cannot annihilate the all-embracing force of power, since power is grounded on the relationships of people, which are manifested in a special way called “public power.” While laws have “spirits” according to Montesquieu,<sup>43</sup> power has effects. Hobbes wrote this: “[W]hen the like causes come into our power, we see how to make it produce the like effects.”<sup>44</sup> By giving up the idea of *telos* as the governing force of things, Hobbes applied causes as the final source of our understanding developments of both natural and human phenomena. This also implied that something is only real when completed, the cause achieves a final stage that is called a “fact,” “which is a thing past and irrevocable”—how else can one judge the success of an action than by comparing the cause and the achievement that is the effect of the cause? In politics the whole process of causation can be regarded as power in terms of the reality of the conditions of power among which cause is crucial and decisive to the effect how political action is successful, that is, political action could achieve change or preservation networks of relationships. The Hobbesian sense of reality fails to capture the dynamics of causation: he is so keen on qualifying knowledge that he forgets about the basic nature of political action, that it is constant change spurred by conflicts among enemies. Knowledge, however, is to be solid, final, and general—unlike Machiavelli he did not want to counsel anyone acting under the constraint of particular necessities and relationships.

The greatest condition of political success is strength. At the same time the greatest danger to the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. For the most of history there was an absolute distinction between

what is inside and what is outside. It means that the outside enemy was an absolute threat that could not be relativized in any way. You felt to be jeopardized by aliens, and rightly so. You could only feel safe within your own boundaries. The distinction of the closed and open society was a salient view historically speaking. Today there is the illusion that the inside and the outside are made relative. Even a single sandwich is made of products from various parts of the world—the question is that this economic reality is transformed into a political one. Hardly so. Although it is true that the issue shifted from virtues to commerce, mentioned first by Montesquieu<sup>45</sup> and repeated by Rousseau<sup>46</sup> and others, the economic can never erase or subordinate the political. Yet it is a challenge how we can interpret the political in conditions different from those prevailing in ancient times and reflected by political thought. In modern times it is more and more a question of economic strength what political purposes you are allowed to entertain. It is because warfare or military needs not only technological superiority but also the mighty is supposed to produce better living conditions to the people of the inimical side than what was common before the invasion or intervention. Even the enemy's welfare should be part of the planning of the stronger part. Whatever the speculation is about the differences between ancient and modern goals of military interventions, the basic issue is whether the more convincing "might is right" can be counterbalanced by the view that "might is not right."

We have to remind ourselves that Plato in his *Republic* found Thrasymachus's definition of justice ("Justice is serving the interest of the stronger.") is the final common sense view on the subject before Plato starts elaborating the idea of justice on philosophical grounds. Again we have the conflict of common sense realism and rationalistic utopianism that might have a hold on minds but which cannot alter the course of developments. The natural or common comes into conflict with the rational by human thought—this tension is radical and unavoidable. The utopianism of the European or Western political thought is perceivable from a number of angles. It is the source of its energy and the reason for its decline. Western culture has always been progressing and declining not in a successive way but parallelly: every single step forward is a step backward in the very same moment. Conquering nature is an elusive project, the dead sure way of self-annihilation. It is not an ideological proposition, but the only scholarly approach to our major issues. Might as technology would not thrive outside the human world. Still, we have to consider the issue of might as right.

Realistically speaking Thucydides account of the Peloponnesian War must be approved or taken seriously. Before the Enlightenment, that is, the age of ideology, history writers were the major sources of realism. In accordance with the aim of history writing they tried to present the qualities of greatness and had nothing to do with artificial or outside aims alien to necessities arising from the actual living of the people. Thucydides was fully aware of the issues of might. We could quote him endlessly in terms of the relationship between might and weakness. In the first book, Thucydides says: “We are not the first who have aspired to rule; the world has ever held that the weaker must be kept down by the stronger. And we think that we are worthy of power; and there was a time when you thought so too; but now, when you mean expediency you talk about justice. Did justice ever deter any one from taking by force whatever he could? Men who indulge the natural ambition of empire deserve credit if they are in any degree more careful of justice than they need be. How moderate we are would speedily appear if others took our place; indeed our very moderation, which should be our glory, has been unjustly converted into a reproach.”<sup>47</sup> Or, “For then they would themselves have admitted that the weaker must give way to the stronger. Mankind resent injustice more than violence, because the one seems to be an unfair advantage taken by an equal, the other is the irresistible force of a superior.”<sup>48</sup> These were the words of the Athenians trying to convince the Lacedaemonians why they should comply. It would evoke reservation from the more liberal-minded readers today since today’s liberals following the idea of eternal peace would denounce this explanation of public affairs. But it would be hard to deny that the most powerful, that is, strongest states have their own consulting forums like the G8 or the permanent members of the UN Security Council or the EU core states. But all these corps reflect the post-WWII conditions wishing to maintain the *status quo* determined by the victorious states. Japan and Germany are more powerful economically than almost all their allies, yet they do not have formally the same voice than the others.

Thucydides often used the phrases like “realize,” “real power,” “in reality” by which he meant to stress that there are things “by appearance” only. He was seeking accomplished events that must have regarded “facts.” As if past events are real by nature, we know that the past is also a consequence of interpretation for the past is not empirical from the perspective of the knower. Therefore it is not a wrong idea to create an antidote to might that is mainly based upon inferences drawn from past

events. “Might is not right” a comfortable weapon against the natural embeddedness of powerful actions. Right conceived as absolute, if it is possible to do that, may serve to counterbalance the natural or real force of power acting day to day. Modern constitutionalism seeks to find methods to eke out right against might. Realistically viewed it is an effort and ideology, but not a fact of politics. We have only rare and heroic examples of the weak winning over the powerful, but we have some. Hannah Arendt presented Denmark as a successful resistance against the Nazis during WWII: “One is tempted to recommend the story as required reading in political science for all students who wish to learn something about the enormous power potential inherent in non-violent action and in resistance to an opponent possessing vastly superior means to violence.”<sup>49</sup> The matter of fact is, however, that might is usually victorious over the weak. This is the quality of power and the stronger, which does not deny the possibility that under temporary conditions “might is not right” becomes an effectual stipulation, but as the conditions of peace are fragile, the same applies for right, too.

### **Practicing Power in an Age of Technology-Based Institutions**

In premodern times the statesman had to focus on his immediate ambience. The core of power centered around the ruler’s family or the restricted number of aristocratic families that were close to the ruler. Personal sphere of action largely depended on the size of the warriors loyal to the statesman, and the taxes he could regularly and reliably collect. The third element of his power was to serve justice to the people in civic and penal cases. These have always been the three main pillars of wielding power. A special kind among the kings, rulers, statesmen, and politicians is the knowledgeable prince whose skills and abilities include a mixture of knowledge and creativity with some principles he is all the time aware of. An excellent elaboration of the subject is Tilo Schabert’s book on Kevin White, the mayor of Boston between 1968 and 1984 who was elected for four terms uninterruptedly.<sup>50</sup> According to Schabert, the prince is the archetype of the ruler claiming his success through conceiving his role as creator, that is, practicing power needs creativity. There are, to be sure, ancient and modern princes. The ancient prince’s creativity had to be measured by his virtues, success in the battlefields, and right decisions. The modern one needs abilities to manage things and handle technology-based institutions. By technology I mean a certain state of mind that relies on modern social sciences that are based on finding out the statistical medium of various facets

of social life. For instance, social sciences keep looking for the median voter, the average life expectancy, or the percentage of the state deficit in terms of the annual GDP. This average or percentage focused state of mind implicitly suggests that the individual, who is always particular, does have a real say in things; what is more, he or she is not responsible for his or her conditions. Virtues and moral responsibilities have been long neglected or debarred from public discourse, and partly due to this change of intellectual habit, politicians are expected to act as managers. But a prince is a master of political action. Technology as a state of mind blurs the essence of power: it is a *rapport*, or a complicated network of interdependencies that determines decision-making. Even if technology dictates what would be the most favorable, thus acceptable, decision for the average of the people, a political decision must be concerned with goals hopefully the most beneficial for the community but not necessarily approved by the people, because a good political decision is meant to be useful or good under future conditions and not for the present—unless the present must be preserved for its benefits. The major issue here is that power needs concerted action in order to achieve any goals. Therefore the prince has two obstacles to overcome. The one is that he has to set morally desirable goals; the other is that he has to provide the necessary support for his goals. This latter one is the real challenge for the prince, since he has to manage to create the camp of the potential supporters being aware all the time of the precarious character of the support. Supporters, despite a small number of ardent followers and almost fanatics, behave like businessmen, and they would immediately withdraw their support if they felt their interests to be threatened—supporters easily become enemies of the prince. The prince as the archetype of the ruler or statesman has to keep a close look at the friends and foes. This is one of the basic distinctions in politics without which the prince would fail soon. Loyalty is more important from the prince's point of view than the supporter's expertise. Expertise belongs to the qualities and blessings of technology but secondary from the perspective of political action.

Loyalty is an informal expression of one's unconditional adherence to the prince. By "unconditional" it is meant trust and support until the very last moment of the prince's political struggle. Loyalty is a form of subordination to a person called the prince. It requires several practical actions of the loyal supporter: all information affecting the prince's position must be reported to him without any reservations; all nonloyal inquirers will have to be misinformed or misled by lies; loyalty is best served if it does not have visible signs or the minimum of it; in sensitive

situations the loyal supporter has to stand out in front of the public but always remaining to a proportion of support, not exceeding the required intensity; in exchange, the loyal supporter is informed about the real reasons of a decision, during the process of decision-making, the prince, if necessary, consults the loyal supporter; if the prince is hurt in any way, the loyal supporters undertake the duties of the prince and act without making any innovations in policy-making; the loyal supporter can never leave his position at his will, but he must serve until he is exempted from under his duties; the loyal supporter knows how to remain silent and contribute to the maintenance of a power-network that is based on concerted action.

Serving the prince's needs is a multifarious duty. Its range is so vast that it cannot be calibrated by any measurement. Sometimes the prince's needs include sexual ones, cultural interests, or simply meeting with people of dubious backgrounds. The most relevant thing is, however, the erection of the lines of defense around the prince. Sometimes they are called "gatekeepers." But the lines of defense do not coincide with the functions of gatekeepers, although they are of the defense system. The narrowest line of defense does nothing but meeting the primary needs of the person to be served. In the second line around the person defended there are the gatekeepers who regulate what information and what persons can reach him. Other gatekeepers are responsible for the prince's communication and strategy-formation. If the prince is really a prince, he would build parallel channels and apply several gatekeepers in order to keep a check on the gatekeepers as well. Yet some gatekeepers may have bigger power and influence upon the prince. Because the prince needs an intimate with whom he can share his most direct doubts and ideas. Sometimes it is the spouse. Therefore the influence of wives or other female members of the prince's closest vicinity may have a much profounder impact on arranging a matter than it might be imagined from outside. But most of the intimates belong to that narrower circle that actually founded a party or the political background of the prince. They are regarded friends, public friends, and sometimes private friends, too. The third line of defense includes warriors who have a relatively strong position over certain areas like mass communication, but they do not have a direct say in political decisions. They are extremely useful because they bear the brunt of legal responsibilities of political decisions implemented by the government but also outside the government. They have run a high risk, and they do the most of the jobs assigned by the prince for them. In modern constitutionalism the legal defense is of utmost importance since it is the only way how to

challenge the prince. All other methods like smear campaigns are meant to morally denigrate the prince, but they fail if these are averted by legal and communication skills, including countercampaigns.

When political life is technologically engineered the prince will have to use technology to defend himself and his associates. Legal technology is just as important as communication techniques. But the greatest line of defense is the one that minimizes his exposure to legal consequences. It is a recent tendency in constitutional democracies that the executive branch of power is seeking opportunities to shift decisions over to the judiciary thus transforming political issues into legal ones. Also it is another way of trying to escape legal responsibilities when the morality of a political issue is accentuated, and by moralizing the bite is removed from a case, thus the follow-up decision might have a stronger legitimacy than otherwise. It is the most difficult thing to judge the efficacy of the prince's invisible power, that is, how he manages or handles background bargaining; lobby-interests, trade unions, and other interest groups; media and printed journalists; etc. One wonders how this tacit part of ruling can be approached without intimidated information. Sometimes autobiographies allow taking glimpses at the real motives of a particular decision, but it is hardly imaginable that we are offered the complete set of motivations behind a decision. Yet it would be a mistake not to take seriously such biographies written by presidents and prime ministers after stepping down from office.

There remains a real problem—the character of a statesman or prince. In premodern times, the ruler's character played an important part in his assessment and was described in terms of his lineage. Potentially a statesman could achieve greatness if he had a long lineage of ancestors whose achievements, deeds, and instances of a good or noble character could be demonstrated as final or real examples of perfectibility. With one's death not everything was lost, because achieved perfection could be inherited, and descendants could grow on the previous generations' greatness. Building a dynasty that belonged to the practice of aristocratic regimes, lost its relevance; what is more, according to some, it is the hotbed of creating an autocracy to say the least. Every society needs an aristocracy or elite; democracy is not an exception, so a conscious system of education is needed to produce the renewing ruling elite. Once the prince was regarded from an educational point of view as a gentleman; in modernity certain appointed universities or colleges wish to satisfy the recruitment of the ruling elite. Earlier education of the statesman or prince was a decisive factor in shaping his character, because it was the source not only of the character but also the accumulated wisdom that

was to serve the new generations to be confronted with the vicissitudes of ruling. But it did not mean that good governance was on a par with good or noble character. Plutarch's *Lives* provides several examples for the difficult judgment why a king or a governor could become a good statesman: "Both Theseus and Romulus were by nature meant for governors; yet neither lived up to the true character of a king, but fell off, and ran, the one into popularity, the other into tyranny, falling both into the same fault out of different passions. For a ruler's first end is to maintain his office, which is done no less by avoiding what is unfit than by observing what is suitable. Whoever is either too remiss or too strict is no more a king or a governor, but either a demagogue or a despot, and so becomes either odious or contemptible to his subjects. Though certainly the one seems to be the fault of easiness and good-nature, the other of pride and severity."<sup>51</sup> What kind of a person then is a ruler? Someone is to be accepted by the people independently the form of government. What differs in conjunction with the form of government is the virtues or values that the ruling person should exhibit with credibility. If credibility shakes or trembles because of insincere behavior of the ruler, his authority begins to evaporate, which is the beginning of his fall. But Plutarch was already aware of the first requirement of the king or any ruler: "a ruler's first end is to maintain his office," which means that seizing power is not one act, but a regular or routine job of a ruler. The ruler needs a structured and well-kept network of supporters who are the members of an action-focused group cemented by a vow to act in concert with the intentions of the leader.

### **The Statesman or Prince as Politician, or Ambition Assessed**

Is there any other profession comparable to the statesman's? It would be very difficult. "When that virtue ceases, ambition enters those hearts that can admit it, and avarice enters them all. Desires change their objects: that which one used to love, one loves no longer. One was free under the laws, one wants to be free against them. Each citizen is like a slave who has escaped from his master's house. What was a maxim is now called severity; what was a rule is now called constraint; what was vigilance is now called fear."<sup>52</sup> Great books are great because they address problems that arise all the time but in different apparels. Montesquieu tried to capture the essence of what a statesman can and should aspire to. Ambition is the key to the understanding of the profession of being a politician. Ambition is actually a desire to change anything that the person in question sees necessary to change—ambition



is usually seen as dangerous because implicitly it denies laws and rules. It also denies manners and customs. The highest challenge to what is usually called divine, the ambition, is an attempt to challenge what is accepted and what is beyond human reach. Therefore ambition is to be curbed but like a snake's poison, it is lethal but can be healing sequenced in good proportion. There is no political action without ambition. It is blessed and cursed at the same time. It is so because any fundamental condition of man is characterized by the basic contradiction between what is given and on what we should change by our own decisions. The ancients used the term *hybris* to indicate that if man exceeds what is allowed by divine and natural law, he would be seriously punished, usually taking everything from him. But it can happen only after the breaching took place and when it is irrevocable. Hence the tragic view of human conditions in antiquity. In contrast, modern man thinks that he can do almost anything without taking the risk of complete annihilation in the hands of gods. Today the only limit is set by dubious legal constraints or the person's consciousness—morality no longer has any binding force in our culture. If power is limited only by legal means than everything is possible conceived by the individual, for moral responsibility is only informative but not binding. Cynicism has been petrified or built in the human psyche and center of decision-making. We are unaware of not only *hybris* but also of the boundaries of our thoughts. Modernity has widened our imagination and the limits of rationality. Overabundant ambition can only be stopped by another overabundant ambition. This is political reality. The roots of ambition are in human nature directly related to will. Action and will are correlated and only progressives believe that it can be mitigated by institutions, what institutions can amount to is setting limits to ambition, but ambition knows no boundaries, always wills, and easily creates and attracts conflicts.<sup>53</sup> Without ambition nothing can be achieved in politics, and due to the nature of political action, if someone has doubts about his political ambitions, despite modern intellectual illusions, he is better to stay away from politics. That modern intellectuals have been flirting with political participation is to be traced back to the French Jacobins, the prototypes of secular messianism and the embodiment of political will put in practice. The problem of ambition may have several sources including strong egotism, narcissism, ideological enthusiasm, spirit of entrepreneurship, overabundant creativity, mere search for an income, intellectual hobbyhorse, and the like. Earlier ambition was tamed by a vertical or authority-dependent personal decisions, but in democracies and by technologically organized procedures personal

ambitions get neutralized and look like one of the many common elements of the political career. Evil is not weeded out from politics in modern institutionalism but built into every single bit of the political machinery, which seems to be working impartially and serving equally diverse needs. This is modern bureaucratization and mechanistic management of public matters. Power has limits, but within limits, power is creatively distributed where personal ambitions do matter a lot. Still it is a burning question of modern democracies how political recruitment is to be managed. Not only does the selection process seem unreliable, university graduation in itself will not make anyone a politician, but democratic egalitarianism keeps shadowing the ruling elite, which struggles for authority almost all in vain. Therefore antielitism is a constant feature of modern egalitarian public life.

### Whether the Prince Should Heed Ideologies

If we take political action as our vantage point, ideologies cannot be simply disregarded due to their limited intellectual horizon. Although ideologies were already declared to be obsolete in the 1960s, in a broad sense under the conditions of secularization, ideology does matter all the time. But in a way, as modern ideologists think that ideology is the only guiding principle for the people, it is a more profound approach if we accept that ideologies do matter in the sense that they are suggestions for people on how they should live. In this respect, even conservatism is an ideology, but only in this presentation. Ideologies offer visions of how we should live, and they compete in an arena of mind-created reality—a virtual world capable of producing change of behavior. Since religion was banned from the sphere of direct political action after the Enlightenment, a reverse case of the European Middle Ages has evolved in the now secular and positive legal framework of modern constitutionalism. Big ideologies are the offsprings of modern secular public life, in which politicians are either living *for* or living *off* politics, as Max Weber, who tried to reconcile real political necessities with offers of how we should live, noticed at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>54</sup> What we call modern democracy is grounded on the ideas of certain liberal ideas institutionalized by human rights. These are the moral fundamentals of this kind of political arrangements. Progressives believe that human rights are at the same time the proofs of human progress as well in that the nature of political power would also be changed. They are the victims of the mirage of their own fundamentalism. Political action can be limited, say, by regular elections, but if

a political agent wants to be successful, he or she will have to storm these limits, unless she believes in the changeability of natural laws. Real political agents consider the role of ideologies but do not ensure a special place for them.

### The Riddle of Political Knowledge

At least since Machiavelli's *Il Principe* there has been an unintended confusion of political action and political thought. Viewing and describing political action had been the concern of historians, who studied particular political events and persons, whereas political philosophers had concentrated their minds on man's life as a whole and on possible rational orders. Thus the latter ones developed political thought toward the problems of "how man should live," neglecting the actual conditions of human living. Political action as such did not capture the thought of classical political philosophers. What Machiavelli did was a shift from the comprehensive conditions of human life in general toward the circumstances of political action. The dichotomy of political action and political thought is not unavoidable. But it is a matter of fact that the two conceptions have become the source of serious intellectual conflicts. Before Machiavelli there had only been a latent conflict between historians and philosophers, sometimes writers or poets and philosophers. After Machiavelli we have had several more conflicts claiming the priority on the question regarding which approach to politics is more beneficial or more accurate. We have a long history of how political knowledge has disintegrated into various perspectives through the specification of diverse aspects of politics, that is, man as a communal being. Next to the amazing unfolding of technological discoveries through history, it is the development of political knowledge that is to be counted for one of the most important achievements of human thought.

The *first* split within political knowledge took place in early classical literature when political philosophy distanced itself from poetry and dramas with respect to political judgments. Solon had poems with powerful political contents integrating aspects of political action, morals, and wisdom. Socrates not only outlined the issues of politics by demarcating them from other problems, but imbued all of them with political, that is, communal, character. Man is inescapably a political animal; therefore the political is the first question of all philosophical issues. The Socratic turn had the most decisive impact on philosophy of all times. It is a paradox that more writings have been produced on

Socrates, who did not bequeath a single line to us, than on any other philosopher of all times. This paradox carries the secret of philosophy and political philosophy in particular. If the political is the first question, this must be the most comprehensive one as well. Being comprehensive does not incur that this should be based on data or information more than in any other field should have. It is more likely that that political knowledge would be the most beneficial, which is capable of providing a view or perspective on politics that explains man's aspirations the best at a given moment. Political wisdom is meant to serve this end, outdoing poetical insights by not only naming but giving reasons for political phenomenon that might point to or found the possible future political events and institutions, too.

The *second* split evolved as a result of contrasting the description of particular political events, and rational speculations about politics in general or with a universal intent. This is the debate between the historians and philosophers. Over ages this conflict has been mitigated by works of history obtaining philosophical qualities, whereas philosophy has been historicized in modernity creating a new field of philosophy called "philosophy of history." It means, as a minimalist judgment, that there is not an unbridgeable gap between the particular and the universal understanding of politics. In other words, political science is possible.

The *third* split is a more catchy issue. Is it salutary to divide political knowledge into a practical and a theoretical aspect? This nineteenth century suggestion initiated by Auguste Comte came to be applied as a standard of political science. Well before the positivist idea of political sciences and social sciences in general, the possibility of realizing this split, Comte's intention is ultimately based on the distinction between political action and political thought, or extending the problem over to questions of metaphysics, the conflict between body and mind, or matter and spirit. Philosophically speaking, this modern distinction clinches politics as a practical activity to the body, and change, improvement, perfection, or progress in politics, whatever it might mean, is linked to the mind. By making this turn a routine procedure in modern political science, the always imminent ideological or utopian character of politics surfaces more easily and overtly. The very first debate in political science between Plato and Aristotle can be interpreted as an exchange of arguments on human nature and the limits of human institutions assuming a context of what is real and what is feasible and aspects of what would be best in terms of constitution and statesmanship.

Like any other fields of knowledge, political science has also become analytical, compartmentalized, and dependent on democratic

institutionalization. Political knowledge or wisdom gradually developed into political science taking a solid empirical basis thus ensuring the quality of being realistic. But it is false to believe that what is empirical is also realistic, unless we endorse the postmodern claim that everything is the product of construction, that is, rational construction is real—the error stems from the confusion of what is real and what is feasible. Due to man’s ambiguous stance in the universe, human beings, within changing natural limits, are capable of pursuing dreams, fantasies, reasonable and unreasonable plans, and wishes deemed to be contributing to man’s happiness. Whereas feasibility is tied to man’s ambitions, what is real is mainly connected with outcomes or with the final condition of something that has come to an end. What is real comes close to what happened or to something being accomplished. But body and mind, matter and idea remain to be contrasts, and temporality or a historical view of human activities will not bridge the gap between the contrasts.

In recent years there has been a renewed concern with what is called political realism. William A. Galston has this observation: “During the decades-long reign of what some have called ‘high liberalism’ (exemplified by John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin, among others), a countermovement has slowly been taking shape [...] In casting about for a rubric to summarize this dissenting movement in political theory, I can find nothing better than Williams’s preferred term, ‘realism.’”<sup>55</sup> According to Galston, political realism is contrasted with “high liberalism” of recent decades suggesting that the gist of political realism shifts the relevance of the study of politics from normative ideas over to actual issues of politics: “In this paper, realism will emerge as a kind of community stew where everyone throws something different into the pot. There is however a theme or sentiment that unites realists at the threshold—the belief that high liberalism represents a desire to evade, displace, or escape from politics.”<sup>56</sup> In other words, political realism stands in opposition to political utopianism. Thus political realism should be understood not merely as a reaction to “high liberalism,” which was dominating political philosophy and/or normative political thought after the publication of John Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice* until the present day, but an everlasting tendency in European political philosophy, that is, political utopianism.

European intellectual life has been incurably *utopian* almost from scratch. It is a distinctive feature of Western culture, in general, and of political thinking, in particular. Whether it is ancient or modern utopianism, the core of the utopian mindset is that human beings are not

only capable of radically changing the quality of living conditions but they should seek new ways and methods because it is *necessary*. The stress on what is necessary has always been a sure sign of realist tendencies in one's political thought. Therefore the opposite of utopian thought is the *realist* way of thought. Conceptually realism is a reaction to utopianism, though realism might be treated as a *sui generis* problem of epistemology. As such, the theme of realism is reality: What is reality? What is real? It means that the concept of reality is closely tied to the problem of how knowledge is possible. Likewise political knowledge is rooted in political reality, and the concept of political utopianism must be derived from our intellectual relationship to reality. So when political realism is contrasted with political utopianism, we have to understand the nature of political knowledge and its connection to political reality. As a further consequence, we have to search political realism both epistemologically and on the basis of the history of political thought.

### Reality Versus Utopianism

The problem of political realism and its contradistinction to utopianism were created the moment when Socrates announced that "Come, then, let us create a city from the beginning, in our theory."<sup>57</sup> What there is before this statement in the *Republic* can be labeled as conventional views on what justice is.<sup>58</sup> Because they are conventions, they are also real in the sense that many people regard them as "true" or approved by many, therefore reliable vantage points for their decision-makings or judgments. Having listened to all of them, Socrates starts demolishing all proposed views on justice in order to point out that what justice is cannot be understood on everyday or empirical experience—all conceptions have only particular validity but lack universal meaning, that is, a claim to the name of knowledge. Thus the issue of political realism and utopianism leads us to the problem of what is particular and universal, in a broader sense, the distinction between opinions and knowledge. It is not by chance that Plato had to expose his views on fundamental epistemological questions as a relevant motive of how he is founding his *Republic* in words. The best form of government should be based on the universal concept of justice. And there is no place for epistemological relativism of any kind in this, for knowledge is one, and opinions are many; this is why they are particulars. The conception of knowledge in European philosophy, always founded on the search after truth, distinguished between what is visible and what is not. The latter one can only be approached by rationality or abstraction from what is visible. Truth

or true reality is hidden. And knowledge earns its authority by appealing to the hidden character of the true reasons of any phenomenon of the world. Whereas the religious search for the hidden is satisfied with collecting the evidence of a higher intelligence; rational philosophy would have liked to bring forth the hidden entity of the first cause of being, allowing the possible abhor of ending up with an insight of the infiniteness of being both in time and space. Thinking is unavoidably disastrous in terms of man's encounter with the ultimate paradoxical nature of existence. On the one hand, man seeks safety, stability, and unchanged conditions, and on the other, he wishes to enhance these qualities by further guaranties, let alone now his natural inclination toward poking his nose into everything that is hidden.<sup>59</sup> So what there has always been a challenge to the human mind, but it was only in European culture in which reality, what is visible, was allowed to be confronted with what is hidden or accessible only through man's thinking. What is visible could at any time be suspended for the sake of getting closer to the hidden. Once this attitude was allowed to spread over to any matters of human affairs, including public things, the contrast between political realism and utopianism was created as an unwanted consequence of the development of human intellect.

Plato's *Republic* includes all relevant ideas that are to be looked upon as decisive elements of political thought. But it is even more ambitious, since it also established a special form of political thought, that is, political philosophy, which is meant to handle man's needs to improve his conditions of life, that is, to secure the necessities of life. The second part of Plato's ominous line consists in what follows: "[A]nd yet the true creator is necessity, who is the mother of our invention." It is clear that founding a new state is not merely a passing whim but a must: "Now the first and greatest of necessities is food, which is the condition of life and existence." Dwelling, clothing, and the like follow on the list of necessities. It is crucial to observe that founding a state in theory or words mean that it must be done according to *logos*, that is, rationally. Certainly the needs are real in that they exist without any rational interference of man, but the way man satisfies his needs must be improved, that is, made safer and steady. As to what is visible and what is hidden is a parallel to what there is and what there should be—once this parallelism is beheld, political philosophy with its juxtaposition of the real and the ideal gained ground in European philosophy. How the two can be bridged is described in the history of political philosophy.

The issue is whether conventions, which are real for or ubiquitous among the many, should be contrasted with what there should be. And

here is the core of the problem: what is real is real because it exists according to the judgment of most people, which suggests that political reality is based on a majority view, and what is shared only by a few is doubtful if it is real at all or a figment of the mind that is nothing else than the luxury or hobbyhorse of the leisured class. One of the most vexing intrigues of human life is the tension between what there is and what there should be according to human rationality or thinking. In public matters or politics the contrast between what there is and what there should be is simply a transformation of the original problem of the conflict between matter and spirit or soul. If reality is nothing else than what we can gather from our sense perceptions, then our rationality should be limited to what is common to all of us, and thinking must not exceed the capacity of man's average understanding. Common sense, or *sensus communis* (*koine aisthesis*), is liable to designate the boundaries of what is real for man. What is corroborated by several or most men's views to be real that must be taken to be real. If most people agree that there is a tree over there in the garden, then reality would bind all men to be aware of that tree. And men would act individually accordingly and would coordinate their actions with a view to their common perception of that tree. As a result one of the possible definitions of reality is that what is real has to be experienced by our senses. Thus what is beyond our sense perception has a dubious status in our understanding.

But what about God, angels, and similar entities of which we do not possess sense perceptions but exert profound impacts upon the behavior and actions of many people. This is a matter of fact, and redirects us to the problems raised systematically first by Plato. It is also one of the most profound intrigues for our thinking to consider whether sense concepts like "justice," "power," "law," etc. have reality or are real. Without entering the realm of Platonic epistemology, it is enough to take it for granted that man is a communal being, and in order to survive, he must coordinate his activities with others. Since it is based on a unique attitude toward his conditions, man's mind is dominated by two aspects: the one is that man has a memory or experience of earlier events, the other is his constant worry about future happenings. Being present commits man to his actual needs, like any other living animals. Human creature is the only one that has not only presence but also past and future. Either of the two cannot, however, be experienced by sense perception. To connect the two, past experience is used to form rules of human conduct, that is, to create conventions, and future is treated in a way to avoid unexpected events—this strange mixture of human attitude will yield human decisions that implicitly attribute man



with something called “free will,” which in itself complicates how to define political reality. That human beings are not completely subject to instinctual drives will make man a creature undecipherable to the human mind. The most we can do is to pursue truth or wisdom. Political reality is that segment of human life that is determined by man’s communal character and everything that affects his thinking about man’s behavior toward the relationship or *rapport* that Montesquieu emphasized in his seminal work on laws. Relationship can be most effectively maintained if both or any sides of a relationship approved the laws that regulate how and by whom institutions are run. But the problem is that before we come to establish public institutions, we have to answer the question: “How should we live?” This is an issue that cannot be settled by science including political science of today, but it is also mandatory to rationalize the problem otherwise any community would fall apart or dissolve very soon. By rationalization one should think of all forms of human behavior that is capable of repeating a process, following rituals, respecting functional boundaries of different human skills and knowledge. Each human community has to have an overt or implicit code of behavior that rests on an answer to the question of “how should we live?”

Understandably with the rise of philosophy, a new landscape evolved with a new form of rationalization of this problem. This was paralleled by the appearance of the individual that was capable of distinguishing between two questions: the one is “how should we live?,” and the other one is “how should I live?” Earlier, customs had to give answers to any arising questions about how we should live without the heeding of individual needs. Since the rise of philosophy, and political philosophy in particular, all political thought should start out of the question of how we should live, but the new aspect of the individual doubled the question. Before discussing what sort of political institutions we need to have, we must decide the question that Aristotle discussed in his *Politics*, Book VII, with an emphasis on a new aspect called the “individual view” on the same issue: “We ought therefore to ascertain, first of all, which is the most generally eligible life, and then whether the same life is or is not best for the state and for individuals.” That it is the first question of political thought is supported by Plato in his *Republic* in one of his side-remarks: “For it is no ordinary matter that we are discussing, but the right conduct of life”(352d). The “right conduct of life” is similar to Aristotle’s “most generally eligible life.” But from now on, the original question assumed two perspectives—that of the community and of the individual. Until now, conventions enjoyed

a unique position of taking the answer to this question for granted; there was no need to multiply the original issue that mainly collected and concentrated the experience of the community as a whole, but after the birth of the individual, philosophy had to challenge conventions in order to serve the needs of the individual as individual desires, which might come into conflict with the safety of the community based on inherited conventions or bequeathed traditions did mainly in the face of challenges posed by natural or given conditions of human existence. The moment when the way of the “we” got split from the way of the “I” was captured by Plato’s Socrates and could not be ignored anymore by all later philosophers or scholars. Religions also competed for the better answers to these two crucial questions.

Within political philosophy the opposition of the rational and the real was preserved after Plato. Rousseau openly declared, “Let us begin then by laying facts aside, as they do not affect the question.”<sup>60</sup> Rousseau argued that “[t]he investigations [...] should not be taken for historical truths, but only for hypothetical and conditional reasonings, better suited to shedding light on the nature of things than on pointing out their true origin.”<sup>61</sup> Before Rousseau there was no reason for indicating that he follows natural laws as guiding principles of political order, but Enlightenment political thought resorted more and more to the standards of historical explanation that was to contribute to the more precise understanding of what order is possible to be realized in conjunction with the rules of historical development. Thus the great rivalry between natural law and history became obvious for the philosophers. Hegel was also aware of the relevance of the issue: “Philosophy cannot teach the state what it should be, but only how it, the ethical universe, is to be known [...] To apprehend what is the task of philosophy, because what is is reason.”<sup>62</sup> Hegel meant science by philosophy, so when he was looking for a solid basis of philosophy, he identified it with what was accomplished, what had already taken place, because what is is reasonable, and such it is real, too. As a consequence, “philosophy cannot teach the state what it should be,” which is the opposite of what, for instance, Rousseau suggested following the traditions of political philosophy. We know that this latent Rousseau-Hegel controversy marked the break with the natural law thinking in favor of a historical or historicist view of politics. All later political ideas split on this point: they can be justified on the force of either natural law or on the laws of history. Clearly, the long history of human rights also indicates how deep this conflict has been, for the notion of “right” gradually obtained the plural form “rights” for some time still preserving the adjective “natural,”

and when the idea of modern progress became dominant, the adjective disappeared denoting that the moral justification is no longer rooted in nature but in a historical context that grounds men's agreements among themselves without any outside, that is, divine or natural law, warrants of order. Purely the historical context and human rationality through consensuses should decide the fundamental issues of politics. The trouble with it is the constant threat of losing contact with reality in favor of a rational world, which has always been a dormant danger in the view supported by political philosophy to dogmatize political issues, just because liberal ideas are the final teachings on the truth of history-based political science. Fukuyama's proposition that history ended at around 1989 was nothing than a dogmatizing effort on the basis of liberalism. And it also triggered such an idea as "illiberal democracies," which is a practical application of the idea of the end of history, an ideological claim to fend off attempts to question the opportune behavior toward modern democracy. John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* also gave a moral justification of the particular order what was called "liberal democracy" that was originally put forward by Rawls as the comprehensive, hence final teaching on the good political order in which both liberty and equality are saved. Not only is power not mentioned in that book, but real or available facts were also intentionally excluded from the Rawlsian world of just order.

### Real, Reality, and History

Hobbes translated Thucydides's work *The Peloponnesian War* (1629) well before he wrote *Leviathan* (1651). As Machiavelli grew on Titus Livy's history on Romans, Hobbes relied on Thucydides's account of historical reality of the Greeks. Hobbes in his words to the reader explains the relevance of Thucydides's work thus: "[T]he principal and proper work of history being to instruct and enable men, by the knowledge of actions past, to bear themselves prudently in the present and providently towards the future."<sup>63</sup> While Hobbes remained true to the contemporary requirement of liberal education dedicated to the idea of liberty and perfection as the goal of education, he also gave reasons why a translation of a work of that magnitude is required. In order to study and understand "past actions," which implies that political knowledge should be aimed at political action rather than thought, norms, or the like. Political action takes priority over to political thought, yet we must not forget that the Hobbesian realism remains *within* the confines of political philosophy.

If political realism is a distinctive conception within political philosophy it is necessary to determine in what way we look upon “real” and “reality.” According to an average vocabulary, the concept of “real” may have some eleven realms of life,<sup>64</sup> where the word is used with different meanings. We are only concerned, however, with the possible philosophical interpretations of the term. “Real” as an adjective has the meaning of something being “true,” “actual rather than imaginary,” “being an actual thing; having objective existence; not imaginary,” or by way of classification we can distinguish three separate meanings of it: 1. existent or pertaining to the existent as opposed to the nonexistent; 2. actual as opposed to possible or potential; 3. independent of experience as opposed to phenomenal or apparent. What we can safely gather from the diverse definitions, “real” denotes something existing, actual opposed to the nonexistent, imaginary, or possible. It is corroborated by the origins of the concept of “reality” that comes from the Latin *res*, that is, matter, thing, that evolved through Medieval changes into *realis*, simply meaning “actual,” being a shorthand for “belonging to the thing itself,” or as a result of the positivist proposition for “facts.”

There is no need at this point to make a substantial detour to the history of such epistemological issues as what are the really existents; it is enough to refer to the two opposing metaphysics of Parmenides and Heraclitus whether there is anything next to being, that is, whether nothingness has a real existence or not, or the debate between Plato and Aristotle regarding whether it is justified to divide the existence into really existents, which cannot be empirically proved, and only seemingly existing things that are conceived empirically. I am satisfied with the classical distinction by the Greeks between words (*onomata*) and things (*pragmata*). *Logos* is made of words that unite rhetorical and logical elements as well. So the names and verbs were not separated; it was the ancient Latin language that dissected the meaning of *logos* into two parts: *ratio* and *verbum*. This shift in meaning implied that rationality is not naturally tied to personal speech or talk, or in other words, what is logical can be, and later on should be, distinguished from what is rhetorical. Actually this was the beginning of the decline of the classical idea of education mainly founded on classical liberalism. Also philosophy lost its personal character, and the mode of practicing philosophy was deprived of its original character requiring dialogues or personal exchanges. The dialogue form or conversations could condense the primary standards of process of looking for the truth. Truth is not only a sort of identification of words and things, but also an act of persuading other men about the character of truth. Therefore what is logical or, as

we say today, scientific, is not necessarily true, but would amount to, or yield to, logical constructions that might be impeccable formally but in terms of reality they are not actual, but imaginary.

History and political philosophy have been in a constant debate. This is the original framework of the conflict between political utopianism and political realism. History cannot help being realist while giving an account of events that are accomplished, therefore, in principle, we can relate the actual order of events, and, again in principle, we can search for the reasons of an event, decision, or action. Whatever history writers may conceive about their own jobs, the metaphysical foundation of history writing is that if something comes to an end, that is, no later actions or thoughts can change the course of earlier events, it can be regarded as final, unchangeable, and exposed to open scrutiny by anyone. If something happened or reached its development in time, which has assumed its final form and is ready to be told as a story, and open to be interpreted infinitely. From the perspective of history writing, all political philosophies are utopian, not based on reality, that is, action and events completed. Because what is real is accomplished, we know the partial or final conditions of a certain institution, the fate of a personality, or the stages of a process. If history writers take their jobs seriously, and they certainly do, they would distinguish themselves from political philosophy, for history has to do with particular events, whereas dominant political philosophers are concerned with the possible, or logically tenable, which is the opposite of what has happened. Realism in political thought means that we take the actual happenings as not only examples but also the limits of what we can do as political agents. Logical constructions do not bother about the limits of the actual, since these constructions are based on the pure reasoning on a particular problem, for example, justice is to be judged by analytical means without any historical references. A good example is the concept of justice put forward by John Rawls who hardly mentioned, say, Plato's classical conception of justice determining all later ideas on it. Today it is a mainstream belief that modern political philosophy begins with Rawls's book, *A Theory of Justice* published in 1971. This categorization enjoys any validity only if we accept the identification of political philosophy with political thought opposed to political reality. As political realism is primarily concerned with what has a historically justifiable reality, this allegedly modern political philosophy represented by Rawls only expresses a direction in the long list of utopian political philosophies. In the vocabulary of Rawlsian terms there is no place for strife, necessity, or acquisition and the like—the major signs of the

political realistic approach. The real issue is not the ideological character of Rawls's work, but whether it is not a complete failure of modern political science to separate political action from political thought as it was made mandatory by nineteenth-century positivist philosophy of science.

### Nature

Political realists would prefer to consult history and nature when they wish to generalize about politics. Most realists used nature (the basic quality of which is "growth"), much less turned to history for arguments of realism because history (mainly based on the lineal concept of time) had not existed as a reference point prior to modernity, and what is more relevant is that history was invented against the arguments of those following nature, so the idea of history favors mainly those who are archenemies of arguments based on nature. All classical political thinkers wanted to understand the hidden relationship of natural laws and human laws. The *physis versus nomos* controversy lasted for long enough to influence political thought and action up until Christianity finally replaced it by the concept of lineal time that paved the way for the conception of historical understanding of what the actual meaning of politics is. From the perspective of political realism we have to aware of the alternative of what nature and what history can offer. There is a fundamental difference between nature and history. Nature has two basic principles: the one is the alternation of growth and decline; the second related law is what Nietzsche called "the eternal return," that is, in nature there is a circularity even if each cycle has its own special features due to the changing conditions. To the contrary, history is designed to counteract the relentlessness of nature. Tragedy is the perception of nature's relentlessness toward man compared to historical development that can be guided or directed by rational agents. Earlier man had fate; modern man has a career or guided destiny. History is fate rationalized according to the wish of modern enlightenment thought. All human action takes place in time and place. The moment anyone disregards this fundamental context of human possibilities would fall into the trap of modern utopianism, which tends to neglect these two determinants of human action. Utopian is what sets aside either time or place as a fundamental aspect of any human action including political one. Time is responsible for both Christian and modern understanding of the meaning of human action. Already Christian theology wanted to

change the classical perception of time as a circular process, but modern secular understanding completely altered the classical view: if you wish to interpret the order of things in the world, you should not have to consult the rules of the nature but are free to find out the tendency of human activities and thought that might be in opposition to what is expected “naturally.” Once you discredit nature as a vantage point, as it was carried out by modern historicism, history would immediately jump into its place in order to point out that either everything is just constructed, the concept of nature is not an exception, so we can develop an improved construction, and history is just the case in point, or nature is against the idea of “humanity” or “humanism”—it means that the institution of human rights can effectually confront natural rights. Accordingly, nature produces natural differences among men, natural justice, natural religion, and the like, whereas a political community based on the idea of history, that is, historical development or progress, and attached human rights fundamentalism, that is, human rights must be considered as the final source of all human acquisition and defense, but as such they are morally acceptable and should be endorsed. This idea completely depends on the subjection of nature, which is arguable because this victory over nature cannot be proven or satisfied by rationality, unless you think that rationality is capable of achieving anything it wishes.

By following the natural, it went without saying that it is natural law that is to be decoded, but when you nominate a new vantage point of judgment, you also have to say how you construct the law of laws of your new reference point. When modern natural law appeared, human nature was used to supply the universality of political judgments—if human nature is the same everywhere, institutions grounded on it enjoy a universal recognition, too. If history is selected to be the universal vantage point, the laws of history also had to be invented. Or discovered? Unlike natural laws the alleged laws of history demanded justification: the meaning of history was added to serve the invention of the laws of history. If laws of history were only to be discovered, there would have been no need for clarifying the meaning of history. Modern natural scientists would never begin their studies by interpreting the meaning of nature. In classical philosophy the meaning of existence was provided by the concept of the teleological as Aristotle proposed, making use of the idea of nature with her undeniable ever repeated tendency of growth and decline. Because of the loss of *telos*, the ancient idea of aims that govern things, every single entity needed a justification of its existence.

Man was entitled to have a meaning of his life. And history just made up for this missing link.

There is a direct connection between realism and history obvious after Machiavelli, because realism needs solid grounds other than logical precision, thus what happened always carries an outside standard of judgment of what man should do. But Machiavelli remained in history; it did occur to him that history is not the final context within which one can act. He had no idea about transcending history through an alleged meaning that allows man to step out of the history as the only context of political action. In this respect Machiavelli was not modern at all. Although he did not follow the ancient history writers' intention to treat history for the education of the character to aspire to greatness and to avoid unjustifiable historical generalizations, he used history to consult it for the planning of present political action. He merely observed that the only difference between history and present politics is temporal and not essential.

The invention of history as a meaningful process or flow, at first, seemed to have strengthened the political realism that was observed by Hegel. Very soon, however, history came to be applied against everything inherited from the past—the past was used against itself in the sense that whatever is rooted in the past is nothing but an impediment to the new, which is free from the negativities of the past heritage. Only in European culture has the possibility of intentionally discarding the past occurred as the only vantage point that assists current decision-making, comparison of particular events, and creation of identity. It is also an unexpected consequence of meaning-attribution to history, because if the meaning of history is either “the development of freedom” or “progress,” then it becomes necessary to qualify every new development in terms of what contributes to the hoped for progress, and what does not. Western culture has evolved to be a culture that constantly blames its own legacies, values, and deeds and believes that by relinquishing her own past she can get rid of the major sources of future errors, present evils, and would-be problems. Strange but true, especially European culture blames herself for her failures with moralizing and historical misjudgments. Instead of reassessing her relationship with nature, she gets satisfied with the utopian construction and reconstruction of reality. Europe seems to be on the decline because of losing her identity through emaciating her ties with the past. The long-lasting effects of the debate between ancients and moderns in the seventeenth and eighteenth century are getting more and more visible.



### Past and Present—The Problem of Utopianism Extended

The tension between “what there is” and “what there should be” keeps human consciousness in a condition of eternal excitement. In our incurably utopian culture including political philosophy we have been pursuing to find passages from the present state of affairs to a rationally desirable world. Seeking reconciliation with what there is involving the outcomes of what happened seems unacceptable opportunism, but at least preferable to the existing conditions. The rational is preferred to what is real. Accommodation to the circumstances is labeled uncritical and morally unacceptable since what is new is necessarily better than the old. Modernity means the cult of the new and the younger. The old is always familiar and provides comfort through experience and knowledge to a limited extent. The new in contrast allows the possibility of having more knowledge and more rational, because it is us who initiate the new, thus exercising control over the future developments. Hence the belief in progress and perfectibility in modern times. Hegel’s identification of the real with the rational is perfect example for this kind of thought. In this respect there is no much difference between communist and liberal utopianism, which has become a dominant culture in the European culture. Communist utopia has not ended, for it has not started yet—this paradox has held in sway the communist utopia from the antiquity to the present. This is one of the oldest traditions of the Western man. The liberal utopia has started to exert a marked influence upon our lives by producing technological development through the rise of natural sciences and the technocratization of the social realm by bureaucratization and state-centered management of public affairs. The history has never seen such a totalitarianization of the public matters. Hence the recurring forms of modern radicalism both in culture and politics. Modern radicalisms are luring the human mind with having a total control over one’s happiness—you can plan your happiness. Fate is something belonging to the life of people in the past. The liberal individualism regards the individual the only real component of the human world. On this point socialists and liberals have split for long, but not any more—socialists or leftists inculcated the doctrine of human rights, but they did not notice that what they also embraced is the individualism of the liberals. According to the progressives, the world is not only formable but conducive to restructuring of transformation. The realist’s attitude takes the world as it is, because the world is a secret, an enigma that cannot be solved once and for all, but the laws of the reality must be studied.

All discoveries and human inventions should be meant to assist us in accommodation to the world.

From the realist point of view we can make a comparison between the communist and fascist and Nazi utopianism. It is not justifiable that the communist utopia is judged by its intentions, and the fascists or the Nazis by the disasters that they caused. Both of them must be distinguished but identified where the sameness is obvious: both of them relied on scientific arguments and were morally united in that reality can be radically transformed and restructured. Both of them disregarded the riddle of reality testified for all of us in things to be experienced in time and space.

The precondition of the twentieth-century radicalisms was a deliberative break with the idea of nature as reality. Originally philosophy could be the synonym of science because there was no point in separating the material and the spiritual. What is whole unites all aspects of the existing, and the most adequate approach to it was synthesized by the concept of philosophy. A single pebble on the roadside symbolized the wholeness of the being. Nature as a mental construction could cover all the aspects of living with the unifying concept of purpose or goal that is characteristic of all objects of the world. Classic philosophy embodied and expressed the superiority of the objectivity of the world around us. Reality is a concept of any worth if it helps us to distinguish and structure the entities of in and around us. When reality was identified with rationality ousting the identification of it with nature, a completely new condition determined our understanding of the world: think what you want without considering its impacts on the boundaries of reality and your possibilities, what is more, accommodation must be viewed irrational. Dissection of the world in order to deepen the understanding of the particular destroyed the serenity with which man could view his world around him. Harmony came to be seen as obsolete, the material was cut off from the spiritual, the matter from the mind. Man grew up from its self-imposed nonage, as Kant victoriously announced in his writing on the Enlightenment. Really? Or just simply quickened the losing of reality identified with nature. Modern man revolted against nature; now he does not feel comfortable in his world that seems to be alien to him. Nature has become enemy no.1. Truth is no longer somewhere "out there," but here "within." Reason became and is his own judgment. Descartes's philosophy rightly claims the initiator of this new self-image of reason, and Pascal's desperate criticism against this new philosophy was relegated into the zone of "past things." However, man's, and actually all animals' craving for

security and comfort hailed the consequences of Descartes's thoughts and supported a new concept of nature, which is a bunch of aimless and spiritless objects, sowing the germs of modern natural sciences. In the past, man sought to understand the world in order to be able to accommodate better; today man develops technology in order not to accommodate themselves to seemingly given circumstances. Needless to say, the struggle for greater independence, paradoxically, increased man's dependence, this time, upon technology and a totalizing world of institutions. Politically speaking, which offers greater safety for man: natural right or formalized institutions of justice? The whole question boils down to the issue of whether there is real reality or if it is simply a figment of the mind. If man has a chance to become the lord over himself, that is, changing his own nature, then anything is possible.

The evidence for the relevance of the understanding of the conflict between modern utopianism and realism, a few lines of Spinoza are worth quoting. In the Preface of Part 4 of his *Ethics*, this is what he writes: "What I mean is, that we conceive the thing's power of action, in so far as this is understood by its nature, to be increased or diminished. Lastly, by perfection in general I shall, as I have said, mean reality—in other words, each thing's essence, in so far as it exists, and operates in a particular manner, and without paying any regard to its duration."<sup>65</sup> Spinoza still uses the idea of nature as it had been used by earlier thinkers. For him reality meant things given, as they were created by God or nature. Something either grows or declines, and man is not an exception: "It is impossible, that man should not be a part of Nature, or that he should be capable of undergoing no changes, save such as can be understood through his nature only as their adequate cause."<sup>66</sup> From this it follows that man is subject to passions, that is, nature, and all he does is to obey and accommodate to it. Realism is tied to the concept of natural order of things, and since there is a natural hierarchy of entities—God, nature, man—the higher necessarily will come first before the lower. Utopianism, by its very essence, has to deny this hierarchy, because utopists wish to perfect society not within, but outside of nature; this is why each utopist is radical at the same time, which is demonstrated again by Spinoza: "[A] horse would be as completely destroyed by being changed into a man, as by being changed into an insect."<sup>67</sup> Sounds absurd? Not really in a world of genes manipulation. Biotechnology could even meddle with the most hidden secrets of existence.

Already C. S. Lewis noticed in his *Abolition of Man* that man can be changed into something else. His insight is not new in terms of

modern technology and sciences to conquer nature but gives a kind of a report on how far the process had gone. “The final stage is come when Man by eugenics, pre-natal conditioning and by an education and propaganda based on a perfect applied psychology, has obtained full control over himself. Human nature will be the last part of Nature to surrender to Man.”<sup>68</sup> Lewis, being a realist, was fully aware of the political consequences of conquering Nature: “Man’s conquest of Nature, if the dreams of some scientific planners are realized, means the rule of a few hundreds of men over billions upon billions of men.”<sup>69</sup> What is it if not one of the profoundest insights about and unmasking utopian thought and its political aftermath? Today’s naive liberals still believe that their program is designed to “enlighten” man, to boost his perfection thus enabling him to distinguish between what is right and what is false. These liberals mistake man’s rational capabilities with the necessary, internal structure of power. The action of enlightening someone unavoidably creates a hierarchical or natural situation between the “enlightener” and the one to be “enlightened.” The process of enlightening does not abandon the structure of existence in which the one who knows more will necessarily gain more power over the one knowing less. And since knowledge cannot be evenly distributed there always will be a few who would know more and better, thus forming a power construct whether they want it or they do not. The master is superior to the pupil in terms of power. Communists simply drove this implicit power structure to the extreme: they know the best what history is about, so they claim the very core of knowledge that in itself makes a claim legitimate to political power, too. The very few know on a scientific basis what ethereal the goal (communism) is, and in order to spread the good news (gospel) intellectuals are needed to enlighten the people. This leads to tyranny both theoretically and practically. But today’s communist way of thought is not class-based, though ideological—the basis is technology or expertise pretending to be neutral in terms of power. They have been liberalized by the concept of autonomy. Both liberals and socialists claim that each individual is “autonomous,” that is, capable and has the right to determine himself, that is, to enact laws for himself (*autos* = self, *nomos* = law).

The new hope for such social planners is biotechnology. Lewis had already predicted the possibility of “pre-natal conditioning” of the human nature; today we have the particular instrument to do that: biotechnology. According to Peter Augustine Lawler, one of the living on communist features is that our judgments are never personal or individualistic, but rhetorically they talk about scientific or neutral forces: “The claims of

ideology, on the other hand, are never personal; ideologies teach that we are not controlled by persons but by forces, such as history or matter or the economy of technology. That is why ideologies are always promulgated by experts who never say <I think> or <I believe> but <history shows> or (nowadays) <studies show>. Ideologists always call upon the impersonal authority of science.”<sup>70</sup> Instead of natural laws there are social laws that suggest that man can gain control over the developments of history. Modern personality is born at the moment when man’s freedom was combined with the idea of autonomy. From a personal point of view one can develop a new attitude toward such fundamental conditions like death, sexuality, education, love, and God. In addition biotechnology creates an illusion of human conditions that are prone to be changed or restructured. Both Marx and the liberals are seduced by the hope that social conditions can be altered, partly by erasing the inherited ones, in order to establish spotless ones in which the autonomous individual is free to choose how he wants to live. The final promise of the liberals and communists is very similar. Communists recommend leadership; the liberals recommend good laws, but the purpose is a completely free individual. What has remained as resisting the final transformation of human conditions? Love is no longer the relationship of a man and a woman, and even death can be relativized, for the body of someone likely to be passing away can be hibernated hoping for a technologically more developed age when the sick body could be healed sometime in the future. It means that the relationship among men has been completely changing.

First, the utopian thought abolishes the absolute quality of reality and produces a number of interim modes of living between reality and an ideologically established realm. It is crystal clear that utopianism has been gaining the upper hand over reality in our world because the virtual is made absolute in the face of reality. This is why both the individual and human community had to be made “absolute”: if nothing is sure except my ego (*à la* Descartes), then the utopian thought has an unlimited perspective to develop—any human desire (*à la* Hobbes) or need might have a legitimate and legal claim to acknowledgement and approval, since human rights are no longer guaranteed by nature, but by the majority’s (or the powerful elite’s) consent and approval. But the more widespread or extensive modern human rights are, the stronger the state needs to be to enforce and maintain these rights. When liberals and fallen communists together talk about liberty today, they conceive a particular power structure—separation of the church and state, division of powers, rule of law, but they fail to recognize that what they stand for

is a totalizing political system inherent in the process of the loss of reality. The most intriguing circumstance of this state of affairs is who is going to maintain the consciousness of the purpose, which requires the support of the majority of the people? Only centralization of political power or the idea of a global state can save the planners to fail.

The survival of the utopian thought is maintained through the absolutization of the new as such. All politics needs new goals, solutions, and means. But only the utopians wish to absolutize the new as such. Strangely enough Machiavelli, who is rightly called a political realist, also contributed to the loss of reality and the rise of ideologies. He deliberately sought new ways and modes, yet his basic questions come from ancient political wisdom. He was the first to use history without demonstrating the qualities of greatness, he did not want to formulate new ethical rules but he studied his subject on the grounds of the multifariousness of reality. Yet it needs be to analyze why Machiavelli is regarded as a realist political thinker. First, it was not taken for granted what his subject is or his relationship with practical politics. Thomas More's *Utopia* was completed almost in the same year (1516) when Machiavelli finished *The Prince* (1513, published only in 1532). The Renaissance political thought was to find new ways and modes. Second, Machiavelli used the concept of virtue with a new meaning: virtue did not only contribute to perfection but virtue has a functional-technological meaning as well, that is, an instrument to achieve a goal. Third, political realism suggests accommodation to what we have, and not how to change it at any cost. All utopian political thought looks upon the world what is wrong in it, what is imperfect. All of us all the time have enough reason to feel dissatisfaction with the existing state of matters. This is not extraordinary, but when it is fueled by utopian expectations, each instance of dissatisfaction can blur the relevance of reality.

Knowledge is power came to be applied as a principle and purpose in modernity, the cult of the new. Modern utopias are scientific in most cases. It was at its beginning, and it is mechanized and standardized today in the form of social sciences, which regard reality as a construction. Liberal constructivism strives to either depoliticize political issues, mainly through legalizing political matters, or tries to tame power by various instruments and institutions. The nature of political reality, however, keeps breaking through the walls of constructions to which the utopian is constraint to react with force or plainly violently. He would act the way against which he had wanted to prove that the nature of politics can be changed. His own behavior and decisions will be the evidence against his ideas. Man's second nature has been developed over

a long time and is the most fragile element of human conduct. One's character is more obliging than any quality obtained by training or education.

Beyond doubt it was Hobbes who polarized the inner contradiction of political thought. He finally chose modern rationality against classical natural right thought. His sense of reality lasted as long as he wanted to counterbalance man's beastly part by a mighty state. This kind of realism opened up a controversy between the fundamental conflictual character of politics with consensus-seeking rationality of modern conception, which often ends up with utopianism. Hobbes ultimately is rightly seen as a political realist, because he preserved the basically conflictual nature of politics. Man does not live almost together with war, because he chooses it, but because man is like that. Man's life is struggle and competition from the beginning until the end. How salient and ancient this view is it is worth quoting Hesiod's *Works and Days*: "[F]or a man grows eager to work when he considers his neighbor, a rich man who hastens to plough and plant and put his house in good order; and neighbor vies with his neighbor as he hurries after wealth. This Strife is wholesome for men. And potter is angry with potter, and craftsman with craftsman, and beggar is jealous of beggar, and minstrel of minstrel."<sup>71</sup> The same argument is usually used for defending capitalist mentality, for man in himself is liable to idleness and torpidity. And the more ambitious and hardworking must also be defended, which is a political job. Justice or right should rule men through laws. Violence at the bottom of which there is a conflict must be controlled by the right. Hesiod again: "But you, Perses, lay up these things within your heart and listen now to right, ceasing altogether to think of violence."<sup>72</sup>

We cannot help mentioning the problem of philology, because the Greek word *diké*, which is translated today by "right" or "justice," originally did not have any moral implication at least at the time of Homer or Hesiod.<sup>73</sup> According to Michael Gagarin, *dike* or *dikaïos* meant "consent" or "legal procedure" in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.<sup>74</sup> According to Gagarin *dike* might mean "law," so when Hesiod wrote about *dike*, then he must have alluded to a consent reached through a peaceful procedure by adverse rivals. In contrast, Matthew W. Dickie denies this interpretation, because at that time *dike* already meant justice. The stem of the Greek word *dike* is *deik*, which comes from the verb *deiknymi* meaning "to show," "to demonstrate." This is the basis of the different meanings of *dike*: sign, direction, way, and custom. Further derivations of meaning are "character" or "characteristic behavior." For the Greek philosophers *dike* meant action in accordance

with nature, that is, *dike* did not have any normative implication, or what there should be, but what is ordinary or customary, the way things are or behave. Strife or conflict is in conflict with *dike*, for both of them are parts of human life. Modern concept of justice, however, is normative and beholds in it the finest product of human rationality. The opposition of reality and the norms is the intended consequence of modern use of reason, and reality is the enemy of reason that creates rationality as an independent entity, thus justice does not stem from reality; it is not created from the interactions of the entities, but the mere product of reason. In this respect there is no difference between communist and liberal thought.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, it had become clear that reality got split, and Ortega y Gasset described the evolved situation in which reality is viewed as “what it should be like” (in the Kantian sense of “Sollen”): “The whole modern utopianism is magic. . . . They talk about nothing else than whether a political constitution should be aristocratic or it should not be. They do not previously analyze what there is, not the unavoidable conditions of reality, but they immediately declare what things should be like. This characteristic mistake has been committed by the <progressives> and the <radicals>, what is more, the overall liberal or democratic spirit as it is called. This is an extremely comfortable attitude.”<sup>75</sup> Ortega precisely understands that we have been confronted with the outcomes of Descartes’s epistemological innovation. Descartes’s famous *more geometrico*, which is mentioned by Ortega as well, implies that it is possible to construct a society in which “the formal perfections of a polygon and a dodecahedron”<sup>76</sup> can be realized. A utopia or oblivion of reality at once presents itself the moment we confuse what is desirable with that which is actually desirable—the problem with desires that they may prove to be the opposite of they seemingly look like at first sight. Ortega also adds that this utopian state of mind has been developing since the eighteenth century and left its marks on the course of history.<sup>77</sup> Progressivism in this aspect is nothing but unstoppable restlessness yearning for that which should be. Since it is a state of mind or attitude it needs to have an objective justification, which is mostly moral in character as if morality were a legitimate claim for being restless so that something morally higher could be achieved at the expense of neglecting reality. That one can become a monster or evil while pursuing a brand new state of the world of alleged morality does not occur to him, for historical progress eliminates evil in the long run.

But the all-embracing morality is not the only one that spreads and covers the real springs of political action. Those who believe that



“politics is applied ethics” would not revolt against using law as a political weapon. For a progressive, all forms of normativity is beneficial by which he would acknowledge that politics in itself is unable to move toward something better, for the idea of good should be introduced from outside of the political realm. On the basis of political realism the question is if a political agent can attain any other norm than the one applied in politics every day—the norm of nurturing power in order to be successful. All outside layers gathered or condensed from elements of common morality, legal norms, economic wealth etc., and petrified on politics impede political action and expose the political agents to deeds that ultimately make them cynical. The bigger the distance is between what there is and what there should be, the more and more volunteers offer their services: lawyers, moralists, journalists (because they really know what reality is like!), philosophers, modern social scientists, etc. They are the intellectuals and claim that they know better than the actual politicians do. But these omniscient intellectuals do not take any formal responsibility for what they so vehemently argue for. The few who did, turned directly to politics, and usually failed very quickly.

We may contradict the modern intellectual with Pindar’s line, “Become such as you are, having learned what that is.”<sup>78</sup> The realist always scrutinizes what we are, the utopian studies what we could become, or what we should be—the latter attitude is not fair, because it seems as if the realization of the perceived good depends solely on reasoning. The “what there should be” is linked to the idea of “new,” and when it happens; the individual’s judgment of “what there should be” will evolve to be a universal truth. All forms of modern utopianism went through this process. Both epistemology and morality requires this change or justification. A utopia is effective when these two aspects are united. Such was the Marxian view of society, and such is the liberal approach to public issues. Revolutions do happen in modernity when intellectuals want to shorten the way between what there is and what there should be. This is when intellectuals, especially in so-called backward countries, step up and create the image they know better than anyone else what to do. It often happens that the intellectual is confined to assume a political role but usually fails. The reason for it is that the intellectual is comfortable with ideas and moral issues but ignorant about how things actually happen, how people behave under diverse circumstances. As a result the intellectual is strong in moral judgments, but acts very poorly in the management of things. Every man has at least a vague idea about what he would like to have in the future, but it is only the intellectual who wishes to replace the politician without

responsibility. The counterutopias, or dystopias, do not address the reality of politics either, so the opposite of utopia is realism and dystopia.

Plato's *Republic* is a utopia but has nothing to do with modern concerns with utopianism. Before the modern Enlightenment, people had a different relationship with reality, because they had a different attitude toward reality. They did not know the purely empirical or romantic bondage with reality, their relationship was direct to reality, and was not affected by any ideological persuasion. This is just the case in point: modern Enlightenment relativized the relevance of religions that were ousted by ideologies, which were the combination of emotions and rational arguments. The forefathers of public intellectuals gathered in saloons in certain parts of Europe and managed to acquire the critical and intimate positions toward power relations. However, the Romantics also reacted to the Enlightenment by focusing on the partly emotional, partly irrational individual who revolted against a purely rational culture and society. They developed an individual who is unique, and differs from other individuals, because each of them is a *kosmos* in himself compared to the rationalistic individual who is looking for a reason common to all other individuals. Usually the Enlightenment and Romanticism are seen as the opposites of each other, though from the utopian point of view they supported one another. A utopia is ready to make for the missing constituents of each attitude: it softens the reasonable by giving flesh and blood to the rational skeleton of the imagined society and rationalizes the emotionally overpowered by lending a stricter logical order to the fancy ideas of a better society. Not a single utopian would admit that he is a utopian in a particular sense. No modernists, scientists, communists, or fundamental human rights advocates believe that they do not serve reality. All of them think that reality is best served if they construct a better world than what they can see around themselves. The problem arises when in the name of a better society someone fails to consult the present conditions of living. Dogmatism is very close to utopianism, though the representatives of it assume that they are the most free and flexible thinkers on earth. Utopists are necessarily radicals as well, because they deny the world as it is, and they want to uproot it completely, otherwise the dogmatic-rational construction of theirs would be destroyed. Certainly not all utopias are radical in all aspects. But they are in one or two fundamental respects like the communists in terms of economic exploitation and private property, and the liberals in terms of equality. A sure sign of utopianism is the radical or relative neglect of historically evolved institutions like the family, the state, politics, religion, money etc., because they are made the

scapegoats of impeding progress, equality, individual freedom, gender equality, and the like. The central issue is how national income is distributed by political means, that is, what purposes and compensations are appreciated by allocating funds provided from taxes and revenues. Modern man feels free to connect the idea of good at his will or by consent. But such connecting might be wrong, delirious or flawed. Any desire or wish rarely proves to be respectable just because, say, a dogma of equality dictates it. For instance the dogmatic pursuit of equality is hard to defend in matters of gender or morality. The new dominance of the idea of equality behaves exactly like the transcendentalism of the Middle Ages. You either love God, or you are doomed; you either adore equality, or you are discredited from the political community.

A sentence beginning with the phrase “how can it be in the twenty-first century?” refers to a state of affairs that are hidden for us in the future. What has already happened has no real value; even more, the past mixes something evil with the good of the future. This is why the conservative is judged to be a representative of something suspicious if not downright wicked. The progressive automatically claims himself to be united with the good, only because he represent the future in which the new is inherently good. The utopian does not betray himself by declaring all past things wrong but by selecting only one aspect of the past to be good: it must a proof in favor of progress existing and working. Any past event or development could be approved “good” if it points toward progress. Although progress cannot be justified, because it is an attitude, a way of thought, and a moral judgment. Progressivism and utopianism are closely linked by their common attempt to veil the reality of politics by moral ideas or ideologies, which are morality writ large. The old assumption that so-called morally neutral technological development will be serving man to control the outcomes of human decisions and actions is a utopia per se. One can hope that multiplying the instances of calculated successes can be regularized, but no one can assure that these successes will be in accordance with the good that has been targeted before. Technology is never neutral, unless we cannot distinguish the source of good and the source of evil. As the ancients professed, purpose directs every entity, and without a purpose good cannot be evaluated in a particular case. All depends on who sets the goals and what these goals are. Therefore the quality of leadership is essential with respect to a wholesome handling of reality. If reality is the compass of all things, then leadership is the master of the compass. Losing reality means the failure of recognizing the differences in quality

and direction of leadership. Modern is highly exposed to the loss of reality, because modern autonomy enhances the danger of disruption of a balance between the community and the individual. Individual autonomy as a desired aim by many easily fall prey to a distorted view of reality—the connection between the whole and the part might be overturned, and the individual could prefer policies that favor individual desires and needs despite the salience of communal goals. If the West or Christian culture is threatened by an imminent decline, then it is the false judgment of the individual's legitimate needs, and vice versa, the individual's loss of political reality. The loss of the sense of danger is the first sign of a possible decline.

The essence of political realism is that it is capable of removing ideological incrustation and the invisible parts of political action from existing and developing political power. Ultimately all political power is based on concerted action and mostly uncontrolled forces determine how far one can get in pursuing or maintaining power. Democracies are the most hypocritical regimes among all, because the real nature of politics is subordinated to political struggle for the votes of the people. It suggests to the observer that political power resides in the actions of the people, which is completely misleading and covers the reality of power. To be honest, people were abhorred if they knew that the peaceful civilization in which they live is so precarious and fragile that war is always imminent despite welfare and fear of violence. To save civilization is the main purpose of political realism—political evil is so pervasive that everyone concerned with politics must bear in mind how great efforts are needed to fend off the imminence of barbarism. Democracies are so busy with everyday political clashes that they fail to recognize the more dangerous threats. Democrats would like to believe that conflicts can be resolved by negotiations and compromise. Reality shows, however, that if one wants to achieve a goal, consensus and compromise work among equals but never among unequals. So the precondition of democratic and/or liberal leftist assumptions is total equality, which is utopian for the time being. In a democracy, the ruling elite is confined to tackle the masses, to cajole them, and mind their imminent wishes. Machiavelli's realism has not been refuted by modern democracy.

What unites different forms of utopianism is the conscious and intentional neglect of reality, declaring it the latent enemy negligent of existing institutions and state of affairs, which are likely to be posited by intellectuals as "butts of criticism," and they recommend "pure rationalism" in the face of "faith," or belief, and the emotional. Intellectual radicalism is an outpouring of the anxiety of the modern

self—if you feel uneasy under the present conditions, change your life by planning a new world. Modern revolutions were the harbingers of the new restless state of mind. But the way modern man lives his life still characterized by Henry David Thoreau back in the nineteenth century: “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.”<sup>79</sup> The main cause of modern uneasiness is rooted in the loss of reality, which simply means that people accept the most trivial, the most imminent, or offered explanations. Even if modern social sciences produce more and more information, people feel more and more at a loss. Modern sciences are statistically median-centered, which just augment the person’s viewpoint to be particular and consequently worthless in terms of social development and judgment. The same has been going on in the field of political judgment. Alexis de Tocqueville already observed that “[t]he inveterate habit contracted by all the politicians, during this long parliamentary farce, of over-coloring the expression of their opinions and grossly exaggerating their thoughts had deprived them of all power of appreciating what was real and true.”<sup>80</sup> Tocqueville as a political realist was directly concerned with politics in the 1848–9, and could react to their down to earth experience about how politics is made on the basis of his more theoretical observations about his contemporary political events. The first thing he noticed was the discrepancy between one’s experience about political reality and the loss of reality to be amended by imagination or emotions. The question is, then, is modernity superior to earlier regimes in terms of adhering to reality or is it the same like any other, which means that however well argued modern liberal democracy is we have to raise the issue whether the understanding of reality as an everyday problem is more taken care of or is it just the same as with other regimes?

Political knowledge is of many sorts. We have at least two massive responses to the question of what political knowledge might mean. The one is that political knowledge should have somehow a direct concern to political reality, that is, political action. The other is that political knowledge is concerned with moral norms and ideologies.

The problem of the tension between the universal and the particular is perhaps most obvious in the field of political knowledge—history has also been tormented by the same issue, but since its raw material is something accomplished, history writing can directly address it by drawing conclusions declaring that this or that is the lesson of a past event. Historians do generalize without admitting to be generalizing. If they do, they are immediately exposed to critical comments like “ideological” or “unscientific.” The main source of such critical stands is that

political or historical things are in direct relationship with the observer or scholar, or philosopher. We are unable to develop a direct relationship with molecules, atoms, or cells. As a result, whereas we have more than enough views, comments, or opinions about matters of human affairs, there practically are none in chemistry, physics, or biology. Everyone has something to say about matters of the day if it directly affects every living being—not human rights, but common experience is primary to all of us. What we all and always experience is crisis and lack of judging the world around us realistically. Crisis is nothing else than a turmoil of possible answers to burning issues, especially when men are helpless regarding which answers to accept. It is tightly connected with the problem of how we are capable of judging the world around us. From the earliest time, we have always had an understanding of politics, which should be interpreted as it is, that is, as it *actually* is. In modernity, we seem to have accepted the premise that politics is about ideas and norms. If it were, reality would be left on its own, without attempts to understand it by reason.

### **Political Realism—Final Account**

Political realism is usually, and rightly so, associated with the wielding of power. Strangely enough, most forms of political thought do not regard power as the focus of their interests, not a word about military issues or war, enemies, or hostility as such. It is partly due to the deceptive character of power—power likes to hide, and it never presents itself directly or unvarnished, and partly because political science has become normative and accepted, the European liberal conception of politics is identified as “applied ethics.” As if politics can be unified with ethics or reduced to it. Ethics and politics are two distinct forms of man’s encounter with reality. This encounter assumed various ways through history. But it is undeniable that anyone who confuses the ethical and the political will end up with either a moralistic or a down-right tyrannical view on power. One might argue that power is always obvious and direct, for it is enough to refer to everyone’s plain experience about what the state does and the way it interferes with one’s life. But it is not power, but the state that assumes the qualities of power, but not power itself. There are many ways by which power manifests itself without disclosing the sources of them. Even constitutional government is a form of concealing power by its often complicated network of institutions that is established to control power but it can only do so partly, and in the long run in the best case. Since power is not a

thing or a subjective-dependent form of influence, we need to identify, at least, a few signs of power in action. Political realism is “powerful” because it wants to rationalize politics through understanding power by subordinating all other facets of it to this only aspect: politics is about power. It is not about institutions or ideologies, not about simple leadership or government. It is about relationships between man and man. But they are not any kind of relationships. It should involve seriously the issue of “how should we live?” Second, it involves all possible concerns with strength and forces. Without strength or force there is not a single chance to get other people to approve a certain common goals without which no community is possible at all. Modern life is about mutual understanding, tolerance, and peace. At least in words and by norms. But in reality it has produced the same events and phenomena like any other ages in which there were not so many words about peace or other wishes. We have had wars, and earlier never seen the number of civil casualties in wars. We need leadership independent of the form of the government. This is final word of political realism on politics.

The backbone of power is authority. Without authority no power can evolve or be maintained. Authority may be derived from success, respect, and strength. This is one of the problems with power based on consensus or consent. If a modicum of greatness is not added to political positions or power in general, then the mere rational foundation may soon evaporate leaving the partners nothing to adhere to. Authority is an idea that is able to incubate rational, emotional, and moral elements to alleviate political action as such. It cements and stimulates agents to act and obey, if necessary. At the same time authority is the focus of power, the zero point that creates a sphere of action within which one can create power. This apprehension of power allows vast fields of imagination and moralizing about political power.

According to Alfred N. Whitehead, “The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. I do not mean the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings. I allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through them. His personal endowments, his wide opportunities for experience at a great period of civilization, his inheritance of an intellectual tradition not yet stiffened by excessive systematization, have made his writing an inexhaustible mine of suggestions.”<sup>81</sup> Would it be an exaggeration, growing on Whitehead’s insight, to say after Machiavelli that the European political thought should consist of “a series of footnotes to Machiavelli”? Maybe not despite the fact that almost all political movements after

Machiavelli have found it necessary to detach themselves from what is called Machiavellism, which became the synonym of political evil according to political trite. Machiavelli's teachings have been instigative or fermenting beneath the surface in the face of mostly hypocritical moral standards of all ages. Due to the nature of political actions, Machiavelli could only resort to history writers who developed a different set of judgments of moral behavior compared to philosophers who combined morality and political action. Machiavelli only described how political action could be effective, which, however, stands in stark contradistinction to moral standards. The fundamental insight he relied upon was a firm recognition that man always behaves differently as it is prescribed either by laws or moral precepts or rules, or simply private considerations. Man is a deficient being in the universe and especially in political matters. Once man departed his natural circumstances in which only instincts rule, he had to find out how to regulate the common life of all men with a view to how to assure the survival of the community. The individual does not matter just like under natural conditions—the struggle for the position to tell the others how they should live has been a perpetual feature of man's life. We have replaced instincts by rules or the source of the second nature of man that are being breached all the time, therefore human life is just as unpredictable as it was under natural circumstances. We have also replaced fate by DNA and fortune by mathematical calculations. But the outcome is the same: the statistical mean survives but the individual is completely helpless. Thus our culture remains fate-based as it has always been; only the designation was changed.

Machiavelli's approach to politics remained in one aspect nearer to the classical one. It is his direct involvement in political life. All later political thinkers, esp. modern political scientists, are very anxious to stay away even from the appearance of being part of political reality. They stand aloof from what they try to understand. But could they, or is it possible to say anything relevant about politics if you are not part of it, which you are, by the way? Strangely enough, there is an indirect evidence that those modern political scientists who are not an active part of a particular political community are usually unable to capture the actual reasons of political motifs and processes. What they are capable of doing is to nail down their own political preferences, and to project them over to other political communities, because norms are more important for them than actual political actions.

Rousseau was wrong when he supposed that man's plight can be straightened by political means. It is because man only changed the



conditions within which he wanted to live his life but there are conditions that cannot be removed. Napoleon was right as he reacted to Goethe about the destiny plays when they met in Erfurt in 1808. Goethe wrote: “He went on to talk about destiny plays, criticizing them. They belonged to the dark ages. “Why these days do they keep giving us destiny?” he said. “There’s no destiny, only politics.”<sup>82</sup> It is a statement comprising all the realities of human life—no one can escape being a human being once born to be a man, and it involves a way of life that depends on higher forces than those an individual could apply. Politics is the widest real context of human life. But it is the most abstract or most difficult to access for any man. Political reality is not something that you experience directly, and if gravity seems to be an easy concept to capture, it is against our common sense perception that the earth is not flat but round. Likewise politics offers an easy and visible accessibility, though it does not allow a direct understanding of what it means to be involved in politics or any other public activity beyond one’s direct care of his body and emotions. And the case is even worse, for man can imagine or develop ideas of various sorts sometimes denying reality, replacing it by mere figments, tales, myths, norms, or utopias, which have their own functions. No one can be sure of where his limits are, and therefore we can find ourselves in a context of unlimitedness. The name of this tension between what there is and what there should be is the conflict between the end and the instrument viewed from the perspective of action. Even Tocqueville observed that in political bodies those will be successful who undertake both the ends and means, and those who want only the goals but are unable to use the necessary means as well will likely lose.<sup>83</sup> Tocqueville’s remark was framed on the basis of his actual political experience after he actively joined the political struggles in Paris in 1848.

There are two supposed instruments by which “the end justifies the means” sequence can be broken: the law and the morals. Laws, however, are always means in order to achieve certain ends by them. If the ends are approvable, the laws are, too. But this is purely a formal logical argument, so we badly need another constraint that is capable of qualifying laws, and this is the moral aspect of not only laws but also actions. Morality has a dubious character, since there is nothing other to maintain it than the individual who is educated in traditions that bequeath norms and standards obliging the individual to act with the observation of them. All morals stand and fall on the idea of what is good. For Aristotle good must be the highest virtue because it is the only one which is desirable for itself. It seems that there is one thing

that is commonly regarded as the good—and it is *eudaimonia* or living well. The search for the highest good, that is, living well, or also called happiness, is a practical issue, and participation in public life is part of this search. And this is where the conflict begins, for, on the one hand, it is not beyond question whether partaking in politics assist us in achieving happiness, or to the opposite, it hinders us to get it. The dilemma is obviously grounded in the duality of political action: political reality might contradict the individual's expectations of the good to be achieved through the interaction with other men. But man is a communal or social being thus it is highly unlikely that anyone can be happy without participating in public life. Whatever the answer is to this issue raised by both Plato and Aristotle, the basic conflict is between the end of man, that is, living well, and the means how one can achieve this end. Political realism is just a possible response to resolve the conflict—political action is limited by both laws and morals but these limitations at the same time limit man's aspiration to living well. Due to man's communal character, living well or happily, seems to be only a haunting mirage but useful as a guiding line for all of us. What is cancer for medicine is power and happiness for political knowledge.

Reality is one of the greatest challenges to human intellect—what is admirable in the world that it can be known. But we also know that “language does not coincide with the world.”<sup>84</sup> It is not difficult, however, to perceive that in politics the initial experience of any observer is that political agents do lie and manipulate, intentionally creating the image of politics seeking an ever present distance between reality and knowledge about it, let alone the distance between knowledge and action. In literature realism is taken to be an issue of imitation. Peter Brooks writes: “[F]or many centuries of European art and especially literature, imitation of the everyday, of the real in the sense of what we know best, belongs to low art, and to low style: comedy, farce, certain kinds of satire.”<sup>85</sup> This approach suggests that reality must be men's common world that we all see and share, since sight is our most reliable source of the world around us. It is also tempting to approve Brooks' statement that “language can itself be a thing,”<sup>86</sup> but compared to artistic realism, political reality is always the product of creativity and never an imitation of a higher but not visible reality. Imitation can play a role in politics, for instance, when modern republicans gained inspiration from and a model of the ancient Roman republic. In this respect, political action can be said to be imitation in terms of action, but calling imitation to be the ground of political realism would be an untenable notion. Yet the vexing issue of both artistic and political reality

is the unsolvable situation in which man often and tendentiously confuse things which are empirically real, and things that have reality due to and through language. Political reality has but one common basis: human beings acting and entering into interactions with other people who can exchange ideas by language thus creating a realm within which they wish to exert their will, self-preservation, and wishful thinking. Political reality is created at every moment when two or more people set goals to achieve by concerted action. And whatever they do collectively or individually for the goals they produce a world that exists to the extent that they rely upon their language “things,” things that pretend to exist as touchable and visible objects by assuming physical qualities though they exist only indirectly by human nature and behavior, rhetoric, and persuasion. Ultimately politics is a battle for the definition of symbolic representation of human behavior while fixing and achieving shared or public goals.

The concept “political realism” has been monopolized by theorists of international relations for some time. In international politics political realism usually denotes the conflictual aspects of politics. It is based on actual human behavior and stresses the competitive nature of human actions rooted in the mere fear of the loss of security, let alone sheer existence of the individual. As self-preservation is the number one natural necessity, there is hardly any superior force that compels man to stay in rest or to move. But sometimes it happens that man sacrifices his life by abandoning the natural compulsion to preserve his life—in man’s life there are ideals, e.g. love, patriotism, magnanimity, justice, etc., that are judged to be higher in quality or in necessity than the mere existence of a particular individual. Man is unique among other creatures to be able to sacrifice his individual being for something that does not exist in empirical sense. Man is also a creature of living in two worlds: the one that is his empirical reality that the world surrounding him, and in a figurative one that is created by his mind and psyche. When we talk about realism and idealism, we are actually confronted with man’s long ago observed dual existence. Some would call it the ambiguity of human existence. Thus political realism is one of the several expressions of this duality. First, man lives as he actually does live, and second, man always has ideas how he would like to live—to have greater security, more affluence, and peaceful course of managing things. It means that man has a perception of how he actually lives and how he would like to live.

For centuries political realism could be attached to the writings of history writers and political thinkers of various backgrounds. In the

meantime, with the Socratic-turn, political philosophy was linked to the question of “what there should be” rather than “what there is.” It is even true of Aristotle who picked up a controversy with Plato but remained within the field of rational description of what politics is, or should be, about. Cicero wanted to combine the two approaches, and managed to produce a view on politics that rested on stoic wisdom. Up until the early modernity this dual approach to politics remained constant: political realism, that is, what there is, was cultivated by history writers or writers in general, and political philosophy, under the guidance of Christian believes, came to be a subsidiary treatment of commenting on ancient political writers, mainly the teachings of Aristotle. But wisdom still preoccupied political thought, which highlighted the insights of ancient political teachings. But what is wisdom? *Sophia* is obviously not tied to the empirical knowledge of reality, though it is certainly part of it. *Sophia* is more than mere empirical knowledge; it involves combined awareness of experience, thinking, feelings, and judgments. When Aristotle distinguished five various types of intellectual virtues (*sophia, knowledge, techne, art, nous*), he must have thought that wisdom is the highest, which could only mean that *sophia*, or wisdom, incorporates all the other four intellectual virtues. Wisdom is a virtue by the dint of human ability to think, and as such, one can see beyond the knowledge of empirical sense perceptions and is capable of using it in creation (*techne and art*), and even beyond rational thinking, we can have a hunch what and how things are (*nous*). Being wise is the highest aspiration of human thought to decipher the mystery of being, and admonishing man how to live accordingly through judicious judgments.

Thucydides was the first whom we can read as a theoretically (universal-) conscious author of politics based on a conception of realism. It was him extensively wrote about strife, necessity, enemies, and war. Necessity opposed to choice, that is, idea of freedom is there, too, acquisition, revenge, enemy, human nature, limits set by nature. Not all historical accounts of political events can, however, be regarded as realist, for Thucydides also noticed that there are “poetic” distortions of past events. It is because of the idea of greatness—it is the concept that juxtaposes necessity, thus striving for greatness is the expression of man’s eternal yearning for freedom. But in order to achieve greatness one has to apply Heraclitus’s wisdom: “We must know that war is common to all and strife is justice, and that all things come into being through strife *necessarily*.” Philosophically Heraclitus was the first who grasped politics as a system of relationships, since all existing things or

phenomena are subject to change, but change has only a meaning or relevance if it is seen as movements among existing things including the relationships among human beings. Since power is not somewhere “outside” but “inside” of each man, we have found the balances between the opposites: war and peace, strength and weakness, hostility and common meals (Herodotus, Aristotle), revenge and love of the enemy in order to satisfy naturally evolving needs and necessities. Needs must not only be satisfied but limited as well.

### **Leadership and Power: The Core of Political Realism**

Due to the dominance of postmodern liberal conception of politics in the past few decades it has become compulsory to wave away concepts like leadership, power, war, enemy, state, ambition, revenge, and the like, which are rooted in the natural conditions of man, that is, natural conflict between man and man. Human beings are rational creatures but this fact does not designate one particular route how to get to political truth. Since we are all seeking truth, it cannot lead up to eradicate rival attempts—up until a certain points when decision has to be made including the application of force. One must not forget that Rousseau himself elaborated the point when his argument has got to include the element of force: “Thus, in order for the social compact to avoid being an empty formula, it tacitly entails the commitment—which alone can give force to the others—that whoever refuses to obey the general will be forced to do so by the entire body. This means merely that he will be forced to be free. For this is the sort of condition that, by giving each citizen to the homeland, guarantees him against all personal dependence—a condition that produces the skill and the performance of the political machine, and which alone bestows legitimacy upon civil commitments.”<sup>87</sup> Force is legitimate the moment you can produce a mass support behind your idea or will. But it also means that the weak can be, or rather should be, subordinated to the strong. Everything depends on the mass acceptance of a particular idea or action. If it does have it, power will be legitimated, and any measurement of dissident views is sidelined. A political realist has to choose from among the normativity of political actions or the actual motives and actual happenings of political actions. Today one either follows the latest theoretician of political utopianism who is John Rawls, someone who managed to integrate the institutionalized focus of modern political science, ethics, and economics that also represents social sciences in general; or one has to embrace the ideas of power and leadership. Power is leadership, and

leadership is power. Modern efforts to separate them have ushered in the concept of power without any practical consequences, that is, power has certain attributes like coercion, concentration of force, establishing set of common goals and implementation of commensurate means, which can only be realized if there is leadership. Leadership is a comprehensive or covering concept for positions of leaders. The European Union as a political construct is prime example for a huge institution without effective leadership. Despite the potential strength of the Union, all rivals having leadership would be able to challenge it because of the Union's slow and indeterminate decision-making processes. If Europeans drew the conclusion from the experience of two world wars that leadership is dangerous, then they are right, but got only half-way to the understanding of modern conditions and political reality. Realism dictates that the immediate has a preference over the remote; that in politics it is either you who makes decisions and use other people, or it is you who are used by others; that most political agents act out of necessities and revenge rather than of ideological commitments; that ideas do matter but only in the long run, a particular case is determined by sheer will.

Political realism simply wishes to convey that security comes first, and justice comes next. Whatever good may hold for the European and American citizens, it is security that they have to bear in mind. It is more the Hobbesian intention and insight than anybody else's is. We, human beings, are in a constant conflict with each other and struggle with supremacy not because we need it, but because we want to avoid being subjected. Because we are driven by other needs including security and freedom.