How David Easton's Three Levels of Political Science Resolves Disciplinary Disputes Going Back to George Catlin and William Elliott

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Introduction

John Gunnell is a historian of the political science profession. He is acutely aware of the issues now troubling the profession, and he has written much about the history of these disagreements. These issues include the place of political theory in political science, the role of political philosophy in the profession, and the relation of political science to political practice. In his essay, "Political Science on the Cusp: Recovering a Discipline's Past,"[1] he shows how these issues have their origin in the early 20th Century. He explains that two writers in particular, George Catlin and William Elliott, embody the debates more richly than any of their contemporaries. While they published their key books in the mid-1920s, the same issues emerged with salience again in the 50s and 60s, and remain in contention almost 100 years later.

In the present essay I will summarize what Gunnell tells us about how the Catlin/Elliott debate addressed the issues I have mentioned. Then I will go beyond Gunnell, and suggest ways by which some of these issues can be resolved. Fortunately, Gunnell's clarifications of the problems have facilitated the finding of solutions for them.

I: Catlin's Paradigm for Political Science Research

Gunnell has found that George Catlin is the writer who most fully articulated the principles and aspirations of the early 20th Century exponents of turning political science into a true science; even more so than Catlin's contemporaries Charles Merriam and Herbert Lasswell. Emblematic of the period, Catlin attempted to formulate a "scientific" model of political science as distinct from the philosophical approach carrying over from the 19th Century, such as that articulated by Elliott. Catlin rejected the speculations of political philosophy about the nature and ethics of politics, and argued that political science should turn away from typical studies of "political philosophy and the humanities," and strive to be "autonomous" from those approaches.

Gunnell tells us that although an Englishman, "What attracted Catlin to the American scene was not simply the growing emphasis on empiricism but the manner in which this perspective was linked to a commitment to practical application."[2] Indeed, the desire for practical application (that is, to influence policy making), seems to loom larger in Catlin's theoretical framework than his commitment to logical consistency. This becomes apparent in Gunnell's presentation of Catlin as a pragmatic oriented political theorist who seems untroubled by the contradictions and ambiguities in his formulation of a "scientific" research paradigm. As we will see, Catlin's approach to political science fails to clarify its relationship to other social sciences. His approach uses fictions in its scientific research, thus undermining the empirical integrity of his approach. He advocates a moral position *sub rosa* behind a façade of "value neutrality." He

[1] John G. Gunnell. "Political Science on the Cusp: Recovering a Discipline's Past." American Political Science Review Vol. 99, No. 4 November 2005, pages 602 and 607.
[2] Ibid. p. 599.

comingles incompatible models of science, and fails to recognize the necessity for having a logical correspondence of the subject matter to the method.

The Autonomy of Political Science

Given Catlin's quest for the autonomy of political science from political philosophy and the humanities, writes Gunnell, Catlin "was forced to confront the issue of the discipline's 'place among the social sciences.'"[3] Catlin rejected the notion that each social science was a logically distinct science, having its own scope and methods. He believed that "attempts either to define 'social determinants' in terms of strict disciplinary boundaries or to unify the social sciences were mistakes and bound to fail." Instead, there were orientations with different leanings, "not one social science but many jostling each other," and any hope "precisely to define frontiers must be futile." For example, in his view, "fields such as law and history had attempted to annex and submerge the 'middle province' of politics," but without success at theoretically justifying an exclusive dominion over the subject. Catlin maintained that because human nature was complex, a science of politics required a radically interdisciplinary approach rather than divided "departmental knowledge."[4]

Nevertheless, from the pragmatic point of view, "there were, he claimed, sufficient heuristic grounds for viewing [political science] as 'a realm in its own right.'" Political science could carve out its own "domain based on a concept of 'man in his relation to the wills of his fellows in control, submission and accommodation.'" Politics, then, would be a competition of wills for power. With this axiom, or definition of the field, "political science had as much standing as any other discipline."[5]

Catlin proposed "giving an account of 'the process of politics' in terms of an extended analogy with economic theory." In his view, economics owed its success as a social science to its use of the analytic concept of the "Economic Man;" that is, the person who pursues his economic interests in a rationally calculated way. Catlin thought this concept has proven to have very fruitful explanatory power. He acknowledged that the notion was an "ideal being," but he contended that "whether economic man exists or ever existed is immaterial." Although a "mere fiction," it had heuristic usefulness as an abstract "scientific hypothesis."[6]

So, Catlin proposed his notion of "Political Man." He played on "Hobbes's idea of human beings as creatures 'seeking power.'" Perhaps in an effort at humor, he said the concept could be understood as a kind of "'scientific Frankenstein' who, rather than pursuing money, as in the case of economic man, strived for 'man-power' such as that involved in voting." Gunnell says that Catlin's notion "was the principal discursive forebear of contemporary rational choice analysis … within political science."[7] As in economics, Catlin seems to assume that centering his "science" on a fictional notion of the rational man was no threat to the theoretical integrity of his system, as long as it had heuristic usefulness, explanatory power, and practical application.

Catlin was unconcerned about the ambiguity of "political man." Indeed, he recognized that the concept spilled over the boundaries of governmental power seeking and into all types of organizations, from office to church. He failed to even attempt to explain how political science

[3] Ibid. p. 601.
[4] Ibid. p. 600.
[5] Ibid. p. 601.
[6] Ibid. p. 601.
[7] Ibid. p. 601.

researchers are to know the scope of their field with such an amorphous conception. Also, he offered little defense of the individualistic orientation of political man seeming at odds with the tendency to focus on groups as political actors among Catlin's contemporaries.

The Fact/Value Confusion

Using political man as its primary analytic concept for conducting what Catlin called "pure science," political science would eschew any indulgence in moral value judgments. Catlin favored "the Chicago School of Politics" which turned away from "political philosophies of values," and toward "quantitative and interdisciplinary studies."[8] In this sense, Catlin was a pioneer in articulating many of the basic tenets of the behavioral political science that would soon dominate the profession.[9]

Even while claiming that he could separate political science from ethical and moral speculations, he had a definite purpose in mind for the discipline. According to Gunnell, "there was no ambiguity about Catlin's commitment to the idea that the ultimate purpose of a science of politics was social transformation and control." But control was for a reason, and not an end in itself. Perhaps influenced by the Progressive call for public health reforms in his time, Catlin presented his method as a "science of social hygiene." "The political situation must, then, be approached not with preaching and programmes, but in the attitude of a profession of social medicine" in which ethical theories should not intrude.[10]

Apparently unconcerned about the soundness of his logic, Catlin argued for a practical distinction between "morality" and "social hygiene" as the goal of applied political science. While the former consists in "preaching," the latter would be more akin to medicinal prescribing. "Like Lippmann, Wallas, Merriam, Lasswell, and others, Catlin was committed to a science that would inform experts acting in the public realm." Catlin seems unaware that, despite the scientific gloss of his public health metaphors, in fact he had an ethical end in mind to be served by political power. He thus opined that in "a pluralistic society, [like the US] science could wield influence over politics only if it was grounded on the neutral authority of objective and impartial methods." To gain respect, "Pure science must precede application." [11]

Gunnell observes that what "Catlin recommended for political science was "practical agnosticism." But Gunnell is not willing to take the uncritical position that the acceptance of Catlin's "science" requires. Gunnell warns his readers that "what is again crucial to note is that Catlin's emphasis on the separation of science and ethics was for the purpose of gaining scientific authority that would be directed toward practical ends. It was a separation predicated on complementarity."[12]

Confusion of Science Models – Physics and Biology

A point that Gunnell does not discuss about Catlin's paradigm is that there is a biological model of science underlying the public health metaphors of a "science of social hygiene," and "a profession of social medicine." This underlying model has profound consequences for the logical

[8] Ibid. p. 602.
[9] See id. p. 607f.
[10] Ibid. p. 601.
[11] Ibid. p. 601.
[12] Ibid. p. 607.

consistency of Catlin's "science." Despite the biological model implicated by Catlin's public health language, his expressed aspirations to science leaned more towards the Hypothetical-Deductive (H-D) model derived from Newtonian mechanics.[13] According to Gunnell, Catlin's "principal argument was for the adoption and application of what he took to be a universal scientific method of generalizing from particulars, which could be the basis of an authentic law-governed science of politics."[14] Catlin envisioned a "predictive science," which "should be modeled on the form of the natural sciences." For Catlin, an objective "Politics must view social phenomena externally" and "consists of a body of verifiable and systematic knowledge gathered by observation and experiment." Thus Catlin envisioned "the development of a naturalistic interdisciplinary science of society based on general laws."[15]

But Catlin appears to have failed to recognize that "the natural sciences" encompass very different realms. For example, Newtonian physics and Darwinian biology, well known at that time, differ greatly in both subject matter and method.[16] Indeed, the methods for each are fashioned to fit their particular subject matter. Darwinian biology is concerned with the behavior of living organisms adapting to, or expiring in, their environments. As biologist Ernst Mayr explains, because such organisms live in a variety of circumstances, and must make life sustaining choices, mechanistic causal laws cannot be fruitfully employed to explain their behavior or their success or failure at survival.[17] Survival choices are made in the minds of the actors, based on their individual knowledge, skill, and judgment. The mechanistic causal laws of Newtonian physics are derived from the behavior of inanimate matter, which is the subject of physics. Clearly, organisms, such as animals in nature, do not behave like cascading rocks crashing into one another along a mountain side.

Gunnell does not explain how Catlin reconciled his juxtaposition of two incompatible models of science – physics and biology, nor how Catlin relates either model to his ill-defined subject matter of politics. How Catlin could reconcile the contradiction of a mechanistic model of science, with the subject matter of Political Man who has a "will," and who makes choices in varying conditions, has yet to be explained. In other words, Catlin's description of the subject matter of political science is incompatible with his methodological principles, which themselves are a muddle.

Given Gunnell's discussion, Catlin appears to have made no effort to address the major contradictions in the models of science he used to construct his theory of political science as a science. Indeed, neither he nor Gunnell seem to have noticed the models problem. Since the main purpose of Gunnell's article is to show that positions taken in the early 20th Century have defined the debate that raged in political science in the 50s and 60s, and which is still unresolved, shouldn't he have included this fundamental confounding of scientific models and their ambiguous relationship to the subject matter?

As I will show in a latter essay, this muddling of the two models of science, physics and biology, would also appear in David Easton's work on "behavioralism," and thus persist into the present.

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[13] Cf. my review of *A Model Discipline*, by Clarke and Primo, at William Kelleher. "A Model Discipline, and How 'Good Work' Hurts Political Science." Perspectives on Politics, Volume 13, Issue 02, June 2015, pp 446-448.
[14] Gunnell, supra, p. 600.
[15] Ibid. p. 602.
[16] Cf. my review of Mayr's *What Makes Biology Unique?* https://independent.academia.edu/WilliamJKelleherPhD
[17] Ibid.

II: Elliott's Guidance System for Political Science Research

Like Catlin, Elliott used "the term 'Politics' as a designation of the field of study" for political science. However, Catlin and Elliott disagreed dramatically over the definition, or conceptualization, of the scope and methods of political science. While Catlin was at the forefront of the emerging natural science "empirical" research model for the profession, Elliott represented what we can now see as the declining philosophical approach to the study of politics. Both men understood clearly that political science research requires a specified guidance system, or methodological paradigm. But they differed greatly as to what that system should look like. "Although [Elliott] did not object to the idea of a science of politics defined in some broad sense, he maintained that it was inappropriate to seek to apply the principles of natural science."[18] This put Elliott at odds with Catlin. Likewise, Elliott's model of "science," or research guidance system, centered on concepts which Catlin found unacceptable.

Elliott's was not a "value free" or "value neutral" approach, but an avowedly value oriented method of study. Central to Elliott's method of political science was a commitment to the ideal of "democracy as based on … communal unity."[19] Within that scope, he "saw the state as the principal object of analysis." Drawing from the 19th century tradition, Elliott's use of that term "referred to the People or sovereign community of which the government was only the agent. Elliott viewed the state as the organized form of the democratic community." Its "will arises from the associated individual members." Government has "only limited or delegated sovereignty as opposed to the complete sovereignty of the 'federal state created by the Constitution.'"[20]

Gunnell explains that the normative dimension of Elliott's conception of communal unity "moves beyond laissez-faire doctrines, [but] it does not go to the extremes of communism and fascism." As the rise of Captains of Industry and Labor Barons shows, "Economic pursuits can get out of hand, and, consequently, they often need to be regulated in order to bring them in line with political purpose."[21]

Elliott was a rationalist in the sense of favoring the preservation of the communal form of democratic political order through the establishment of a constitution and the rule of law. Political science, then, would *serve* these principles rather than challenge their validity by separating the pursuit of factual knowledge from the defense of democratic order.

With such normative concerns central to his political science methodology, Elliott envisioned political theory as encompassing both political philosophy and political science. Thus, according to Gunnell, the political theorist for Elliott was both a political scientist and a political philosopher, "and this combination was an intellectual mirror of the practical role of the 'statesman' who must reconcile 'means' and 'ends.'"[22] Catlin's focus on "political man" was more behavior oriented and less legalistic than Elliott's focus on the state. But for Elliott, Catlin's individualistic focus on political man also created a distraction from the element of community, which is so essential to democracy.

[18] Ibid. p. 606.
[19] Ibid. p. 603.
[20] Ibid. p. 605.
[21] Ibid. p. 606.
[22] Ibid. p. 605.

Elliott's Anti-Pragmatism

Elliott's magnum opus is entitled *The Pragmatic Revolt in Politics* (1928).[23] Elliott criticizes pragmatism as lacking a moral compass. The emergence of this philosophy has had deleterious consequences for both political society and political science. Thus, in actual politics, pragmatism has led to the rise of special interest groups, which in turn undermine the values of community. Elliott claimed that pragmatism had become so pervasive that it constituted the philosophy of both "revolt and reaction." Pragmatism has led to the crushing of community by fascist dictatorship, and the fragmenting of the community as in the case of the "general strike," which has set class above state. Another political consequence of this cultural shift of meanings is that "the life of certain groups within the state, notably trade unions and professional associations, has become a more real thing in men's experience than the common life represented by the state."[24]

Contemporary political science, Elliott claimed, had failed to discern these trends, because it had adopted the same basic pragmatic values and adapted and confined itself to a "scientific" description of the "facts" which was insensitive to meanings and values. He attributed this "spirit of the age" to the ideas of William James and John Dewey. This spirit has spilled over into political science and rendered the mainstream of the discipline "behavioristic in terms of psychology and positivistic in terms of philosophy. … Although it was possible to have a science of politics in the sense of a general commitment to objective description and comparison … what required study were the values and myths that moved people at particular times and places."[25] Anticipating current disputes in the profession, Elliott saw that such meanings must be understood through interpretation, and cannot be studied scientifically in the sense of quantitative methods.

For Elliott, the doctrine of "Value neutrality" has blinded contemporary political science to the importance of state sovereignty, and reduced it to one group among many. But such pluralistic blindness bodes ill for democracy. In political thought, this pragmatic turn away from rationalism has entailed a rejection of the theory of sovereignty that had, in its various forms, been put forth by Dicey, Burgess, W. W. Willoughby, Jellinek, and others. For Elliot, in Gunnell's words, "to view the state as merely one group among others, as Laski, Sorel, G. D. H Cole, Duguit, and others had suggested, was to undermine the very idea of law."[26] In Elliott's view, the authority of law depends upon the state being sovereign.

The impoverished condition of political science has brought about a decline in the number of what Elliott considered to be "true political theorists." As a consequence, this has caused a divide between political science and politicians who both, in their own way, had become infected with "pragmatic skepticism." Unfortunately for political science, however, the effect had been simply to make the discipline "irrelevant" to those who govern.[27]

As a solution to this unhappy condition Elliott urged the establishment of legal norms in a constitution which would provide an "accepted rule for fixing political responsibility" by giving sovereignty to the democratic state. He argued that "constitutional government represents the same effort at political synthesis that conceptual logic does for thought synthesis. But, above all,

[23] For Catlin's views, Gunnell relied primarily on *The Science and Method of Politics* (1927).
[24] Ibid. p. 604.
[25] Ibid. p. 604-607.
[26] Ibid. p. 605.
[27] Ibid. p. 604, 608.

constitutional government created a 'community' as a 'moral whole' in which popular sovereignty became a 'reality' and to which the kind of 'purpose' that supported democracy could be ascribed."[28] Clearly, the concepts Elliott prescribed for the systematic study of politics required avowed normative commitments along with a fidelity to empirical facts, and a rationalist's rejection of pragmatism.

III: Problems and Solutions

Gunnell indicates several issues raised by the Catlin/Elliott comparison that emerged with salience again in the 50s and 60s, and which remain in contention. I will discuss three of the issues mentioned in the Introduction, these include i) the place of political theory in political science, ii) the role of political philosophy in the profession, and iii) the relation of political science to political practice. Gunnell's clarifications of the problems have facilitated the finding of solutions for these problems. Such solutions will be suggested below.

In regards to the relationship between political theory and political science, suppose that, as Giovanni Sartori has suggested, one of the primary roles of political theory is conceptual clarification.[29] For example, defining the subject matter of political science and the methods to be used in the study of that subject matter is clearly a conceptual challenge. Another way to put this is that political theory is the way political science defines itself. It is the *self-reflection* of the profession. In the course of undertaking that task Catlin and Elliott, as do those who follow in their wake, have employed numerous concepts. The concepts used to define political science are, thus, the subject matter of political theory.

In my view, one way for political theory to take on the challenge of political science's self-definition is to begin with the organization of the profession. Easton has suggested that political science can be defined as having three dimensions, or levels.[30] These would be pure research, applied research, and the phenomenal or ground level of actual politics. Simply by positing these two departments of labor and their subject matter, a means is provided for the clarification of several conundrums.

Before discussing pure and applied research, suppose, following Easton, that the phenomenal realm of politics is defined as that social activity concerned with the "authoritative allocation of values." Out of that activity emerges a political system with inputs, a conversion process into outputs, feedback, etc.

Pure research, then, would be an activity outside the realm of politics, but which examines that realm. Pure research might be concerned with such matters as whether a given set of social interactions rises to the level of a political system, or are something else. Do Somalia and Libya, for instance, have political systems, or is the social activity there little more than anarchy? Within a recognized political system, pure research would observe and describe how the various functions of the political system are carried out. Identifying and explaining the workings of demands, supports, the conversion process, and outputs in a particular political system are principal functions for pure research.

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[28] Ibid. p. 605.

[29] See "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." The American Political Science Review 64 (4): 1033-1053 (1970) and Collier, David and John Gerring (ed.). *Concepts and Method in Social Science: The Tradition of Giovanni Sartori*. London: Routledge, 2009.

[30] Easton discusses his understanding of pure and applied political science, with the phenomenal level implicated, in *The Political System*, University of Chicago, 1953, 1971, at pp. 86-89f, and 350f.

Public opinion within a political system is another area of research for pure political science. Elliott worried that Catlin's approach to political science was too individualistic and insensitive to the element of community. Whether, and to what degree, the people effected by a political system feel the absence of, and have a longing for, community can be studied by political science. (Indeed, it often is, as in Putnam's *Bowling Alone*.) Pure research would find and describe what actually exists within a political system, and may test causal hypotheses, and offer explanations as to why a described condition exists.

Applied research could use the knowledge of pure research to identify problems in a political system. It might determine the threat level a condition presents for the stability of a political system, and may suggest remedies or ways to manage it. Questions as to how efficiently and effectively parts of the system are operating could also be addressed by applied research.

Using their knowledge of how political systems emerge and operate, gained from comparative studies, applied political scientists might propose ways by which such places as Somalia or Libya could achieve the formation of a political system, if one is found lacking. Problems, such as threats to stability or inefficient use of resources, in established political systems could simply be identified and analyzed in pure research without suggesting ideas for solutions. Applied political science can, but need not always, propose ways to resolve such problems within a political system. These proposals could be published in peer reviewed professional journals. Solutions to chinks in the system put forth in applied political science books or journals can become the material for advocates without themselves being advocacy. This concept of applied political science thus separates political science from political participation.

A political scientist can be a public intellectual, journalist, or even politician. But by engaging in such activity, he or she would necessarily cross a logical line and descend from the professional realm of science into the world of politics. A political scientist can act as a participant observer collecting data through personal experience. Writings which include such data, like political biographies, can be examined for their scientific import by peer reviewers, editors, and journal readers. All sciences use their own theoretical frameworks to interpret the meaning and import of their relevant data. The scientific import of both qualitative and quantitative data would be a regular question of normal political science.

An applied political scientist's choice of a research topic is a personal matter, and not constrained by any conception of science. The study of a subject may be undertaken for pay, or out of intellectual curiosity, or to indulge some political passion for or against a given policy or social condition. Whether or not such motivation should be disclosed is a matter of the profession's policy. However, only that which is offered to professional journals for publication, or appears in books, is required to pass scientific muster. Thus, the line between applied political science and policy advocacy can be policed by professional journal editors and peer reviewers.

A second continuing problem according to Gunnell is the role of political philosophy in the political science profession. By assigning the task of conceptual clarification to political theory, one of the traditional functions of political philosophy will continue as an important element in the profession of political science. Whether such terms as "liberty," "freedom," "justice," and so forth have any scientific import, or are merely mirages like a pond just ahead teasing a thirsty desert wanderer, will be a matter for political theorists to debate. By committing itself to the study of the political system, many questions in political science concerning the nature of politics, power, authority, etc. are either answered or become the subject matter of political theory.

Gunnell reports that another long unresolved debate in the profession concerns the concept of "democracy." He writes, "the pursuit of science as well as the critique of that pursuit have never been disjoined from the search for the criteria and realization of democracy." One question is as to how the term is to be defined. If "democracy" can be defined with scientific import – that is, as a clear referent to existing conditions in the world, then further questions can be asked such as whether the distribution of power within it is pluralistic or centered among elites. However, in my view, because the key concept for political science is the political system, not the form of government, the scientific relevance of the term "democracy" and some of the questions about its character seem dubious. As Gunnell observes, "Easton never subscribed to the theory of pluralist democracy which was so widely associated with behavioralism."[31]

Another conceptual question traditional in political philosophy concerns whether or not democracy ought to have a higher moral status than monarchies or oligarchies in political science. But are those three Aristotelian categories even relevant to the study of political systems, or too nebulous to have any heuristic or explanatory utility? As problems of conceptual clarification, these questions belong to political theory. Before pure research on democracy can be done, the term will have to be defined and then found to refer to something that actually exists. The same is required before applied research can be conducted. If there is no scientific consensus on the meaning of the term, proposals for ways by which such places as Somalia and Libya can become democracies will be strictly a matter of advocacy, and not science.

As to the third issue, the political philosophy practice of criticizing society from a defined moral point of view, of course, will continue. However, if Easton's scheme of three levels in the organization of the profession is followed, those who indulge in this practice will be acting as public intellectuals, or policy advocates, or leaders of a party or other activist organization. Professional political scientists as such will be exclusively concerned with what is, and not with what ought to be. Again, applied political science is a problem oriented practice. It will engage in identifying and analyzing problems within a political system, and perhaps proposing solutions based on accepted causal knowledge. But the political science profession as a scientific enterprise cannot, logically, be a Bully Pulpit.

One way for journal editors and peer reviewers to distinguish between political science and political advocacy, including the moral speculations of political philosophy, is by scrutinizing the language used in the submissions they receive. One important tool to use in this process is the distinction between synthetic and analytic concepts.

Synthetic concepts are meaningful because they fit well within the methodology of political science. Analytic concepts are categorically different in that they are true by definition or have emotional pull but do not derive their meaning from the scientific interpretive system. For example, "input" and "output" are synthetic concepts drawing their meaning entirely from political science's systems theory. But "justice" and "liberty" have no meaning within that systems theory. The meaning for those two terms comes from their emotional pull and the way users define them. Liberty and justice are terms used in the phenomenal realm of politics. They are the words of political rhetoric, but they are not technical scientific terms for use in pure or applied research. For example, a pure science researcher can describe the inputs and outputs of a criminal justice system. But the "justice" of the system is a matter of opinion not amenable to scientific description or verification. Political activists may fight in the streets over the injustice of the criminal justice system, but neither they nor political scientists can describe the condition of justice or define the term in a way that has an observable referent. Analytic terms can be the

[31] Ibid. p. 608.

subject of political science, for example as drivers of political behavior, but they are not a part of its scientific method.

An applied political science researcher can propose ways by which to reform a criminal justice system so as to reduce the threat it causes to the general political system. Thereafter, lobbying policy makers to adopt the proposals, or rallying the masses to demand the reforms be made, would be non-scientific activities within the political realm.

Political philosophy is not eliminated as either a field for study or for speculative writing by this proposed three level form of organization for the profession. It is merely reclassified as an element of the political realm, and not a scientific enterprise. The history of political philosophy, and the analytic concepts of interest to political philosophers are appropriate subjects for the curriculum of a political science department. If nothing else, the study of those subjects will help students appreciate the clarity of political science as a science.

Gunnell points out that one intense concern shared by Catlin and Elliott, and which has persisted into the present, is as to how the profession can become more influential in the policy making process. Elliott's prophesy that the "scientific" trend of political science would render the profession *irrelevant* to the policy making process has, unhappily, proven prescient. But this need not be. If the profession could earn for itself a reputation of being a source of political wisdom, with an aptitude for insight and for problem solving, then policy makers and the public would turn to it for advice more often than is done today.[32]

There are times when members of a profession feel compelled to speak out as a profession. The psychology profession condemned the practice of psychologists taking part in the torture of prisoners by agencies of the US government.[33] The medical profession has taken public positions on practices that it is convinced are detrimental to public health, such as smoking.[34] These extra-scientific activities are options open to every professional organization. In political science such steps would be an extraordinary measure, and not applied political science, but actual political practice. The Caucus for a New Political Science is a group within the political science profession that advocates for such extra-scientific activities to influence public policy.[35]

Conclusion

Clearly, John Gunnell's clarifications of the persistent problems in the efforts of political science to define itself, and to articulate a paradigmatic research guidance system, have facilitated the finding of solutions for those problems. As Aristotle understood in his own way, the subject matter of political science is politics. Scientifically, this subject can be studied in two ways – by pure and applied research. Political science is about politics, but apart from it. Political theory

[32] On the lack of respect for the political science profession among policy makers in the US, its causes, and some remedies proposed by the APSA, see my review of Clarke and Primo here on Academia.com.

[33] The American Psychological Association has an official policy condemning "torture" as that term is defined in Article l of the United Nations Declaration and Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, http://www.apa.org/about/policy/torture.aspx

[34] "For the last five decades, the AMA has been a proud supporter of anti-tobacco efforts ranging from urging the federal government to support anti-tobacco legislation prohibiting smoking on public transportation to calling on tobacco companies to stop targeting children in their advertising campaigns." http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/news/news/2014/2014-01-09-ama-celebrates-50th-anniversary-report-smoking-and-health.page

[35] http://www.newpoliticalscience.org/

reflects upon political science just as political science reflects upon politics. Of course, concepts about the organization of political science and its subject matter are social constructs. They must be proposed, debated, and if they are to become real, or operational, a personal commitment to them must be made by political scientists. Here, in this essay, the proposal has been made. The rest is up to the reader.

Notes on Contributor

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