

Ernest Nagel & Felix Kaufman Respond to Leo Strauss, and the Road not Taken.

The *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association of 1948-1949* reports that, on the recommendations of the Executive Committee, Leo Strauss (1899-1973) was elected to full membership in that year.¹ There is no sign this was anything but routine. At that point Strauss had been stateside for close to a decade.

After a few years in England, where he published a major book on Hobbes, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: its Basis and its Genesis* (1936), Strauss had come to the United States in 1937, where he received an appointment at the New School.² The book on Hobbes had been reviewed respectfully in *The Journal of Philosophy* and *The Philosophical Review*.³ In these reviews, Strauss was understood as offering a developmental and contextual account of Hobbes. If Strauss had published nothing after the Hobbes book, he could have been understood as an early anticipation of the so-called Cambridge school's 'contextual' turn in the history of thought.⁴

In an otherwise critical (1951) review of Strauss' (1948) work, *On Tyranny*, Vlastos (then at Cornell), who in his prime was "one of the most influential" in ancient philosophy as

¹"Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association 1948-1949," *The Philosophical Review*, 58(5) (Sep., 1949): 472.

²Eugene Sheppard (2007) *Leo Strauss and the politics of exile: The making of a political philosopher*. Waltham MA.: Brandeis University Press, 55.

³ S. P. L. (1937). [Review of *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and its Genesis; La Pensée et L'influence de Th. Hobbes*, by L. Strauss, E. M. Sinclair, J. Souilhé, R. Hönigswald, C. von Brockdorff, S. Holm, J. Laird, F. Tönnies, & F. Thompson]. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 34(3), 74–76. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2018718> and Sabine, G. H. (1938). [Review of *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes, Its Basis and Genesis.*, by L. Strauss & E. M. Sinclair]. *The Philosophical Review*, 47(1), 91–92. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2180987>. Sabine was an important historian of philosophy then, who helped build up the Cornell department. SPL probably stands for Sterling P. Lamprecht (a historian of philosophy). See also Oakeshott, Michael. *Philosophy*, vol. 12, no. 46, 1937, pp. 239–41. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3747149>, which is very positive and insightful, where critical (and very much worth re-reading). See also J. W. N. Watkins (1955) "Philosophy and Politics in Hobbes." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 5(19): 125–46. & J. W. N. Watkins "The Posthumous Career of Thomas Hobbes." *The Review of Politics* 19.3 (1957): 359.

⁴ While Quentin Skinner has been polemical toward Strauss in other work, he cites this book approvingly in *Reason and rhetoric in the philosophy of Hobbes* (1996), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. I do not mean to suggest that founding contextualism would have been Strauss' self-understanding; he clearly was also grappling with and responding to Schmitt. On this see McCormick, J. P. (1994). "Fear, technology, and the state: carl schmitt, leo strauss, and the revival of Hobbes in Weimar and National Socialist Germany," *Political Theory*, 22(4), 619-652.

analytically practiced,⁵ writes, “Those who have read and admired Professor Strauss's earlier book on Hobbes will be disappointed in this monograph.” In fact, Vlastos (1951) goes on to *praise* Strauss’ “learning” and “agility of mind” before complaining that “the weakness of this [new] work can be traced directly to his present addiction to the strange notion that a historical understanding of a historical thinker is somehow a philosophical liability.”⁶

Once Stateside Strauss continued publishing numerous book reviews and articles often in *Social Research*,⁷ then recognized as a “philosophical periodical.”⁸ While American scholars of the age still actively read scholarly works in German I have found no trace of the impact of Strauss’ earlier *Die Religionskritik Spinozas als Grundlage seiner Bibelwissenschaft* (1930) in the 1940s or 50s. Educated by elite German philosophers, including Cassirer (who was his supervisor), Husserl, and Heidegger (whom Strauss admired), Strauss, thus, arrived Stateside alongside the great exile of the Vienna and Berlin schools, who with the scientific wing of pragmatism (under Ernest Nagel’s leadership) helped form the backbone of American analytic philosophy which flourished simultaneously as his school did.

At the dawn of the cold war, in October 1949, Leo Strauss gave a number of Walgreen lectures at the University of Chicago that were published as *Natural Right and History* (1953;

⁵ J. Annas (2004) “Ancient Philosophy for the 21st Century,” in *The future for philosophy*. Leiter, Brian, ed Oxford University Press, p. 30 and 42.

⁶ Vlastos, Gregory. "On Tyranny." *The Philosophical Review*, 60(4) (Oct., 1951):593. Cornell. In 1986, in his famous take-down of Strauss in the NYRB, Burnyeat also remarks “The range of his learning is indeed formidable; his command of ancient and medieval languages cannot fail to impress; his minute scrutiny of each text establishes an aura of reverence for its author.”

⁷ Strauss, Leo. "The spirit of Sparta or the taste of Xenophon." *Social Research* (1939): 502-536. Strauss, Leo. "Persecution and the Art of Writing." *Social Research* (1941): 488-504. Strauss, Leo. "On the intention of Rousseau." *Social Research* (1947): 455-487.

⁸ See: “Notes,” *The Philosophical Review*, 49(2) (Mar., 1940):281 & “Notes,” *The Philosophical Review*, 51(2) (Mar., 1942): 242. During his time at The New School, Strauss published more work in *Social Research*, then edited and published by the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science of the New School for Social Research.

hereafter NRH).⁹ In 1949 he also became a professor of political science at the University of Chicago. The appointment and the book propelled him into prominence.¹⁰

Before long Strauss was known in his own right and for the school he had founded. This ‘school’ received notoriety with the (1962) publication of Herbert J. Storing (ed.) *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics*—all the authors, in addition to Strauss (who contributed an “epilogue”) were students of Strauss or had spent considerable time with Strauss! *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics* is a fierce (and often uncharitable) polemic against then mainstream empirical science.¹¹

That Straussianism came to be seen as a school can be inferred, from for example, in a (1962) review by the prominent game and social choice theorist, William Riker, of Buchanan and Tullock’s *Calculus of Consent* (which propelled Buchanan to the Nobel prize in economics), Riker could mention, in passing, that “Some, like Leo Strauss, have urged a return to the great tradition; but unfortunately the process of return, as it appears in the work of both master and students, has turned out to be an even more sterile historicism than that against which they revolted.”¹² In the flagship journal of the American Political Science Association, Stanley Rothman starts his anti-Straussian polemic with the following two sentences: “Perhaps no single individual has had as much impact on the discipline of political science during the past several years as has Leo Strauss of the University of Chicago. Both he and his disciples (and they are disciples in the “classical” sense) have engaged in a full scale attack upon the premises underlying the contemporary study of politics.”¹³

⁹ Leo Strauss (1953) *Natural Right and History*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. For a review that anticipates many of the subsequent, recurring criticisms lodged at Strauss, see John Plamenatz (1955) “Natural Right and History.” *The Philosophical Review* 64(2): 300-302.

¹⁰ James Burnham (2014 [1965] *Suicide of the West: An Essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism*, New York: Encounter books, p. 24.

¹¹ For then contemporary (and critical) reaction, see Schaar, John H., and Sheldon S. Wolin. “Essays on the scientific study of politics: a critique.” *American Political Science Review* 57.1 (1963): 125-150.

¹² Riker, William H. *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 6, no. 4 (1962): 408. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2108773>

¹³ Rothman, Stanley. “The Revival of Classical Political Philosophy: A Critique.” *American Political Science Review* 56.2 (1962): 341. The accompanying footnote reads: “The most articulate of Strauss’ students include Walter Berns, Joseph Cropsey, Harry V. Jaffa and Allan Bloom.”

Compared to the fire-works that Straussianism generated within political science, the response by philosophers was relatively muted. The full-scale polemics against Strauss really start with John Yolton (1921-2005), who was a PhD student of Ryle's (1950-52) that resulted in a D.Phil. thesis, "John Locke and the Way of Ideas; a Study of the impact Locke's Epistemology and Metaphysics upon his Contemporaries."¹⁴ This dissertation and the book, *John Locke and the Way of Ideas*, are important mile-stones within the development of so-called 'contextual' historiography *within* analytic philosophy. After the book was published, in a subsequent article, Yolton contested the "violently distorted interpretation recently advanced by Leo Strauss" of Locke in NHR.¹⁵ He used to occasion to argue that "Strauss's general esotericist thesis suffers a severe blow when we consult the techniques he employs."¹⁶ Strauss' reliance on diagnosing and practicing esotericism was a subsequent recurring source of polemics among analytic philosophers.¹⁷

In particular, those working in ancient analytic philosophy objected to Straussian esotericism from the start;¹⁸ and returned to it regularly, especially notable in a very famous (1985) NYRB essay, "Sphinx without a secret," by Myles Burnyeat then Laurence Professor of Ancient Philosophy. Later Malcom Schofield called this a "devastating critique" of "Leo Strauss's treatment of Plato and its development into a cult and a political ideology."¹⁹ I do not mean to suggest that Strauss' reliance on esotericism was the only source of disagreement.

¹⁴ Buickerood, James G., and John P. Wright. (2006) "John William Yolton, 1921-2005." *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 79(5): 139–42.

¹⁵ Yolton, John W. (1958) "Locke on the Law of Nature." *The Philosophical Review* 67(4): 478. It's worth asking why the treatment of Plamenatz (1955), op. cit., was not thought conclusive.

¹⁶ Yolton (1958), op. cit., 478. Yolton's case is not as tight as one might wish for, see <https://digressionsimpressions.typepad.com/digressionsimpressions/2022/06/on-esoteric-locke-and-cicero-yoltons-polemics-with-strauss-pt-2.html>

¹⁷ Outside of analytic philosophy, the best and most sober criticism of Strauss' esotericism is Adrian Blau's (2012) "Anti-Strauss," *The Journal of Politics* 74(1): 142-155. For a thoughtful defense see Arthur M. Melzer (2020) *Philosophy between the lines: The lost history of esoteric writing*. University of Chicago Press, 2020.

¹⁸ Vlastos (1951), op. cit.

¹⁹ Burnyeat, M.F. (1985), 'Sphinx without a secret', *New York Review of Books*, 30 May 1985. Malcom Schofield, "Myles Fredric Burnyeat: 1 January 1939 – 20 September 2019" *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the British Academy*, 20, 62. [20-Memoirs-03-Burnyeat.pdf \(thebritishacademy.ac.uk\)](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/20-Memoirs-03-Burnyeat.pdf) Schofield is a Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, and Emeritus Professor of Ancient Philosophy in the University of Cambridge.

Ancient philosophers, especially, also objected to Strauss' reliance on and handling of the evidence derived from Xenophon's testimony of Socrates.²⁰ Outside of analytic philosophy, political theorists and historians of political thought also objected to Strauss primarily on methodological grounds.²¹ These polemics, and the boundary poling involved, have much to teach us about the sociology and discipline/identity formation of post WWII analytic philosophy Stateside.

Even so, this paper focuses on less well remembered and more subdued interactions. For, I show that Strauss' work also elicited a more substantive philosophical response, especially from Ernest Nagel. This response is of intrinsic interest because it involves the relationship between science and values. I show that Nagel's response was foundational to Felix Oppenheim's political philosophy or what Oppenheim called his project of 'conceptual reconstruction' a instrumental philosophy of (political) science. In addition, I show that lurking in Oppenheim's response to Strauss are questions about the role of the PSR in philosophy. My paper suggests that an opportunity was missed to clarify questions pertaining to the inductive risk of philosophy more than a half century before these issues became fashionable (as 'public philosophy' and 'responsible speech').

In the first two sections, I show how in his classic (1961) *The Structure of Science*, Ernest Nagel engaged quite seriously with Strauss on the fact-value distinction. I also show that Nagel's argument is essential to Felix Oppenheim's method of political philosophizing.

In the third section, I analyze Oppenheim's criticism of Strauss in the 1950s.²² Oppenheimer represents a different way of doing political philosophy from both Strauss and

²⁰ In addition to Vlastos (1951), op cit, see, especially, the (1974) review of Strauss *Xenophon's Socrates* by Terence Irwin *The Philosophical Review*, 83(3): 409–13 to get a sense of the polemics.

²¹ See Rothman (1962), op cit. and, especially, Quentin Skinner, (1969) "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas." *History and theory* 8.1: 3-53.

²² I do not mean to suggest it is the first substantive criticism of Strauss among American political philosophers. In 1954, Arnold S. Kaufman published, "The nature and function of political theory" in *The journal of philosophy* with very interesting criticisms of Strauss. But it is not obvious Kaufman ought to be understood as an analytic philosopher then, although he certainly was educated in a NYC pragmatist environment.

the subsequent dominant strain of Rawlsianism, and so this provides a useful glimpse at a largely forgotten episode in the history of analytic philosophy.

Section 1. Ernest Nagel vs Strauss

The discussion of Strauss in Nagel's *Structure of Social Inquiry* occurs in a chapter 13 on the "methodological problems of the social sciences" in section (V) on "The Value-Oriented Bias of Social Inquiry." This is a rather long, ambitious chapter (over 50 pages). The chapter made Nagel a recognized authority in the philosophy of social science, and got him invited to debates internal to (say) economics.²³ The chapter also includes, for example, Nagel's ferocious criticism of Hayek's *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, which Nagel partially recycles from a polemical 1952 review in *Journal of Philosophy*.

Nagel could be a very fierce polemicist, including a public, political polemicist.²⁴ But the response to Strauss in *Structure*, does not fit that mold. Rather the section -- it's about five pages -- attributes to Strauss a family of arguments, which Nagel calls "sophisticated" (Nagel, *Structure*: 490) that [A] 'social sciences cannot be value free.' Nagel treats this as entailing or nearly identical to the thesis [B] that there is no "compelling reasons" that "an ethically neutral social science is inherently impossible." (Nagel, *Structure*: 495). It may seem a bit surprising that [A] is thought to entail [B] because ethical neutrality may well be a significant 'value'! To be sure, Nagel himself derives this formulation from Strauss, who attributes the identity of "value-free" or "ethically neutral social science" to Weber.²⁵

Before I get to the details of Nagel's arguments two observations: first, Nagel responds to a version of Strauss' argument published in 1951 in *Measure*. To the best of my knowledge this journal did not have a long life or wide circulation. But Strauss reprinted a version of the

²³ Schliesser, Eric. "Philosophy of science as first philosophy: the liberal polemics of Ernest Nagel." *Ernest Nagel: Philosophy of Science and the Fight for Clarity* (2022): 233-253.

²⁴ See Schliesser (2022), op. cit.

²⁵ Leo Strauss NRH, p. 40.

article as chapter II in NRH. The passage(s) from Strauss that Nagel quotes can be found there on pp. 50-53. The omissions in Nagel are basically all the places where Strauss is criticizing Weber directly. (I return to that below.) NRH was published in 1953, and famous, so it is a bit odd that Nagel does not cite it.

Second, a few years ago, Anna Alexandrova published a paper, "Can the science of well-being be objective?." in *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* (2020) that has quickly become a classic in its own right. This paper engages with the material I am about to discuss (and mentions that Strauss was Nagel's target), and expresses my own substantive disagreements with Nagel better than I could. So, it is by no means obvious that Nagel's position still represents the consensus view. Alexandrova has indirectly helped rehabilitate a position akin to Strauss (but decoupled from the bad baggage of Straussianism). So, I am primarily focused on describing the significance of the debate rather than evaluating it.

Section (V) of Nagel's chapter is devoted to the following issues:

Since social scientists generally differ in their value commitments, the "value neutrality" that seems to be so pervasive in the natural sciences is therefore often held to be impossible in social inquiry. In the judgment of many thinkers, it is accordingly absurd to expect the social sciences to exhibit the unanimity so common among natural scientists concerning what are the established facts and satisfactory explanations for them. Let us examine some of the reasons that have been advanced for these contentions. It will be convenient to distinguish four groups of such reasons, so that our discussion will deal in turn with the alleged role of value judgments in (1) the selection of problems, (2) the determination of the contents of conclusions, (3) the identification of fact, and (4) the assessment of evidence. Nagel *Structure* p. 485

I quote it for two reasons: first, because it shows that the way Nagel operationalizes 'value neutrality' is in terms of unanimity, or consensus. To readers of Kuhn's *Structure* this should be familiar! The broader context of Nagel's argument shows that the relevant class participating in or constituting the relevant consensus is "competent workers in the...sciences" (Nagel *Structure*, 448). In addition, the question for social science is articulated in terms of the purported "unanimity so common among natural scientists concerning what are the established facts and satisfactory explanations for them." Nagel is aware, of course, that natural scientists

do not always agree, but this occurs for him either at the research "frontier" (448) or in contexts where the disagreement is an effect of "alternative formulations" that are "mathematically equivalent" (158). So, value neutrality is constituted by expert agreement over facts and the theories or (equivalent) models that explain them.

Second, the response to Strauss falls under what Nagel calls (3) "the identification of fact." Nagel identifies Max Weber's position with (1). He doesn't identify a single author with (2), but in it he treats S.F. Nadel (an anthropologist, who was "a pioneer of multi-sited ethnography,"), his own teacher Morris R. Cohen, and A.E. Burt (whose work on Newton is still important) as typical representatives of it (Nagel's own discussion draws on work by the economist (and later Nobel laureate) Gunnar Myrdal). Finally, Karl Mannheim is treated as the exemplar of someone who holds (4). What's neat about this list is that it is both politically diverse and reflects the practices of different kinds of social science(s).

Nagel attributes to Strauss two distinct criticisms: the first is that "the distinction between fact and value.. is untenable when purposive human behavior is being analyzed, since in this context value judgments enter inextricably into what appear to be "purely descriptive" (or factual) statements." (490) The second is that purported "factual claims about means-ends statements" are themselves infected with values. (491) It's not hard to see that they are similar in kind, because in both contexts we're dealing with the possible presence of a kind of teleology or opaque context.

In his response to the views he attributes to Strauss, Nagel emphasizes that Strauss is *right* about three features: "(a) that a large number of characterizations sometimes assumed to be purely factual descriptions of social phenomena do indeed formulate a type of value judgment; (b) that it is often difficult, and in any case usually inconvenient in practice, to distinguish between the purely factual and the "evaluative" contents of many terms employed

in the social sciences; and that (c) values are commonly attached to means and not only to ends." (Nagel *Structure*, 491--[letters added to facilitate discussion]).

Nagel insists that Strauss equivocates on two notions of 'value judgment:' first, "the sense in which a value judgment expresses approval or disapproval either of some moral (or social) ideal, or of some action (or institution) because of a commitment to such an ideal; and the sense in which a value judgment expresses an estimate of the degree to which some commonly recognized (and more or less clearly defined) type of action, object, or institution is embodied in a given instance." (492) Nagel adds that these notions are often conflated in the social sciences and that sometimes it's not so easy to sort distinguish them. But he concludes his argument that "there are no good reasons for thinking that it is inherently impossible to distinguish between the characterizing and the appraising judgments implicit in many statements, whether the statements are asserted by students of human affairs or by natural scientists." (494).

Now, rhetorically, it's important that Nagel's argument -- and this is characteristic of his argument in the whole chapter -- generally has the following form: 'an apparent problem X in social science occurs also in natural sciences and when X occurs in natural science, X does not prevent the development of consensus in the natural sciences (and, thus has been tamed in the natural sciences) and so X does not pose an in principle obstacle to consensus in social science.' So, for example, Nagel illustrates the two senses of "value judgment" with an example from biology.²⁶ And the effect of this move is to turn the critic of value neutrality in social science into a critic of the purported value neutrality of natural science. Nagel assumes nobody (not even the sociologist of knowledge he discusses under (4)) will go that far. Of course, somebody

²⁶ To what degree Nagel can presuppose the value-neutrality of biology is actually an interesting topic connected to his life-long effort to provide an analysis of function statements.

may well concede Nagel's position for general relativity, but worry about conceding it in the life sciences.

It is worth saying something about what Strauss is up to. In its original context, Strauss' argument is directed against Weber. In particular because Weber is taken to be a spokesperson for the following position: "Natural right is then rejected today not only because (i) all human thought is held to be historical but likewise because it is thought that (ii) there is a variety of unchangeable principles of right or of goodness which conflict with one another, and none of which can be proved to be superior to the others." (NRH 36) Strauss associates Weber with features of what he calls 'historicism' (viz, i) and with value pluralism (viz, ii). To be sure, Strauss recognizes that Weber is not a pure historicist, because Weber recognizes the historical situatedness of the sciences alongside the "trans-historical" nature of its "findings regarding the facts and their causes. More precisely, what is trans-historical is the validity of these findings." (NRH 39). And because Strauss wants to argue for natural right, or at least, the inherent possibility of the recovery of natural right, he is critical of Weber.

So, Strauss is not especially interested in doing social science (although I qualify that below). But he is interested in a kind of self-limitation Weber puts on social science: "the absolute heterogeneity of facts and values necessitates [for Weber] the ethically neutral character of social science: social science can answer questions of facts and their causes; it is not competent to answer questions of value." (NRH 40) Unless values are self-contradictory or help generate incoherence, the social scientist must be silent about them. Now this position is coherent, and it is not obvious why Strauss cares about social science method at all.

The answer to that question is that Strauss (correctly) discerns that Weber is a kind of skeptic about value: "his belief that there cannot be any genuine knowledge of the Ought." (NRH 41) And so observed, value pluralism is an *effect* of this Weberian skepticism (which according to Strauss naturally leads to a nihilism that Weber obscures from himself). To be

sure, Strauss attributes to Weber a kind of formal possession of the norm, "Thou shalt have ideals," (NRH 44); so on this view Weber is not a radical (second order) skeptic about value. For Weber the content of this norm is, as Strauss notes, "Follow thy god or demon," which Strauss reinterprets as "devotion to a cause." (NRH 46).

As an aside, the really significant observation on Weber's philosophy for political theory by Strauss is that "Weber's thesis that there is no solution to the conflict between values was then a part, or a consequence, of the comprehensive view according to which human life is essentially an inescapable conflict. For this reason, "peace and universal happiness" appeared to him to be an illegitimate or fantastic goal. Even if that goal could be reached, he thought, it would not be desirable; it would be the condition of "the last men who have invented happiness," against whom Nietzsche had directed his "devastating criticism."" (NRH 65) That is to say, Strauss diagnoses how he takes Weber's Nietzscheanism to anticipate Carl Schmitt's position (even if Schmitt is not mentioned by Strauss in *this* context.)

Now, the objection to Weber by Strauss that Nagel cites occurs in the discussion of Strauss' analysis of Weber's sociology of religion, which "presupposes a fundamental distinction between "ethos" and "techniques of living " (or "prudential" rules)." And Strauss suggests that "the sociologist must then be able to recognize an "ethos" in its distinctive character; he must have a feel for it, an appreciation of it, as Weber admitted." (NRH 50) Then occurs the passage Nagel (selectively) quotes on 490-491. In Nagel's hands it is completely unclear that Strauss is offering an immanent critique of Weber.

If one only reads Nagel (without knowledge of Strauss' original) then it is natural to think that Strauss's rejection of ethical neutrality of social science is itself an obstacle to consensus or unanimity in social science; so that lurking in Strauss' argument is a kind of denial of social scientific objectivity. But this is a misrepresentation by Nagel; for Strauss the whole point of recognizing values in social science is to make social scientific and historical

objectivity possible. (Because Strauss is often so critical of social scientific practice this is easy to miss.) This is completely explicit in Strauss. For, Strauss concludes his own argument against Weber (at least the present one that Nagel is focused on) as follows:

The rejection of value judgments endangers historical objectivity. In the first place, it prevents one from calling a spade a spade. In the second place, it endangers that kind of objectivity which legitimately requires the forgoing of evaluations, namely, the objectivity of interpretation. The historian who takes it for granted that objective value judgments are impossible cannot take very seriously that thought of the past which was based on the assumption that objective value judgments are possible, i.e., practically all thought of earlier generations. Knowing beforehand that that thought was based on a fundamental delusion, he lacks the necessary incentive for trying to understand the past as it understood itself. (Strauss NRH 60-61)

That is to say, for Strauss establishing the possibility of establishing natural right just is the possibility of establishing a trans-historical consensus/agreement or unanimity in social science. (To avoid confusion: all parties to the debate then agree that history, as a scholarly discipline, is at least partially part of social science—in German, history is a *Wissenschaft*.)

So, somewhat ironically Nagel and Strauss *agree* about what we might call the formal aims of social science, that it involves a species of objectivity that makes fundamental consensus possible. This fundamental *agreement* is obscured by Nagel's presentation. So a reader of Nagel who is unfamiliar with Strauss may well come away thinking that Strauss is a critic of the sciences or anti-scientific. It cannot be ruled out that this rhetorical effect is an intentional payoff of Nagel's treatment of Strauss.

As an aside, recently a transcription was published of Strauss' (1965) lecture course, "Introduction to Political Philosophy," at The University of Chicago. He had assigned Nagel's *Structure* in the course, and he prepared a response to some of Nagel's criticism that is very much worth exploring.²⁷ The existence and nature of this material suggests that Strauss also made an explicit decision not to engage directly publicly with some of his analytic critics.

²⁷ Strauss, Leo. *Leo Strauss on political philosophy: responding to the challenge of positivism and historicism*. Edited by Catherine Zuckert, University of Chicago Press, 2018, Chapter 5, p 104-129. The discussion is wide-ranging. (Strauss treats Nagel as a kind of 'positivist' who he compares to Reichenbach (p. 110).)

As presented here, Nagel's criticism of Strauss may be thought to belong to the philosophy of social science. However, as I show in the next section, it also had an influential afterlife within somewhat forgotten pre-Rawlsian era of analytic political philosophy.

Section 2: Felix Oppenheimer.

As Daniel Dennett informed me, Felix Oppenheim was the son of Paul Oppenheim of Hempel & Oppenheim (1948) fame²⁸. While there was not much distinctly analytic political philosophy before Rawls, Oppenheim (1913-2011) would have to figure in any such a story.²⁹

In the "post-script" to a (2001) festschrift, *Freedom, Power and Political Morality*, devoted to him, Felix Oppenheim (1913-2011) rhetorically asks if he is the "lone survivor of a movement by now of merely historical interest?" and distances himself from the suggestion that he was a logical positivist because he rejects "operationalism and radical empiricism."³⁰ Rather, he prefers to understand himself as committed to *conceptual reconstruction*, which provides concepts "with descriptive definitions in order to make them available for fruitful communication even among persons or groups with different normative views."³¹

Conceptual reconstruction is, thus, a species of conceptual engineering or conceptual articulation and has two goals: first, it is in the service of fruitful communication in the context of substantive normative and political pluralism. (As such, the project is not far removed from the spirit of the Rawlsian enterprise of conceptually constituting an overlapping consensus.) Of course, one may do conceptual reconstruction in a homogeneous society, but there it would be less needed.

²⁸ Hempel, Carl G., and Paul Oppenheim. "Studies in the Logic of Explanation." *Philosophy of science* 15.2 (1948): 135-175. One might add "Oppenheim & Putnam (1958)" fame and (inter alia) "Bedau & Oppenheim" (1961) fame, too.

²⁹ So what follows is meant, in part, as a supplement to Wolff, Jonathan, 'Analytic Political Philosophy', in Michael Beaney (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Analytic Philosophy* (2013; online edn, Oxford Academic, 1 Oct. 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199238842.013.0003>,

³⁰ Carter, Ian, and Mario Ricciardi. *Freedom, Power and Political Morality: Essays for Felix Oppenheim*. Springer, 2001, p. 218.

³¹ Ibid.

What is distinctive about Oppenheim's program is that he thinks that a 'descriptive' definition does "without the use of valuational notions."³² This also makes clear that facilitating fruitful communication is not the only possible use of conceptual reconstruction: second, Oppenheim also intends to provide social scientists — he explicitly mentions political scientists — with concepts that can be used in their descriptive or empirical social science.³³ The absence of valuational notions facilitates in the aim of avoiding the imposition of normative views on the social phenomena studied.³⁴

Assuming that such conceptual reconstruction without valuational notions is possible, this entails that often Oppenheim offers explicative definition "which might diverge from ordinary language."³⁵ To what degree such divergence makes the output of concept reconstruction less amenable to political life is ignored, but it seems safe to predict that conceptual reconstruction is more useful to those committed to value-free social science than to political agents in the middle of public contestation. Descriptive definitions so conceived "are not true or false, since they are linguistic stipulations."³⁶ They are, rather, more or less useful. And this consequentialist understanding of success has a Carnapian flavor to it.

It is to be allowed, however, that in the context of mutual trust or elite bargaining, "political actors sometimes make some effort at 'resolving those differences through argument and persuasion'" and then the presence of descriptively defined concepts may be very useful.³⁷ Oppenheim's program can work in a political culture in which technocratic tools (say a lexicon) are welcomed to reduce social friction or are used to reduce conflict over the terms of a bargain.

³² *Freedom, Power and Political Morality*, op. cit. p. 219.

³³ *Freedom, Power and Political Morality*, op. cit. p. 221.

³⁴ See also Karl W. Deutsch and Leroy N. Rieselbach (1965) "Recent Trends in Political Theory and Political Philosophy" *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Jul., 1Vol. 360, Latin America Tomorrow (Jul., 1965), pp. 153-154, where Oppenheim is mentioned.

³⁵ *Freedom, Power and Political Morality*, op. cit. p. 219.

³⁶ *Idem.*

³⁷ *Freedom, Power and Political Morality*, op. cit. p. 221. Oppenheim is partially quoting Ball's contribution to the festschrift.

What this requires is “a lexicon be uncontestable, in the sense that its vocabulary be made up of definitions that are not valuationally tinted.”³⁸ Such a lexicon can be contested and contestable in the sense that an improved vocabulary might facilitate more efficient or consensual (etc.) bargaining. No lexicon is final.

Oppenheim allows that his conception of descriptive definition is dependent on an “idea” he “did take over from the logical positivists: the separability of ‘facts’ and ‘values’ on the *conceptual* level.”³⁹ In context, he does not argue for the claim. However, Oppenheim had defended the claim in a 1973 paper.⁴⁰ There he acknowledges that in the speech acts of *ordinary or everyday life* there is no such separability.⁴¹ So, there is another sense in which Oppenheim echoes Carnap’s philosophy: it relies on a relatively sharp distinction between a natural language of ordinary folk and a specialist language (which is often formal). In the 1973 paper, it’s explicit that Oppenheim is more focused on designing a “the language of social and political inquiry.”⁴²

Unfortunately, the 1973 paper argues by way of criticizing those who had either de facto or in practice denied such separability. So it is not really helpful in reconstructing Oppenheim’s positive argument *in favor* of the conceptual separability of facts and values thesis. But Oppenheim the positive argument is embedded in his earlier, descriptive definitions, For example, near the start of his (1970) “Egalitarianism as a Descriptive Concept,” Oppenheim writes

Equality and inequality of characteristics are no doubt descriptive concepts. Indeed, whether A and B have the same age or nationality or income can be empirically ascertained. So can assertions that A has greater ability or aptitude than B. These are characterizing value judgments: such statements are descriptive, not normative.⁴³

³⁸ *Freedom, Power and Political Morality*, op. cit. p. 221.

³⁹ *Freedom, Power and Political Morality*, op. cit. p. 219, emphasis in original.

⁴⁰ Felix E. Oppenheim (1973) “Facts” and “Values” in Politics: Are They Separable?.” *Political Theory* 1.1: 54-68.

⁴¹ Oppenheim (1973), op. cit. 58.

⁴² Oppenheim (1973), op. cit. 59.

⁴³ Oppenheim, Felix E. (1970). Egalitarianism as a Descriptive Concept. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 7 (2):143.

This terminology is clearly indebted to the material of Ernest Nagel's (1961) *The Structure of Science* discussed in section 1 above. Unsurprisingly Oppenheim cites the relevant page-numbers of Nagel (in which he is critical of Strauss) in the accompanying footnote. So, the first main pay-off of this investigation is that Oppenheim's program of conceptual reconstruction *presupposes* that Nagel's criticism of Strauss is substantially correct, and that, thus, characterizing value judgments can be kept sufficiently distinct from the normativity we find in appraising judging.

As I show in the next section, there is very good evidence that Oppenheim was familiar with Strauss' *Natural Right and History*. So, he clearly must have made up his own mind about the adequacy of Nagel's response. However, If the reader agrees with me that Alexandrova's (2020) criticism of Nagel on this score is apt, then Strauss' unwillingness to pursue the exchange with Nagel in public also gave Oppenheim false confidence in the robustness of his program.

Section 3. Felix Oppenheim

In a 1955 essay, Oppenheim defended a form of epistemological relativism.⁴⁴ In particular, Oppenheim is committed to the claim that "words such as "good," "desirable," and "valuable" do not designate properties of things or events or actions, but express the speaker's subjective preferences."⁴⁵ Oppenheim is explicit that he is echoing Charles L. Stevenson's *Ethics and Language*. To be sure Oppenheim's "relativism is opposed to value-objectivism, not to objectivism in science. If "objectivity" means possibility of objective, i.e., intersubjective, verification, relativism denies the objectivity of intrinsic value-judgments, but not the

⁴⁴ Oppenheim, Felix E. "In Defense of Relativism." *The Western Political Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1955, pp. 411–17. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/442896>.

⁴⁵ Oppenheim (1955), op. cit. p. 411.

objectivity of empirical statements."⁴⁶ Oppenheim goes on to claim: "Relativism does not question the possibility of explaining or giving reasons for people's valuations; relativism denies the possibility of validating or giving grounds for them."⁴⁷

An auxiliary claim that matters a lot to Oppenheim's argument is that "logically, there is no necessary connection between any particular value-judgment and either absolutism or relativism."⁴⁸ This will play an important role in Oppenheim's argument against Strauss. Oppenheim identifies Strauss twice as one of his targets. First, in a footnote attached to the following passage:

[A]bsolutists tend to consider relativism incompatible with whatever goals they adjudge demonstrably valuable. Thus value-absolutists who are also political absolutists (i.e., who claim that the values underlying political absolutism are the "true" values) maintain that relativism is dangerous because it promotes democratic values. Absolutists who believe that the de way of life can be proved to be the best often hold that a subjectivist be a "true" democrat. The latter thesis is based on arguments such as the following: if good and evil is not a matter of objective knowledge, then everything is a matter of indifference. The relativist must therefore be tolerant of every ethical viewpoint, even of doctrines which command the overthrow of democracy. Or still worse: if there is no justice, it does not matter how one acts; so one may just as well climb on the bandwagon. Thus relativism becomes akin to nihilism, cynicism, and opportunism.

In the accompanying footnote, Oppenheim quotes the following passage from Strauss NRH:

[I] "If our principles have no other support than our blind preferences, everything a man is willing to dare will be permissible. The contemporary rejection of natural right leads to nihilism - nay, it is identical with nihilism."⁴⁹ (Roman numeral added to facilitate discussion.)

Second, Oppenheim goes on to claim, shortly thereafter, "absolutists are likely to shift the argument from the logical to the psychological level and maintain that it is psychologically impossible to commit oneself whole-heartedly to any set of values unless one is convinced that it corresponds to the objectively valuable." And in the accompanying footnote, Oppenheim quotes Strauss from NRH as follows: [II] "Once we realize that the principles of our actions

⁴⁶ Idem.

⁴⁷ Oppenheim (1955), op. cit. 412.

⁴⁸ Idem.

⁴⁹ NRH (1953), p. 5. In the 1965 edition it is on p. 4.

have no other support than our blind choice, we really do not believe in them any more. We cannot wholeheartedly act upon them any more. We cannot live any more as responsible beings."⁵⁰

Both of Strauss' claims can be found in the "Introduction" of NRH. In immediate context Strauss does not offer detailed arguments for these claims so they will seem rather ungrounded. It is a bit peculiar that Oppenheim ignores here the rest of Strauss' arguments developed later in the book. Even so, there is something interesting to be said about the state of the debate between Strauss and Oppenheim.

In the first Strauss passage [I], Strauss does not claim here that relativism leads to "cynicism or opportunism" as Oppenheim suggests. Even so, it is not obvious why according to Strauss nihilism follows from the rejection of natural right or from thinking that our principles are derived from our preferences.

The second [II] passage helps start to explain why Strauss thinks nihilism follows from the kind of relativism somebody like Oppenheim defends. Obviously, it's not obvious why Strauss seems to be committed to such a dramatic slippery slope argument. But it becomes intelligible if we recognize that, fundamentally, there is a suppressed premise in Strauss' argument: that something needs to ground the principles of our actions or these grounds (and so on) to halt the slide down the slope (toward nihilism) . So, lurking in Strauss' position is a kind of appeal to some version of the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) to halt a regress argument.

That Strauss is committed to something like the PSR is not wholly obvious in context of the introduction to NRH. But later, in the long chapter 2 on his critique of Weber's account of the distinction between fact and values (which is the chapter that Ernest Nagel criticizes), in the context of ascribing to Weber the idea that "science or philosophy rests, in the last analysis,

⁵⁰ Oppenheim 1955, op. cit., p.415, quoting NRH (1953), p. 6. (It's also p. 6 in 1965 edition of NRH.)

not on evident premises that are at the disposal of man as man but on faith," Strauss goes on to claim: "By regarding the quest for truth as valuable in itself, one admits that one is making a preference which no longer has a good or sufficient reason. One recognizes therewith the principle that preferences do not need good or sufficient reasons."⁵¹

There is much to be said about Strauss account as a reconstruction of Weber, and as a diagnosis of the effects of Weber's position. But what does seem clear is that Strauss associated the rejection of what Oppenheim calls 'absolutism' with the claim that preferences are ungrounded or at least not grounded in sufficient reason.

In fact, being alert to this feature of Strauss' position also helps explain the recurring use of "blind" in modifying "preferences" and "choice" in the passages [I]&[II] Oppenheim quotes in the notes. (This use of 'blind' echoes the kind of language early modern critics of epicureanism would use.) Such preferences and choices are treated as unguided, and so de facto random. So, lurking in Strauss is a defense of, or at least an acceptance of (the utility of), the PSR,⁵² and metaphysics more generally.

Interestingly enough Oppenheim *agrees* about the stakes (but not on the PSR). Oppenheim claims that his flavor of "Relativism does not question the possibility of *explaining* or giving reasons for people's valuations; relativism denies the possibility of *validating* or giving *grounds* for them."⁵³ So, not unlike Russell and much of the mainstream of analytic philosophy since, Oppenheim rejects the PSR (at least in the context of values).⁵⁴

I do not mean to suggest that the disagreement between Oppenheimer and Strauss is only, ultimately, about the status of the PSR. Oppenheimer's explicit criticism of Strauss are

⁵¹ Strauss NHR (1965), op. cit, p. 72.

⁵² On this point, see Christopher Bruell (2011) "the question of nature and the thought of Leo Strauss." *Klesis- Revue philosophique* 19 (2011): 98, which cites more passages in NRH in support of this claim. I thank Thomas Cleveland for calling my attention to this.

⁵³ Oppenheim (1955), p. 412; emphasis in Oppenheim.

⁵⁴ SEE Della Rocca, Michael. "Tamers, deniers, and me." *Philosophical Studies* 178.4 (2021): 1101-1119, who cites Russell, B. (1910). Some explanations in reply to Mr. Bradley. *Mind*, 19, 373-378.

also framed by an *implicit* disagreement over the status of inductive risk of relativism. Oppenheimer does not name the critic who holds that “relativism is subversive:” “they brand relativism as socially harmful if not outright subversive.”⁵⁵ But that philosophy should be mindful of harming society is a commitment that runs through Strauss' philosophy.⁵⁶ Concern over the inductive risk of philosophical activity has not been fashionable within analytic philosophy. For, as Oppenheimer retorts, such concern (and here he anticipates a move familiar from Nagel) does not undermine the “validity of the thesis: To argue this way would be like questioning the validity of nuclear physics by pointing to the H-bomb.”⁵⁷

In 1955, Oppenheimer had understood Strauss' criticism as a kind of psychological thesis. He is unconcerned by Strauss' argument because he understand his own moral relativism as an epistemological thesis. Even if one is utterly unmoved by Strauss's position (which is expressed rather concisely and ultimately rooted in the PSR), it's pretty clear that Oppenheimer has misjudged it. Strauss' claim is not a contribution to psychology, but existential. The fact that Strauss thinks our preferences lack ground means that for him they are fundamentally unexplained from the perspective of rationality. So, Strauss's position is much more related to epistemology than Oppenheimer allows.

Oppenheimer must have felt something akin to the problem I have just diagnosed because Oppenheimer returns to his disagreement with Strauss in a 1957 APSR article.⁵⁸ He quotes (in redacted form) the same passages from Strauss **[I]&[II]** as he did in 1955. But he offers a new response.

Before I get to that, one aside. In his the 1957 APSR article Oppenheimer first mentions Strauss in the following way, “Non-cognitivism does not maintain that value-words, even in

⁵⁵ Oppenheimer (1955), p. 414.

⁵⁶ For evidence of this claim see, especially, the (very critical) chapter on Strauss in Stephen Holmes' (1993) *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

⁵⁷ Oppenheimer (1955), p. 414.

⁵⁸ Oppenheimer, Felix E. "The Natural Law Thesis: Affirmation or Denial?." *American Political Science Review* 51.1 (1957): 41-53.

the intrinsic sense, are meaningless, but only that they have normative, evaluative, directive, rather than cognitive meaning. Natural law theorists are therefore mistaken when they claim, as e.g., Leo Strauss does, that [III] the denial of natural law implies "the prohibition against value judgments in social science."⁵⁹ Oppenheim quotes Strauss out of context. In context Strauss is criticizing Weber's account of the separation of facts and values! But this does not affect the rest of Oppenheim's or my own argument.

The new 1957 response is basically Humean in character, although Oppenheim's terminology is ultimately derived from Carnap.⁶⁰ In responding to [I]&[II] Oppenheim draws on his own account of rational choice and Carnap's idea of total evidence: "To make a rational choice," the decision-maker must predict the consequences of each of the alternative courses of action open to him in a given situation. His decision will be rational provided these anticipations are based on the total evidence available to him. Such predictions are, of course, true only with a certain degree of probability, and a decision may be rational, yet unsuccessful, and vice versa."⁶¹

Let's leave aside how compelling Oppenheim's view of rational choice is. Although it's notable how thin the view is; there is no requirement here of internal consistency at a time or over time. It's not even obvious we're dealing with a species of instrumental rationality (because the predictions are in no way connected to the arbitrary preferences or principles on which choices are founded). Having said that, and in light of his 1953 article ("rational choice"), I am assuming that Oppenheimer is assuming a kind of instrumental rationality here, and that he

⁵⁹ Oppenheim (1957), op. cit, p. 50. In an accompanying footnote he cites the 1953 edition of Strauss' NRH, p. 52.

⁶⁰ Rudolf Carnap (1947) "On the application of inductive logic." *Philosophy and phenomenological research* 8(1): 133-148. In his 1957 APSR article, Oppenheim cites his own Oppenheim, Felix E. (1953) "Rational choice." *The Journal of Philosophy* 50(12): 341-350, and in it Carnap (1950) *Logical Foundations of Probability*, Chicago. This incorporates material from Carnap's 1947 article. (See p. 343, note 3 in Oppenheim 1953.) For discussion of underlying philosophical issues, see Good, Irving John. (1967) "On the principle of total evidence." *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 17(4): 319-321.

⁶¹ Oppenheim (1957), op. cit. p. 52. Cf. Oppenheim (1953), op. cit., p. 343: "To arrive at a rational decision, it is sufficient to make warranted predictions about the significant effects of one's significant alternative potential actions."

intends to be describing how preferences (he uses “goals”) can be satisfied in light of evidence and knowledge.

What's important for present purposes about Oppenheim's new response to Strauss is that he blocks the claim that choices founded on ungrounded preferences are arbitrary altogether. They are now constrained by evidence and how it relates to genuine possibilities and one's knowledge of these (since they are based on predictions). In addition, these actions can be intelligible in an important way because a spectator (who becomes privy to the evidence and knowledge used) may well predict and perhaps even understand the choices made. In fact, this is, on my view, really Oppenheim's underlying point. He wants (recall the discussion above of his program of conceptual reconstruction and looking ahead to his book *Dimensions of Freedom*) to provide conceptual tools for empirical science.⁶² He understands his position as "an extrinsic value-judgment, namely the empirical hypothesis: whenever you want to bring about the state of affairs which, under the circumstances, will be most valuable (or least disvaluable) to you, apply the rules of rational decision-making."⁶³

Even if the Straussian would accept Oppenheimer's account of rational choice, the Straussian rejoinder is not hard to guess: such predictable choices or instrumental rationality in the serves of ungrounded or arbitrary ends may well exhibit a species of madness/sociopathy or evil. (That's to say the nihilism charge has not been blocked.) So, I doubt that Strauss would be very impressed by Oppenheim's follow up even if he were to grant that given Oppenheim's aims Oppenheim has succeeded on his own terms. If we step back from their debate, the philosophically important point lurking here is that prediction by social science and the rationality of what is predicted may come apart. That's of course a truism, even if it is often forgotten. The problem (of the inductive risk of philosophy itself) with the truism arises when

⁶² Oppenheim, F. E. (1961). *Dimensions of freedom: An analysis*. St Martin's Press.

⁶³ Oppenheim (1957), op. cit. p. 53.

predictions by social science (ground in certain philosophical conceptions of rational choice) become action-guiding and so, say, contribute to the irrationality of the outcomes (think of game theory and mutually assured destruction).

That is, lurking in the Strauss-Oppenheim debate is a debate over the relationship between philosophical theorizing and its instrumental role in social science, or other forms of social activism. With the benefit of hindsight, it's a shame that Kaufman's earlier (1954) criticism of Strauss did not play a role in this debate because Kaufman (who cautiously defends an instrumental, social role for political philosophy) notes that Strauss' epistemology of philosophical or eternal truths is itself underspecified and that it is by no means obvious there are truths separate or separable from sciences, including formal ones.⁶⁴ Oppenheim echoes the point (without citation of Kaufman), when he notes in a footnote, while reviewing Popper's *Conjectures and Refutations* that "it is, however, not always easy to determine whether the anti-empiricists here referred to would claim that their method for apprehending "truth" is scientific, but non-empirical, or non-scientific-i.e., suprarational. This ambiguity may be found, e.g., in Herbert J. Storing, ed., *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics* (New York 1962)."⁶⁵

During the revival of recent interest in questions over inductive risk of philosophy, the fact-value distinction, and science & values more generally, only Alexandrova has noticed that some of the received, standard positions in analytic philosophy on these matters were

⁶⁴ Arnold S. Kaufman (1954) "The nature and function of political theory." *The journal of philosophy* 51(1): 5-22. (Kaufman comes very close to grasping Strauss' skepticism. On the complex relationship between the PSR and skepticism, Michael Della Rocca (2017) 'Playing with Fire: Hume, Rationalism, and a Little Bit of Spinoza', in Michael Della Rocca (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Spinoza*, Oxford Handbooks (online edn, Oxford Academic, 5 Sept. 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195335828.013.019>) Only Quentin Skinner seems to have realized Kaufman's significance to the debate between Straussians and their critics. See Skinner (1969), op. cit., 12-13 note 49! When Yolton confronted Strauss' purported position that "either we are able to ground moral criticism in natural rights, or we are faced with moral nihilism," Yolton does not criticize Strauss' epistemology, but argues (in a proto-Gadamarian vein) that forms of circularity cannot be avoided in dealing with "accepted" social values but that such circularity need not be vicious; John W. Yolton (1955) "Criticism and histrionic understanding." *Ethics* 65(3): 206-212. Yolton misses Strauss' skepticism and fideism altogether.

⁶⁵ Felix E. Oppenheim (1964) "Rationalism and Liberalism" *World Politics* 16(2): 351 n. 14.

sometimes sharpened in response to some elements of Leo Strauss' philosophy. And while it would be wholly misleading to suggest that the increasing rejection of these received view vindicates Strauss' arguments or his mode of philosophy, the dispassionate historian will note that the pull of some of the challenges Strauss articulated to the philosophical defense of mid-century social science was re-discovered independently from Strauss' writings. While this should not make us overlook the ways Straussianism can still provoke and annoy, it would be a mistake to reduce its significance wholly to a fork in the road worth forgetting altogether. For, as I have noted, lurking in Strauss' writing is (recall his apparent embrace of the PSR) a defense, or at least a conditional defense, of metaphysics--a seed of which that blossomed, most unexpectedly, in Syracuse.⁶⁶

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⁶⁶ Jose A. Benardete (1964) *Infinity: An Essay in Metaphysics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.