Abstract
In this inquiry, we try to discover two points in the political theory of Strauss: one is the relation between politics and philosophy, and second, is the analytical approach to the so-called Strauss’ emphasize on the esoteric philosophy. Here, we argue that the amorality that Strauss uses to argue against the philosophy and annulment of rationality from politics would consequently cause the critique on his own approach. His argument is inevitably doomed to be self-destructive one. Second, we try to understand the esoteric approach of his, from the political point of view.

Keywords: Philosophy, liberalism, Strauss, Theo-political problem, esoteric approach
Leo Strauss on Reading Political Nothingness

A fanatic critic of modernity, Leo Strauss attributed modernity’s intellectual degradation to the influence of some great philosophers in the history of political thought who radically broke with classical political thinking. He believed that to be the greatest of the writer lies not so much in being a man of his time, as a man against his time (Nietzsche 1957, p.41, Strauss 1963,). In doing so, Strauss believed, these thinkers either directly or indirectly contributed to the emergence of historicism and positivism, and he held these movements accountable for spineless relativism, nihilism, and modernity’s moral and intellectual demise. Here, we have to ask what is the source of all Strauss critique toward modernity and why?

Strauss, to begin with, starts with the assumption that there exists an inevitable conflict between the state and liberal idea in the modern era. Strauss sees the philosophy as the foundation of modern liberal ideas. To elaborate on this point, we have to refer to his “Persecution and the Art of Writing”. In this work, which is a kind of interdisciplinary inquiry that is based on sociological and philosophical approach, Strauss argued that there is a distinction between the sociology of knowledge and sociology of philosophy. While the latter begins with the assumption that there is a conflict between the ‘thought’ and ‘the state’s order’, the first begins with the assumption that there is a harmony between these two (Strauss1952).

“Philosophy or science, the highest activity of man, is the attempt to replace opinion about ‘all things’ by knowledge of ‘all things’; but opinion is the element of society; philosophy or science is therefore the attempt to dissolve the element in which society breath, and thus it endangers society. Hence, philosophy or science must remain the preserve of a small minority, and philosophers or scientists must respect the opinion on which society rest.” (Strauss 1952)

This is the heart of Strauss’s political philosophy. He believed that the philosophy, invites us to the truth and consequently it invites us to the universality but politics is about self-preservation. Philosophy is neutral to the certain religion, culture, values, and norms; however, these are the main elements for the state obtains its immunity. In other words, he believes that philosophy invites us to only care about good and novel, yet in contrast, politics is about the love of identity and of
ones owns power, it is about ones own tradition and ones own religion. Thus, while philosophy not only cannot lend support to any political regime but also it rationalizes the moral premises, hence it demoralizes the citizens and the state (Strauss 1983). This approach would either suppose that the philosophy must be hidden in order to protect the philosopher from persecution or philosophy, or whether good or bad, because of the principle of liberalism that it promotes, is inevitably doomed to be ignored. However, the assumption that philosophy is annulled from any moral values, which is the vital element for Strauss’ argument, would be not a defendable. It is no wonder that the politics of Strauss gained more attention, to-day, in the regimes that are based on hierarchical power relation rather than the defendable liberal democracies, namely here in the west. However, let us first answer the latter supposition and then move to the first one. At the first glance, we can realize if these two suppositions are all Strauss was saying, then he could not be able to move to the final political argument against philosophy. Indeed, there is a deeper and more important aspect of the Strauss’ approach to the conflict of philosophy and politics and to his argument that philosophy does not only offend the state and political power but also endanger the state sovereignty. The deeper reason is the position exactly against the philosophy. If philosophy is about rationality, in Strauss thought, politics needs ‘unqualified commitment’ to serve the state sovereignty. The commitment which merged with the myth and illusion (Strauss 1959, p.222). Here, we encounter several paradoxical points: first, we see that Strauss introduces philosophy as a demoralized nothingness while he insists that the religion is moralized. However, at least theoretically, the other way around is not impossible since the notion of religion is not restricted to what we would define as religion. Second, he never defines the notion of morality and sovereignty. And finally, regarding the deeper and more important aspect we have to ask whether such ‘unqualified commitment’ which has been forming the notion of state in Strauss’ political thoughts has anything to do with the formative process of the concepts of power? (Haugaard and Ryan 2012). One may ask, here, what is the concept of sovereignty that help us to understand the notion of politics and a power structure? So what are the consequences of such inevitable aspect of social-political life?

Different premises and ideologies on political power, endeavors to reach power, and efforts to develop a high level of authority in a power relation have been caused a general historical-political experience with a unique message: all individuals, groups, nations and institutions, good or bad, legitimate or illegitimate seek to establish an effective political order in which they can centralize
a constituent political power and develop a systematic power relation. ‘Sovereignty’, based on this premise, is an intended force which is in conformity to the legal order, moral values, and political consciousness, which is the intended collective will in a possible authority. In this sense, sovereignty is not equivalent or can be merely reduced to the “the highest power of command,” which Jean Bodin first emphasized in 1576 (Bodin 1992). A view which also propagated by Hobbes, Samuel Pufendorf and later adopted by Jeremy Bentham, John Austin, Max Weber and recently by Lukes. On the contrary to their ideas, the definition of such force has directly related the concept of legitimacy and legality in the theory of power. What Strauss implies as the politics is in total contradiction of the notion of sovereignty in which the notion of philosophy and politics are essentially interrelated.

The notion of state and power is not separable and the theory of political philosophy which Strauss proposed is not an exception. So, the answer is partly depending on his understanding of power. To him, ‘unqualified commitment’ is what make the state what it is, thus power turns out to be an instrument in the hands of politics which, as Strauss argues, is the realm of standing by a particular religion, culture, values, and norms. Therefore, he followed Hobbes and Schmitt to argue that the state’s power is not only ‘the instinct of domination’ (Jouvenel 1945) but also the structural violence of man over man (Clausewitz 1832) in a guise of morality.

In terms of our tradition of political thought, Strauss implicit and paradoxical theory of state’s power, politics and philosophy call for an antidemocratic movement and an imperative concept of law (Arendt 1986). This concept was not invented by the ‘political realists’ but was, rather, the result of a much earlier, almost automatic generalization of God’s ‘Commandment’ according to which ‘the simple relation of command and obedience’ indeed sufficed to identify the essence of law (Arendt 1948, 1955).

**The Interpretive Significance**

Strauss, as we argued, believed that the liberalism lacks the resources to defend itself from extremism and this is the most apparent consequence of the crisis of modernity. Strauss claimed that liberalism, through its boundless tolerance with regard to any set of values and liberal commitments to the state’s neutrality, has been unable to claim superiority of its own values over any alternative set.
This untraditional mode of thinking can be unearthed by digging deep into the origins of modernity in an attempt to recapture the conceptual alternatives it eradicated and in order to retrace the road it has taken from there, Strauss maintained. He believed that studying modes of thinking that differ considerably from our own helps us question our modern presuppositions, and such liberation was sorely needed because of the crisis of modernity.

There would be three interpretations of such approach. First, only if the liberal to grasp the political component, then they would be able to defend the liberal principles against the forces of extremists. Yet, nobody asked if the political component that he implicitly referred to was the projection of his mind. Second, liberalism and in consequence, philosophy would be self-destructive: the moment that liberalism wants to defend itself is the moment of realization of the impossibility of liberalism. Hence, the impossibility of philosophy. Third, philosophy and moral values are essentially contested concepts in a way that they are constantly denying each other. Here, we can see that the concept of philosophy, rationality, and liberalism are against the concepts of politics, morality, and myth. Now, Strauss can argue that the morality of the state is the only morality. A morality that shapes the concept of ‘unqualified commitment’ and paves the way for a demoralized and brutal despotic power who present itself the moral ruler (Strauss 1968).

Now, the question that arises is why is this relevant to his interpretations of philosophical texts? In his interpretations of canonical texts, Strauss weaves together two narratives, one of which is his ideologically informed narrative of modernity’s decay, and the other his account of authors’ actual intentions behind great philosophical texts. In doing so, Strauss conflates philosophers’ significance with their intentions, the result of which is that he attributes to authors intentions they may not have had. But the modernity narrative is not just an unfortunate choice of context against which to read philosophical texts. Rather, it is an ideologically charged contextualization of texts with which Strauss pursued certain political interests. However, we should not uncritically accept Strauss’s own understanding of what he has been up to, which he called the “art of reading ‘between the lines’”, but that it is more appropriate to think of him as professing a ‘politics’ of reading between the lines. That is not to inquiry of what is the true interpretation, but what interpretation can help us to achieve our goals. His ‘politics’ of reading between the lines rests on the Either/Or strategy which he took as the characteristic between the political life and philosophical life. His constant refrain, both explicit and implicit, is that there is no middle ground between the concept of politics and the concept of philosophy. Nevertheless, the
failure of his political philosophy, in general, and his theory of the crisis of modernity is ultimately rooted in its belief that politics and the will can provide its own foundations for justice without reference to the rational principles. In this sense, the crisis of modernity, as he insisted, is the conflict between the politics and philosophy. Yet, he completely ignores the concept of Theopolitical approach to the state and power. Moreover, Strauss work can best be understood as a rhetorical work rather than a pure work in the political theory. Even if we can image is in the realm of political theory, at least by implication, it raises the critiques concerning about the limitations of interpretative political theory and politics.

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دیدگاه اشتراوس درباره حیات ویژگی سیاسی

درباره اشتراوس، من با نمی‌شناسم. او یکی از رهبران غربی از اصلاحات اقتصادی و سیاسی بود که به‌طوری که در کتاب "پادشاهان جدید" می‌نویسد: "اشتراوس می‌گوید نمی‌تواند من نوشته‌ها و تفکرات او را به‌طور کامل درک کنم، زیرا او نمی‌توانست به‌طور کامل به‌دست‌آورده‌ها و تجربیات خود را در پژوهش خود بیان کند. اشتراوس به‌طور کلی یکی از پیشروان‌های اشکال‌گیری ارزش‌ها و عقاید بود و تلاش می‌کرد تا نظریه‌هایی را بتواند به دست آورد که به‌طور کلی به‌طور اجتماعی و سیاسی استفاده شود." 

اشتراوس در این مورد، با استفاده از نظریه‌هایی از جمله اقتصاد، سیاست، تاریخ و فلسفه، تلاش کرده‌است تا با کمک این نظریه‌ها، جامعه و سیاست را به‌صورتی تطبیق کند که از طریق آنها می‌تواند بهتر به‌صورتی تحقق پیدا کند که از طریق آنها می‌تواند بهتر به‌صورتی تحقق پیدا کند. اشتراوس در این مورد، با استفاده از نظریه‌هایی از جمله اقتصاد، سیاست، تاریخ و فلسفه، تلاش کرده‌است تا با کمک این نظریه‌ها، جامعه و سیاست را به‌صورتی تطبیق کند که از طریق آنها می‌تواند بهتر به‌صورتی تحقق پیدا کند. اشتراوس در این مورد، با استفاده از نظریه‌هایی از جمله اقتصاد، سیاست، تاریخ و فلسفه، تلاش کرده‌است تا با کمک این نظریه‌ها، جامعه و سیاست را به‌صورتی تطبیق کند که از طریق آنها می‌تواند بهتر به‌صورتی تحقیق و مشاهده کند.
Strauss’ Political Nothingness

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On Liebessuss

"The concept of Liebessuss is an aspect of the category of the political in both its positive and negative senses. It is a category that is not reducible to any other category, but rather exists on its own as a unique entity.

The concept of Liebessuss was first introduced by the Polish philosopher Aleksander Krauze in his book "The Politics of Nothingness" (1993). Krauze argued that Liebessuss is a fundamental category of political thought, and that it is the basis for all political action and thought.

In the context of the current political landscape, Liebessuss is often used as a term to describe a loss of meaning and purpose in political discourse. It is a term that is often used to describe the state of political paralysis that has characterized many political systems around the world in recent years.

The concept of Liebessuss is a complex one, and it is not easy to define in a way that is universally accepted. However, it is clear that it is a category that is of great importance in understanding the political world we live in today.