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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Reflections on Scientific Inquiry, Academic Freedom, and Enlightenment

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Abstract This paper explores the connections between scientific inquiry, scholarly reflexivity, and enlightenment. I argue that the free intellectual inquiry essential to the practice of science is a fundamental constituent and enactment of human dignity, freedom, and democracy. The expansion and diffusion of these values are both unavoidable in the modern age and immensely valuable, even if there are of course many obstacles to their expansion and no guarantees of their ultimate realization. This process of scientific inquiry also contains the seeds of a discourse ethic with broader ramifications for public enlightenment and perhaps even democratization. I develop these themes through a dialogue with some of the writings of Professor Yu Keping on the topics of Chinese political science and "incremental democracy."

Keywords Academic Freedom · Chinese Political Science · Democracy · Enlightenment · Political Science

In this essay I will offer some reflections on the connections between scientific inquiry, scholarly reflexivity, and enlightenment. I must observe at the outset that I regard this special issue of *Journal of Chinese Political Science*—and the collaborative planning and global communication that made it possible—as a perfect venue for the discussion of these themes, but also as a wonderful enactment of the kind of link between inquiry and an ethic of intellectual freedom about which I will comment.

I have chosen to focus on the topic of scientific inquiry and its intellectual conditions because this is a theme of great importance for the future of political science in general, and Chinese political science in particular. There is also a more

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personal reason for my focus: I have long been inspired by Hannah Arendt's notion that political theory at its best seeks to "think what we are doing," and what I currently spend most of my time doing is editing a social scientific journal—*Perspectives on Politics*, one of the flagship journals of the American Political Science Association. I regard my editorial work as an enormous responsibility and a wonderful opportunity to enhance the quality of scholarly and intellectual discourse within the US discipline of political science and, by doing so, to bring this discourse into better and more mutually beneficial relationships with other scholarly discourses in the US and in the world at large, thus indirectly contributing to even broader processes of public enlightenment.

These are the themes of my essay, which thus constitutes a deeply personal set of reflections. This essay originated as a prepared talk for a meeting on "human dignity" held at the China Center for Comparative Politics and Economics. It is at once an effort to speak meaningfully about the specific situation confronting my Chinese political science colleagues and an attempt to reflect on a broad theme of universal importance. At the same time, its primary intended audience is the community of Chinese political scientists. If I had to sum up my "argument" in a single claim, it would be this: *the free intellectual inquiry essential to the practice of science is a fundamental constituent and enactment of human dignity, and its expansion and diffusion are both unavoidable in the modern age and immensely valuable, even if there are of course many obstacles to its expansion and no guarantees of its ultimate realization*. This process of inquiry is the *essential constituent* of science. It also contains the seeds of a discourse ethic with broader ramifications for public enlightenment. These will be my themes.

I am a political theorist and also something of a "public intellectual," and this thesis has broad political implications regarding such "touchy" topics as human rights and democracy. Indeed, I am struck by the points of convergence between aspects of my argument and Professor Yu Keping's well-known arguments on behalf of "incremental democracy."[1] Professor Keping is an important commentator on these themes, by virtue of his role as Director of the China Center for Comparative Politics and Economics (CCCPE) and Deputy Director of the Compilation and Translation Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. And so in Part 2, I will turn directly to his writings, and in particular his article "The Study of Political Science and Public Administration in China," in which he traces the evolution of Chinese political science as a discipline, a profession, and a "cause" (*vocation* in Weber's sense).

In what follows I will begin by describing, briefly, what I do, and consider some of the challenges associated with trying to broaden the intellectual horizons of an academic discipline. I will then elaborate on some of the broader intellectual/ethical dimensions of this work. In Part 2, "Science and Human Values," I develop a broadly Weberian interpretation of the autonomy of science and the value of intellectual critique, drawing parallels with Professor Yu Keping's description of Chinese political science. My basic point is that the social sciences, and the scholarly

exchange. In Part 3, "What is Enlightenment?" I turn to the question of the broader public relevance of the scientific/scholarly republic of letters. Here I discuss Immanuel Kant's classic "What is Enlightenment," focusing on its account of the relationship between self-limiting enlightenment and Enlightened Monarchy. While I will touch on the relevance of Kant's account to current thinking about democratization, my primary concern is with his idea that scholarly publicity has an inherently broadening and beneficial character even in undemocratic settings. These reflections will bring me full circle, back to some concluding remarks on the importance of free scientific inquiry.

Editing Perspectives on Politics

The journal I edit, *Perspectives on Politics*, is entering only its tenth year of operation. It was established by the American Political Science Association as a complement to the association's long-standing official scholarly journal, the *American Political Science Review*, which has been in existence since 1903. *Perspectives on Politics* was created as a response on the part of the association's leadership to a growing dissatisfaction among many US political scientists with the *APSR* and with the discipline more generally. This dissenting movement, which came to be called the "Perestroika" movement, maintained that as the US political science discipline had expanded, modernized, and professionalized, it had also become hyper-specialized and indeed trivialized by the premium placed on advanced statistical methods and esoteric formal mathematical models.[2] US political scientists, it was claimed, were increasingly addressing narrower and less consequential problems, and were talking to increasingly smaller and more insulated groups of scholars. Another way of saying this is to say that political scientists had less and less to say about things that really matter, and were less and less able to talk broadly with each other much less with others. Political scientists had become, in the words of Perestroika's fraternal critics in the Economics profession, *autistic*.

The journal I edit was designed to counter these tendencies and the discomfort they engendered by providing a space for broader kinds of research and writing and the sharing of broad perspectives about politics and about the scientific study of politics. Thus its name—*Perspectives on Politics*—which I regard as an implied contrast with its sister publication, the *APSR*, which for many of its critics could just as well have been called *Specialized Articles on Increasingly Obscure Questions of Political Science That are Barely Related to Actual Politics.* When I assumed editorship of the journal, I decided to incorporate a subtitle in order to help underscore the journal's distinctive purposes—"A Political Science Public Sphere."

My editorial work is geared towards the editing and publication of interesting, important, and relevant scholarly research about politics. While it is intended to promote more integrative and mutually intelligible communication among scholars, and thus indirectly to enhance the broader public relevance of scholarship, the

While we promote research that is intelligible to a broad (and hopefully expanding) range of scholars in political science and adjunct disciplines, the articles that we publish are peer reviewed and judged according to "*scientific*" standards of evidence, argumentation, and *theoretical* relevance. While we hope to be read by many scholars and educated readers beyond the academy, our primary audience consists of academics, professional political science scholars who are conversant with up-to-date theoretical literatures and whose work seeks to enhance the knowledge contained in those literatures. While we promote work that is relevant, and while we do not adhere to a positivistic notion of "scientific objectivity" or "value freedom," we publish scholarship and not polemics or opinion pieces or mere partisan or movement advocacy. And indeed, while we have a broad "public" orientation, we are an academic publication and not a public intellectual journal. While these other genres are important parts of a broader public sphere, and while individual political science scholars also function as participants in this broader public sphere, our work centers on the distinctive interests of scholarly inquiry in the US political science discipline, and seeks to broaden these interests by working from the "inside out." These boundaries are difficult to rigorously define and justify much less strictly to regulate. But they are essential to the status, prestige, funding, support, and intellectual legitimacy that we possess as a scholarly journal that is an official publication of the American Political Science Association. At the same time, by promoting a broader conception of research, by keeping alive a healthy skepticism towards any claims to intellectual authority or prestige—i.e., by placing a premium on scientific and intellectual *reflexivity*—we do intersect with and contribute to broader public spheres, linking with broader circuits of communication, and thus often having broader impacts beyond our control. For ideas once publicized have a life of their own, within scholarly communities, between scholarly communities, and indeed in the broader world at large.

Science and Human Values

My understanding of this kind of scholarly inquiry is indebted to a certain reading of Max Weber, the great German sociologist whose writing and public speaking at the turn of the 20th century—in "Science as a Vocation" and *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*—was preoccupied with the autonomy of scientific inquiry and the distinctiveness of *scientific values*, and with clarifying the distinction between science and polemics, pamphleteering, propaganda, and prophecy.[3] Weber, it is worth underscoring, wrote at a time when the modern research university was still in its infancy, and when the autonomy of scientific standards of judgment was very much endangered by the politicization of the academy, and especially by the effort of nationalists to limit the flow of critical and "cosmopolitan" ideas. Weber was himself a nationalist. But as a social *scientist*, he insisted that social scientific inquiry must be governed by its own epistemic values, and not subordinated to any political

in terms of their origins [i.e., *causes, JI*]. But they give us no answer to the question, whether the existence of these cultural phenomena have been and are worthwhile. . . To take a political stand is one thing, and to analyze political structures and party positions is another [5]." And again: "The professor should not demand the right as a professor to carry the marshal's baton of the statesman or the reformer in his knapsack. This is just what he does when he uses the unassailability of the academic chair for the expression of political . . . evaluations. In the press, in public meetings, in associations, in essays, in every avenue which is open to every other citizen, he can and should do what his God or daemon demands. . . . [But] every professional task has its own 'inherent norms' and should be fulfilled accordingly. In the execution of his professional responsibility, a man should confine himself to it alone and should exclude whatever is not strictly proper to it—particularly his loves and his hates [6]."

These formulations of Weber's are not without problems, and these problems have been grist for the mill of philosophers of science. But they make clear, at the very least, that the cognitive interest of the scientist in understanding and *explanation broadly construed* centers on the dialogue with scholarly colleagues and the accumulated body of scientific knowledge, and does not translate *immediately* into practice in the broader world. Weber does not deny that social scientists take their bearings from the felt problems of the broader world, nor does he deny that the work of the social scientist might, often does, and perhaps even *should* have important *consequences* for the broader world. But he insists that scientific inquiry has its own "inherent norms" and scholarly-professional responsibilities. In this regard, Weber's position is close to that of two other important 20th century philosophers of these questions, John Dewey and Karl Popper, both of whom maintained that science is above all a distinctive mode of inquiry linking higher education, accumulated bodies of knowledge, and fallibilistic methods of conjecture and refutation. For all three of these thinkers science and especially social science is thoroughly part of the world, and indeed contributes greatly to the world, through its production of knowledge but more through the fostering of critical intellectual values. But this worldly value of science is inextricably linked to the fact that it occupies a unique place and vantage point in the world. When science loses this distinctive sense and location—its distinctive *vocation*—it loses its value, and its practitioners become *dilettantes* or worse.

Such a science is, moreover, the product of a truly global historical evolution often summed up in the concept of *modernization*. The bodies of knowledge, particular methods of inquiry, and professional and disciplinary forms of education and association that constitute modern science, are closely linked to the evolution of the modern economy, the modern state, and the modern university. To this extent, modern science—natural science *and* social science—is a constitutive feature of modernity, with its expansion of wealth, its technical mastery of nature, and its general rationalization.

Social scientists, then, play a crucial role—in advancing knowledge, in educating future generations of scholars, and in contributing to the higher education and

cosmopolitan *republic of letters*.[4] Of course within this "*republic*" there are many differences, national and otherwise, and they enormously complicate things, and are also the source of many of the challenges that animate us and the richness of our efforts—as this most interesting conference makes clear. At the same time, the scholarly *republic of letters* transcends these differences. This is partly for ontological reasons, related to the fact that we share a world that has real existence in both inter-subjective and objective terms. For, as Karl Marx asked in his early (1842) "The Leading Article in No. 179 of the *Kolnische Zeitung,*" challenging the partisans of a distinctively "German" philosophy:

> If from the outset everything that contradicts your faith is error, and has to be treated as error, what distinguishes your claims from those of the Mohammedan or of any other religion? Should philosophy, in order not to contradict the basic tenets of dogma, adopt different principles in each country, in accordance with the saying "every country has its own customs"? Should it believe in one country that $3 \times 1 = 1$, in another that women have no souls, and in a third that beer is drunk in heaven? Is there no universal human nature, as there is a universal nature of plants and stars? Philosophy asks what is true, not what is held to be true. It asks what is true for all mankind, not what is true for some people. Its metaphysical truths do not recognise the boundaries of political geography; its political truths know too well where the "bounds" begin for it to confuse the illusory horizon of a particular world or national outlook with the true horizon of the human mind [7].

Marx thus insists that as inquirers we share both a common world and a common humanity. This human condition is the ground of our inquiries, which have a kind of epistemological universality linked to "the true horizon of the human mind." But the universality of our "republic of letters" is just as profoundly cultural and *historical*—for the cultural resources on which we draw are the product of centuries of cross-cultural diffusion and hybridization, and our ongoing inquiries require the free movement of knowledge and inquiry, and of inquirers, of the sort that make forms of communication such as this journal necessary, possible, and valuable. Indeed*, enlightening*.

In short, while this cosmopolitan republic of letters is obviously composed of numerous disciplines, each with a wide range of sub-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary, national and international institutions and associations, journals and conferences, at the same time in at least an ideal typical sense such a republic of letters, regulated by a fallibilistic consciousness and "the force of the better argument," knows no geographical or doctrinal bounds. I've read with great interest Professor Yu Keping's article "The Study of Political Science and Public Administration in China," and I'm struck by the overlap between the perspective he offers and the one I am delineating here.[5]

[4] The term "republic of letters" is usually associated with the cosmopolitan literary culture of the 18th century European Enlightenment. Jurgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*

In this fascinating piece Professor Yu Keping traces the evolution of Chinese political science as a discipline, a profession, and a "cause" (*vocation* in Weber's sense). While discussing the origins of modern Chinese political science in the period 1901–1904 (interestingly, the first designated course in Chinese political science was offered in 1903—the same year in which the American Political Science Association was founded), he traces the contemporary revitalization of the discipline to "the reform and opening to the outside world in late 1978." Professor Yu makes clear that in the past three decades Chinese political science has come into its own, in large part due to the end of the Cultural Revolution and its hyper-politicization of intellectual life, and also in large part due to its incorporation within a broader international discourse of political science in which "Western" and especially US methodological debates and theories figure heavily. "It was only in the late 1990's," he observes, "that political science truly became a science with comparatively independent academic standing in China, as it was at this point that a generally accepted series of theories, concepts, paradigms, methods, and research questions came to prevail among Chinese political scientists."[6] Professor Yu offers a quite nuanced discussion of "the question of universality and particularity," i.e., the extent to which Chinese political science—like all nationally-based forms of political science, including US political science—bears the imprint of China's unique history, culture, and political situation, and the extent to which it is universal in terms of the scope of its inquiries and the addressees of its scientific contributions. Professor Yu's account is deeply pragmatist, and he thus recognizes the *situatedness* of Chinese inquiry in China, with all that this entails. At the same time, this pragmatism leads him to insist that the universal features of Chinese political science are precisely what qualifies this enterprise *as* science. As he writes: "any science must be somewhat universal in order to claim status as a 'science'—without universality, science as such does not really exist. From this perspective, if political science is accepted as a discipline in China, then it must be admitted that it has a set of common concepts, methods, and axioms that are shared with political scientists in other countries." The examples he furnishes—"power must be balanced, democracy has certain common elements and forms, and so on"—are interesting because their normative dimensions are clear. As he proceeds: "everyone might agree that power must be balanced and politics should be democratic, but the way for balancing power and realizing democracy is nonetheless still going to be different in different countries."[7]

As I read these comments, I take them to mean two things, together. The first is that while political scientists share common methods of inquiry and broad theoretical concerns and questions, precisely how these methods, concerns and questions are put to work will vary depending on the context, and in particular on the national context, which will at least in part determine what is regarded as a pressing problem worthy of study (though "nation" is one of many identities of relevance). The second is that while the world of politics that political scientists study is a world of cultural, national, regional, and historical differences and particularities, this world also has

structurations of civil society—that are of broad interest to all political scientists, who are engaged in an inherently *comparative* enterprise.[8]

Professor Yu's commentary on Chinese political science clearly reflects the distinctive historical experiences of China. It also clearly reflects a serious engagement with so-called "Western" political science, and especially with the range of significant *arguments*—differences of scholarly *opinion*—that characterize this political science. Professor Yu derives two basic implications from this discussion of Chinese political science. The first is that an essential part of the maturation of Chinese political science has been its professionalization as a distinctive mode of scientific inquiry, located in universities and research centers and characterized by distinctive professional ethical commitments. Professor Yu is worth quoting at length here:

> Political science is an academic profession, and its practitioners should take seriously issues of academic integrity and academic ethics; they should comply with academic norms and should have the courage to investigate affairs that may touch on powerful political and economic interests. Political scientists should be encouraged to think independently and seek the truth, since they belong to the group of intellectuals, and should have academic consciousness as well as social and professional obligations to the public.[9]

This is a demanding and admirable sense of professional duty. As I choose to read this passage, it indicates that unlike other professionals—say accountants, engineers, doctors or even lawyers—political scientists are inherently *intellectuals*, and as such their integrity is linked to the independent and courageous exercise of their critical intellectual faculties. To be sure, in the quoted paragraph, Professor Yu goes on to say that as intellectuals, political scientists also "should have a strong sense of political responsibility and the spirit to serve the public interest." This might be taken as a qualification of the above-mentioned independence, but it might also be read differently, a point to which I shall return below.

Professor Yu's second point is that political science is not simply a profession but a "cause" with broad public relevance and particular promise for society as a whole. Here too, it is worth quoting Professor Yu at length:

> Political science can provide ideal institutional choices for political development in human society. Political science can also be used to breed in citizens a spirit of democracy and the rule of law, cultivate the political rights and responsibilities of citizens, strengthen officials' sense of political responsibility and ethics, and motivate the public's participation in politics and political entrepreneurship. As a cause, political science has already transcended the boundaries of disciplines; it has become an essential factor for pushing forward human civilization and human progress."[10]

This is an even more demanding sense of the "vocation" of political science in China. For it seems explicitly to link the practice of political science—along with the

other social sciences of course—to broad and beneficial changes taking place in Chinese society associated with modernization, democratization, and Enlightenment.

What is Enlightenment?

The question of "Enlightenment" has a long and troubled history, and has preoccupied virtually every important contemporary social theorist. I am aware of some of the ways that this question was posed and argued during China's so-called May Fourth Movement of 1919, and thanks to Professor Yu's essay "Culture and Modernity in Chinese Intellectual Discourse: A Historical Perspective," I am mindful of the continuing valence of these discussions and arguments.[11] Indeed, I am struck by the Kantian resonance of Professor Yu's own vision of a "maturing" Chinese political science and its role in the process of "incremental democratization."

I am not a Kant scholar. But Kant's essay "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" is a classic modern text with arguably and apparently universal significance. And so I want briefly to discuss it, drawing heavily on a particularly interesting article by Robert S. Taylor entitled "Democratic Transitions and the Progress of Absolutism in Kant's Political Thought [12]." Kant's essay is a powerful and passionate call for intellectual freedom. It begins by describing Enlightenment as "man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another." Kant proceeds to explain such immaturity in terms of cowardice, laziness, and fear. The ethical message of the piece is entirely summed up in its first paragraph's concluding words:" '*Sapere Aude*!' [dare to know] 'Have courage to use your own understanding!'—that is the motto of enlightenment."

But the most interesting aspect of Kant's essay is the way that he expands on the theme of Enlightenment. His political point is indeed paradoxical: while many, proponents and critics alike, contend that Enlightenment, viz. the unhindered use of reason—threatens all order and authority, Kant maintains, to the contrary, that enlightenment is a counterweight to revolutionary tendencies; that "a public can only undertake enlightenment slowly"; and that in fact the best political vehicle of enlightenment is an Enlightened Monarch. For an *Enlightened* monarch appreciates that the prosperity and power of his regime can be enhanced through intellectual progress, and that a people free to use their own reason will lawfully respect whatever authority secures this freedom and the prosperity and power to which it is linked.

This political argument is underwritten by a conventional liberal distinction, between public and private, reconfigured by Kant in an unconventional way. Kant, in short, distinguishes between the "public" and the "private" use of one's reason, and maintains that enlightenment, and intellectual freedom, is germane only to the former and not the latter. Kant is worth quoting at length:

> often be very narrowly restricted, without otherwise hindering the progress of enlightenment. By the public use of one's own reason I understand the use that anyone as a scholar makes of reason before the entire literate world. I call the private use of reason that which a person may make in a civic post or office that has been entrusted to him. Now in many affairs conducted in the interests of a community, a certain mechanism is required by means of which some of its members must conduct themselves in an entirely passive manner so that through an artificial unanimity the government may guide them toward public ends, or at least prevent them from destroying such ends. Here one certainly must not argue, instead one must obey. However, insofar as this part of the machine also regards himself as a member of the community as a whole, or even of the world community, and as a consequence addresses the public in the role of a scholar, in the proper sense of that term, he can most certainly argue, without thereby harming the affairs for which as a passive member he is partly responsible. Thus it would be disastrous if an officer on duty who was given a command by his superior were to question the appropriateness or utility of the order. He must obey. But as a scholar he cannot be justly constrained from making comments about errors in military service, or from placing them before the public for its judgment. The citizen cannot refuse to pay the taxes imposed on him; indeed, impertinent criticism of such levies, when they should be paid by him, can be punished as a scandal (since it can lead to widespread insubordination). But the same person does not act contrary to civic duty when, as a scholar, he publicly expresses his thoughts regarding the impropriety or even injustice of such taxes.

This is a rich and complicated text. And Kant is surely not addressing the issues addressed a century and a half later by the neo-Kantian Max Weber in his "Science as a Vocation." Kant's "scholar" is not Weber's "scientist," though both do share in common a certain passion for the truth. But the way Kant draws this distinction between "public" and "private" is most interesting, particularly insofar as he associates the "public use of reason" with the activity of the scholar addressing "the entire literate world." Kant can be read as saying something like this: the scholar must participate in a republic of letters than knows no geographical, doctrinal, or civil bounds, and the freedom of the scholar to participate in such a "republic" *in his scholarly capacity* is consistent with, and indeed perhaps relies upon, his submission, as an individual, with all other individuals, to properly constituted authorities of the clergy and especially of the state, not simply the military officer but the tax collector and the police officer.

This peculiar combination of intellectual freedom and political subordination seems to be inherently contradictory and fragile. Kant's concluding paragraph indicates as much:

> considered in broad perspective, a strange, unexpected pattern in human affairs reveals itself, one in which almost everything is paradoxical. A greater degree of civil freedom seems advantageous to a people's spiritual freedom; yet the former established impassable boundaries for the latter; conversely, a lesser degree of civil freedom provides enough room for all fully to expand their abilities. Thus, once nature has removed the hard shell from this kernel for which she has most fondly cared, namely, the inclination to and vocation for free thinking, the kernel gradually reacts on a people's mentality (whereby they become increasingly able to act freely), and it finally even influences the principles of government, which finds that it can profit by treating men, who are now more than machines, in accord with their dignity.

An Enlightened monarch, then, will offer intellectual freedom-and civil freedom more broadly—in "exchange" for political obedience. This will benefit the ruler and his subjects. And at the same time, over time, the spheres of freedom carved out by this peculiar bargain will gradually expand, individuals will become less like cogs in a wheel and cease to regard their state as a machine (and themselves as the machine's cogs!), and the principles of government themselves undergo change. Men start thinking of themselves as *citizens*, and such dignified treatment becomes increasingly unavoidable. As Robert S. Taylor argues, Kant here was articulating a primitive theory of democratic transition with striking affinities with contemporary transitologists interested in the complex relationships between liberalization and democratization. According to this "theory," the freedom of scholarly exchange, and the intellectual, technical, and economic progress thus engendered, over time produce powerful secular tendencies towards greater openness, freedom, and democratization of society.

This "theory" of democratic transition has striking parallels with the theory of "*incremental democracy*" put forward by Professor Yu, in his much-discussed short essay "Democracy is a Good Thing," in the book of essays under that title put out recently by Brookings, and no doubt in his work more generally. Yet as I stated at the outset, my topic here is *not* democracy or democratization but social science and enlightenment. And so to me the most interesting point that Kant makes is that scholarly freedom requires intellectual freedom, and such freedom can be beneficial over time, in a complex way, not only to the scholars who exercise and enjoy it, but to the rulers who benefit from the scientific, technological, and intellectual progress it engenders, and ultimately to the citizens, broadly understood, who through formal and practical education can arrive at a place of "maturity" to make real the dignity of enlightenment *for themselves*.

So What?

To practice the modern science of politics is to develop, share and evaluate *ideas*,

religious, or ideological identities, our common scientific discourse on politics draws upon and helps to further a scholarly republic of letters that knows no doctrinal or geographic bounds. This republic is, quite obviously, in many ways an ideal or aspiration more than a reality. But it is rooted in very real exchanges of ideas, and of students and faculty, of the kind that the *Journal of Chinese Political Science* would seem to epitomize.

Kant may well furnish an interesting theory of "democratization" relevant to societies that might be considered "transitional." At the same time, we surely live in a post-Kantian age. No philosophy of history can sustain a faith in the ineluctable force of modernization. Perhaps even more relevant for my purposes, Kant's vision of the "scholar"—a blend of scientist, philosopher, and public intellectual—hardly corresponds to the average social scientist in the US, China, or anywhere. And the freeing of scholarship from ecclesiastical and state constraint in those places—not everywhere—where scholarship has been so freed, has produced, in most cases, neither a Kantian nor a Weberian scholar but rather new forms of *scholasticism*. All too often we go about our "business," do our work—what we are "trained" to do—with little consideration of its broader implications. We develop private languages and refine esoteric methods that often rest on the confusion of sophistication with *sophistry*. And we enjoy a rare and precious freedom of movement, and of inquiry, without considering their historical conditions of possibility, or worrying about those colleagues who live in places lacking those conditions, or reflecting on the fragility of these freedoms.

My main purpose in this paper has been to underscore the intellectual freedom essential to science, and to draw a link between such scholarly inquiry and Enlightenment more broadly. Yet this link is guaranteed by no logic of history. Indeed, it is guaranteed by *nothing at all*. Its very existence is precarious. But it can perhaps be established, and sustained, by the conscientious effort of scholars—working within and between their disciplines, and as part of a broader, global republic of letters—who take seriously not simply the importance of their own research projects and grants, but the values that ground the very practice of scholarship. The *autonomy of scholarly institutions*—disciplines and institutions and universities—arguably requires a delicate balance of public support and laissez faire that is jeopardized both by the hegemony of markets and the overweening arrogance of states obsessed with "national security" and "public order." The *credibility of scholarly publication* requires a vigorous scholarly public sphere that is increasingly jeopardized by the economics of publishing but also by the small-mindedness of scholars increasingly satisfied tending to their own ever-narrower intellectual gardens, and by the disciplinary structures that reproduce such narrowness. And most importantly, the *freedom of inquiry itself* requires academic freedom and a broader freedom of expression that is threatened whenever self-appointed elites accord religious doctrine or national creed or simple "order" more importance than the free flow of ideas.

I would like to conclude by referencing the previously-quoted "The Leading

and indeed he quotes one such partisan, who claims that "In our day, *scientific research* is rightly allowed the widest, most unrestricted scope." But this self-same writer, Marx notes, insists that "a sharp distinction must he drawn between the requirements of freedom of scientific research, through which Christianity can only gain, and what lies outside the limits of scientific research." Marx's reply centers on this very distinction between what is within and what is beyond the limits of science:

> Who is to decide on the limits of scientific research if not scientific research itself? According to the leading article, limits should be prescribed to science. The leading article, therefore, knows of an "*official* reason" which does not learn from scientific research, but teaches it, which is a learned providence that establishes the length every hair should have to convert a scientist's beard into a beard of world importance. The leading article believes in the scientific inspiration of the censorship.

Marx's point, of course, is that censorship *has* no scientific inspiration, and is inspired by other considerations. His here point is indeed a Kantian one: not that censorship ought to be denounced in general political terms—though politically denounce it he did, on many other occasions—but that, whatever else one might say about it, the state is not in the business of scholarship, and thus has no scientific business claiming to prescribe the limits of scientific research, whose limits can be determined only scientists exercising the freedom of scientific inquiry itself.

But of course Marx is making an even broader point here. For he is not merely questioning whether the censor has epistemic authority or scientific credibility. He is questioning whether the interests of science are consistent with any politically enforced limits on freedom of inquiry and expression. And he is insisting that they are not. To the extent that this is true, then science is an intrinsically liberalizing force in any society, for as a practice of vigorous conjecture and refutation it continually pushes up against the boundaries of nature and society, opening up everything to potential questions about what it is and how it came to be and what are its consequences for human thriving and what this all *means*. What Professor Yu observes in his account of Chinese political science is thus true of the social sciences and indeed of modern science more generally: "As an independent discipline, political science is a product of modern times; it developed nearly simultaneously with modern democracy. The development of political science requires a democratic and liberal academic environment [13]." What this "requirement" means programmatically no doubt will vary depending on circumstances of time, place, and situation. Likewise, whether it is plausible to envision a democratic and liberal *academic* environment in a *society* that is less than fully democratic or liberal is an open question. And it is a *universal* question, of interest to all scholars, as inhabitants of a world of states and societies that are less than fully democratic. Another way of saying this is to say that the world is not simply a source of our

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