

## NOTES AND DISCUSSION

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### THE ACTUALITY OF CLASSICAL STUDIES: ARISTOTLE'S *TOPICS* AND THE RESEARCH OF K. LORENZ

The position of classical studies in our time is paradoxical in several respects. When at the end of the so-called Middle Ages a great new interest in ancient Greek literature was aroused by Greek fugitives from the East, spreading from Italy to other countries of Western Europe, the study of the great Greek authors was beset with considerable difficulties. All the manuscripts which the Greek fugitives brought with them or which had been transferred to the West at an earlier time and were now rediscovered, were to some extent corrupted by copyists' mistakes and/or mechanical corruptions, and even where they were not corrupted their content was in many places not easy to understand because the historical background for the understanding was lacking. In some cases doubts arose concerning the authenticity of works attributed to certain authors. To meet these needs, the methods of textual criticism were developed by the humanists of the Renaissance and later perfected and supplemented by various kinds of historical criticism after a second revival of interest in classical antiquity,

which was promoted by Winckelmann in the 18th century.

The first paradox of the situation is that in the same measure as ever better editions of the ancient texts were made, many problems of authenticity were solved, and as ever better commentaries on the major ancient works were published, the general interest both in classical scholarship and in the works themselves decreased, until now we have reached a stage in which the teaching of the ancient languages, both Greek and Latin, is rapidly disappearing from the higher schools in nearly all Western European countries as well as the U.S.A., and the very existence of classical studies is threatened even in many universities.

What is the cause of this paradoxical situation? It seems to me that one has to distinguish two things. As far as classical scholarship in the narrower sense is concerned it might perhaps be said, and in fact has occasionally been said, that just because it has been pursued so intensively throughout a number of centuries it has solved most of its tasks as far as this is possible, so that not very much is left for it to do. In regard to the interest in the works of the classical authors themselves, on the other hand, one might contend that what could be learned from them has become so much a part and parcel of our own thinking that there is no need for us to return to them again and again in order to renew our understanding.

If this were true we should, it seems to me, have to resign ourselves to the prospect that at least in the immediate future classical studies in the narrower sense can play only a very minor role, secondary perhaps even to Egyptology and Assyriology, just because the latter are in a much less developed stage and therefore much more that is new can be discovered and elaborated in these fields than in the field of the Classics. And in fact: There are not a few indications that a good many classical scholars—in spite of the official appeals to the general public and to learned academies for the preservation of classical studies—have, though to a large extent unconsciously, understood their own situation in this way. The first conscious reference to this unconscious appreciation of the situation was made just a century ago by Friedrich Nietzsche in his “Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung” with the title “Wir Philologen,” where he says that a great many classical philologists are not much interested in

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the works of the classical authors as such: they regard them rather as a means of developing a productivity of their own: making conjectures concerning the texts, inventing all sorts of theories concerning the way in which they were written, or finding new and original interpretations. That in fact a tendency of this kind had developed quite some time before Nietzsche reveals itself in many ways. It reveals itself in the fact that within the last 150 years more than a score of different theories concerning, for instance, the composition of Xenophon's *Hellenika* have been published, all of which contradict one another and the latest of which is no more but, if anything, less well founded than the oldest. In the evaluation of such products of classical scholarship the tendency reveals itself in the overestimation of originality, so that if one points out that a certain thesis is demonstrably false one may receive the answer: "But don't you see, it's so original! It's the most original thing that has been written about the author concerned in decades." Still another indication of the same tendency is the enthusiasm with which, when an hitherto unknown work of an ancient author is discovered, a great many philologists turn to it at once, with the consequence that within a decade more editions of the newly discovered work are published than had been published of a good many no less important ancient works during the whole period from the Renaissance down to the present.

It is, however, only in very recent times that what until then had been with rare exceptions an unconscious tendency and appreciation of the position of classical studies in modern times has been professed quite openly and definitely. Thus a young professor of Classics from the University of Konstanz declared at a meeting of the Mommsengesellschaft that since nothing new can be said any more about the first-class authors of antiquity, classicists must now turn to the second- and third-class authors and, in addition, extend their field of study to the Greek and Latin authors of the Middle Ages and even to modern Greek language and literature and the modernized Latin of the Vatican. For, in contrast to the field of the classical languages and literature, he said, these are fields in which there is still much to be done. Well: it appears evident to me that if this solution together with its premises is accepted, classical studies and classical philology cease to be classical and at the same time completely lose the claim,

which they have made ever since the Renaissance, of being more important than any other studies in language and literature.

But is this estimate of the importance of the Classics in our time justified? At the beginning of my discussion I mentioned two different reasons for the apparent decline of classical studies in our time. The first one was that the greatest part of the tasks which first the humanists and then the classical philologists had set out to solve were by now completed, so that not very much remained to be done. This is, of course, to some extent true. Though no task is ever absolutely completed, there are natural limits to the restoration of ancient texts, and though a certain progress is still continually made in isolated places, the real improvements in the texts of the great ancient authors in recent years are very small in comparison to what could be done in this respect in the time of the Renaissance or still in the 19th century and what can now be done when a completely new text is discovered on papyrus. It is not surprising that the specialists in textual criticism wax enthusiastic over such an opportunity. Questions of authenticity have to a large extent been definitely solved, though some attempted solutions are still violently contested. Very detailed commentaries on the majority of the important works of ancient literature have been elaborated and published or are still in the process of elaboration. Yet in contrast to the field of textual criticism this field is anything but exhausted. A great deal of work is still to be done in the various sections of ancient history, not only and perhaps not mainly in the field of political history, but in economic history, the history of religion, the history of science, of art, the history of institutions; and the result of the historical studies can again be used to write better commentaries.

Much more important than the question of the remaining tasks in the field of traditional classical scholarship is the question whether what can be learned from the great works of classical antiquity has become so much part and parcel of our own thinking that there is no need for us to return to them for a renewed understanding; and here the answer can be an unqualified no: the very opposite is the case. No period of time since the late Middle Ages has been more in need of the wisdom of classical antiquity as a counterweight to its own errors and aberrations than ours.

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There are many visible indications that this is so and that, what is more, it is beginning to be realised by a good many of the most outstanding men of our times in the most various fields. Many men, it is true, who consider themselves especially progressive, declare that the study of antiquity is a kind of escapism from the realities of our time. A professor of physics at the University of Munich recently expressed the opinion that the very success of the natural sciences and their practical application in industry proves that God wants us to concentrate all efforts in this field, so that it is actually impious to waste one's time on purely historical studies. But Werner Heisenberg in the last chapter of his book *Physik und Philosophie* observes that the most modern physical theories are returning to very old ways of thinking, and in this and in the preceding chapter of his book he deals with problems of the formation of scientific concepts, to the understanding of which the history of ancient Greek thought has a great deal to contribute. In the Munich Academy of Fine Arts he recently gave a lecture on the role of the Beautiful in the natural sciences. In this lecture he showed the lasting importance in science of a principle that had an enormous influence on the development of ancient science, especially in astronomy, where it led to the discovery of the heliocentric system at an amazingly early time, but later, through too narrow application, became a hindrance to further progress, which is the reason why it was later rejected as "trivial" and ridiculed by modern scientific positivism. This shows only that Heraclitus was right when he observed that hidden beauty and harmony are more powerful than the too obvious ones. D.F. von Weizsacker in his book *Die Tragweite der Wissenschaft* has pointed out the dangers resulting from what he called "das säkularisierte Christentum": the secularisation of Jewish-Christian principles and the ensuing neglect of ancient Greek insights.

Similar observations can be made in the field of the social and political sciences. Less than two decades ago Theodor Viehweg, in a rather small book which however at once aroused the attention of political scientists, sociologists, jurists, and philosophers alike, tried to show that the development of all these various fields of knowledge had greatly suffered in recent times through the fact that the dialectical methods analysed and discussed in Aristotle's *Topics*, which had played a great role until the second

half of the 18th century, have been almost completely neglected since the 19th century. Since then numerous books and articles by a great variety of authors in different subjects have been published on the same topic. The author of one of the best of these articles rightly complained that in the whole of classical philological literature he had not been able to discover anything to enlighten him concerning the position of the *Topics* within the whole of Aristotle's philosophy. And in fact, though since his article was printed the Oxford logician Ryle published a rather strange treatise on the questions of whether and how Aristotle "taught dialectic" in the Platonic Academy, and though a symposium of Aristotelians on the *Topics* was held and published a year later, there is still no book on the relation between Aristotle's *Topics*, his teleology, and his ethical and political philosophy. Yet without a thorough understanding of these relations the very foundation of the applicability of the *Topics* to sociology, political science, the science of law, and philosophy in general is lacking.

Similarly Hans J. Morgenthau, together with Reinhold Niebuhr the initiator of what is called the new realism in political science in the United States, in his book *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, tries to expose the fallacy of the belief that the methods of natural science can be applied to political science. He obviously is not familiar with Aristotle's *Topics* and dialectic, nor with the attempts made by Viehweg and his German and Italian followers to make them useful for modern political science. On the basis of Aristotle's works on ethics and politics Morgenthau praises Aristotle's superior insight very highly. Yet what he praises in Aristotle, namely his insight into the irremediable imperfection of man and into the consequences to be drawn from it in regard to social and political philosophy, is only one half of Aristotle's ethical and political theory, though perhaps the part that is most important for us as a counter-weight to our most profound misconceptions. But if a whole political philosophy is built on this one half of Aristotle's philosophy, neglecting the other half, it is apt to become no less dangerous than the modern fallacy which Morgenthau combats. It needs to be supplemented by Aristotle's teleology, to which no reference whatever is made in Morgenthau's work.

Teleology, of course, is the one doctrine of Aristotle's that has been most violently attacked by scientists and philosophers

alike through the last couple of centuries. Nearly everybody has become so intimidated by these attacks that hardly anyone dares any more to say a word in defence of it. Herbert Marcuse, the great prophet of our times, in his famous book on *One-dimensional Man*, says in one place that his attempt to transcend the limits of modern scientific method appears to imply a return to teleological thinking. But then he at once shrinks back from such unheard-of daring and assures his frightened reader that he is of course very far from such "obscurantist" inclinations. It seems to me, however, that the modern attacks on teleology in its Aristotelian form are the result of a grotesque, almost tragi-comical misunderstanding. Modern anti-teleology is based first on the belief that causality and teleology contradict each other because causality pushes from behind, while teleology is a causality that pulls from in front, so that if both existed they would be constantly in conflict with each other. It is based, secondly, on the belief, first expressed by Francis Bacon, then most strongly reaffirmed by John Stuart Mill, that the so-called principle of causality, i.e., the conviction that everything that happens must have its ascertainable cause, was derived from experience, and, thirdly, on the belief that teleology is a construction of the human mind which has no foundation whatsoever in experience. But though Aristotle calls the *telos* one of the *aitiai* (as he also does matter and form), there is in his philosophy no such curious conflict between pushing and pulling causes. Even his first mover, who moves the world in the way in which that which is loved moves that which loves it, insofar as he (or it) moves or causes anything is of course an *arche kineseos*, i.e., a cause, in which there is no more a contrast or conflict between pulling and pushing than in the desire of the lover which moves him to go to see his beloved. The whole pretended contradiction is a completely senseless construction. It is in no way necessary to believe in Aristotle's first mover in order to see the meaning and the importance of his teleology.

The belief of Francis Bacon and John Stuart Mill in the empirical origin of the principle of causality, though widely accepted in our time, was not shared by some of the most prominent philosophers of the 17th century. David Hume, as everybody knows, tried to show on the contrary that causality was altogether an illusion: all we could observe i.e., as certain empirically, was that certain

events followed upon each other with a certain regularity. Kant, on the other hand, tried to show that causality was not an experience but a category *a priori* by which our experience is formed and conditioned. The psychologist Wilhelm Wundt in his *Völkerpsychologie* tried to show that on the contrary “primitive man” lacked the concept of causality altogether. As a proof he adduced the fact that the Polynesians believed that the movements of the oarsmen in a boat had a magic effect on the water spirits, compelling them to pull the boat. This is a strange “proof” indeed. If it proves anything it is, it seems to me, that the Polynesians have or had a very strong sense of causality, since they invented a cause where they could not find the true one. But it does show, on the other hand, that their sense or concept of causality was not derived from experience, since they obviously had no experience of the true cause, but believed in causality nevertheless. This seems to argue in favor of Kant’s theory. But perhaps the facts can also be explained in a slightly different way. Man does experience causality where he can handle things directly with his own hands and cause them to behave according to his will. But where he wishes to manipulate things, to form them, to make things happen according to his will without being able to handle them directly with the power of his muscles, he has to find out the causes which will produce the desired effect. Hence the constant search for causes, and the underlying conviction that everything must have a cause which ultimately can be found out. There has never been an age that was so much bent on changing the world and on manipulating everything as ours: a tendency or trend that started about 300 years ago and has been on the increase ever since. This explains the violent aversion of our age against teleology, because teleology was believed to involve the belief in a mysterious cause that cannot be manipulated. It was also the age which identified explanation with causal explanation: “we can explain only what we can *make*”: a dictum very different from Giambattista Vico’s “we understand only what we *do* or what we can *do*.” It is clear that if the first definition of “explanation” is accepted teleology does not explain anything.

The meaning and significance of Aristotle’s teleology is entirely different. In order to understand this significance it is necessary first of all to become again aware of what seems to me an evident fact, obscured only through modern misconceptions, that in



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contrast to the principle of causality, which is not based on experience, but is either, as Kant said, a category *a priori* or a postulate resulting from man's desire to make and manipulate things, teleology is one of the most overwhelming experiences that we constantly make, and *nothing but* an experience: the experience namely that the seed of a pine tree, if it is not destroyed, develops into a pine tree as soon as it finds favorable conditions, the egg of a duck develops into a duck even if it is hatched by a hen, and vice versa, the semen of a human being in the womb of a woman becomes a human being, and so on. Modern vitalists, furthermore, though mistaken in their interpretation of Aristotelian teleology because they were still too much under the influence of modern causalism, have shown that the eggs of certain animals have a very stubborn tendency to develop into whole animals of the species even if cut into pieces. All these are simple experiences, regardless of the causes of the phenomena observed or experienced. But what is the significance of these experiences if they do not explain anything and do not enable us to manipulate things according to our will and desire, as the discovery of causes does?

Though seeds and sperms develop into very specific forms, the seeds of pine trees into pine trees, the seeds of tulips into tulips, the eggs of chickens into chickens, the sperm of cats into cats, and of human beings into human beings, the individuals into which they develop, though recognizable as pine trees, tulips, chickens, cats, and human beings, are not all alike. They are not only not all alike but some of them, if developing under especially favorable circumstances, appear to develop into more perfect specimens of their kind than others. The assertion that this is so arouses, of course, the most violent objection from modern positivists. To distinguish between more and less perfect specimens or even, as Aristotle does, between more and less beautiful specimens, introduces values into science, and science has to be value-free. This, however, is one of the strangest manifestations of modern prejudice, at least if science is identified with meaningful knowledge and if everything that is not scientific in the sense that this word is given by consistent positivists is considered meaningless. From a human point of view it is simply nonsensical to contend that children who because their mother has taken certain drugs while she was pregnant are born blind or

deaf or without arms or legs are just as good as children with all their five senses intact and with all their limbs. But if this is so it is certainly most meaningful and important to try to find out what the perfect form or forms of a species is or are, and—as long as we do not know what the causes are that make a seed or sperm develop towards a certain form or *telos*—to find out what causes prevent a seed or sperm from developing into this perfect form. It is also meaningful and important to find out whether all the individuals of a certain species naturally develop towards the same perfect form or toward different forms. For with certain species the latter appears quite obviously to be the case, and it would clearly be absurd to consider the development of a bee into a queen bee or into a drone unnatural and to demand that all bees or all ants or all termites, for the sake of democratic equality, must develop into worker bees or worker ants or worker termites.

It is one of Aristotle's most fundamental *empirical* observations that there is something analogous in the human species, and that it is one of the enormous advantages of the human species over other species that the different types are not as definitely fixed as with the insects mentioned, but that there is a much greater variety and variability. Some human beings are born with very pronounced talents and inclinations for specific activities: for music, for painting and/or sculpture, for handicrafts, for poetry, for abstract thinking or for contemplation, for planning, for administration, and so on and so forth: these are both happiest and make the most valuable contribution to the human community in which they live if they are permitted to do what they are most gifted for. Others are not so onesidedly gifted for one kind of activity, but in compensation can adapt themselves to various different activities and hence can shift from one to another according to the changing needs of the community to which they belong. From these objective biological and anthropological observations it is possible to deduce what is good for any human community in the sense of being conducive to its biological perfection: namely equality in the *opportunity* for everybody to develop his specific talents and so to make the best possible contribution to the life of the community, but not an equality that considers everybody as interchangeable with everybody else and forces him to do what is against his nature and what he

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never will do well. Aristotle has also pointed out the reasons why this fundamental principle is constantly violated. Many human activities require for their performance material goods, hence to some extent what is called wealth. Others, like all kinds of planning, require a certain amount of power or command over those who are to execute the plans. But while wealth and power are goods—but are to that extent real goods—only as far as they serve these ends, most men strive for wealth and power for their own sake and try to accumulate them far beyond what is good for the community *and for themselves*. This—Aristotle calls it *pleonexia*—is according to him the greatest single cause of all ills of human society.

To follow this into all its consequences, ramifications, and modifications would require a book of considerable length. But I want to show here also how fundamental truths discovered by Aristotle are being rediscovered, though in a more restricted field, by one of the most outstanding scientists of our time, namely by Konrad Lorenz, the leading man in the so-called behavioral sciences. In opposition to the positivist dogma of absolutely value-free science, he shows that it is impossible to build up a meaningful system of behavioral science without introducing values. Since he was brought up in the Darwinian tradition, he defines biological value as survival value. But as soon as he comes to questions of detail it becomes obvious that the principle by which he finds his orientation is not “survival value.” On the contrary, he adopts an unrestrictedly—in view of the modern taboo according to which it is shameful to think in teleological terms, one is tempted to say: a shamelessly—teleological point of view: in fact, in formulating his questions he goes far beyond Aristotle in using anthropomorphic terms. In studying the behavior of individuals of different species he constantly asks the question: is this how the constructor meant it to be? He certainly does not mean this literally. But what he means is obviously very near to what Aristotle had in mind when he contended that the different species develop towards specific model forms which can be recognized though no individual ever completely reaches the perfection of the model. It is certainly not “survival value” by which Lorenz finds his orientation when in another passage he exclaims: “A man to whom it makes no

difference whether he 'kills' a cabbage, a fly, a dog, or a baby chimpanzee would do better to hang himself."

Turning then to the human species, Lorenz criticizes sharply the Watsonian type of behaviorism which for a long time had been an almost universally accepted doctrine, especially in the United States, a doctrine according to which all men are actually born equal and their individual character as well as their abilities depend exclusively on the environment in which they grow up and the education which they receive. Lorenz shows that empirical observation provides absolutely nothing to substantiate this theory; that, on the contrary, especially pronounced talents in specific fields show themselves very often quite regardless of the environment, though for their fullest development they of course require a certain training and learning. On the basis of these empirical observations he attacks what he calls modern pseudo-democratism, which, starting from a false concept of equality, tries to make man absolutely manipulable. He points out that this pseudo-democratism, far from promoting liberty, actually can only lead to the complete enslavement of man. "It would be of equal advantage to capitalist producers and to super-Stalinist rulers if men by proper conditioning could be moulded into absolutely uniform and absolutely obedient consumers or communist citizens." One might add that the ambitions of some modern biologists of a different school who promise that at some not too far off future time they will be able—this time by manipulating the hereditary factor—and willing to produce men without legs, better suited for the tasks of astronauts than normal human beings, would reduce the human species to the condition of insects whose function is absolutely determined by the shape which the individual receives at birth. Both the pseudo-democratism of Watsonian behaviorists and the *hybris* of these biological scientists would deprive the human race of the greatest advantages that it has over other species: those fundamental advantages which Aristotle more than two thousand years ago had been the first to observe and to describe lucidly and which Konrad Lorenz, without any reference to Aristotle, has rediscovered in our time.

There are a great many truths and insights to be found in ancient philosophy which—without any reference to the ancients—have been rediscovered by Konrad Lorenz and other outstanding modern scientists like the psychologist Erik H. Erikson, who

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uses an entirely different approach. One of them is the role and importance of tradition. Since the conditions under which human beings live are subject to change, it is necessary to change the traditional institutions and rules of conduct when they no longer fit the conditions of the time. But since traditions are the means by which human beings orient themselves in the world in which they live, too rapid and too radical change of tradition, even if the change is necessary and, considering the changing circumstances, is in itself for the good, is apt to cause disorientation among a great many people and consequently violent resentment and civil dissension. It is therefore essential for the health of a community not to turn everything upside down at every turning point of history, but to effect the necessary changes gradually and with some caution, so as to enable the majority of citizens to adjust themselves to them, but also to allow enough time to find out whether the seemingly splendid solutions of pressing problems are really suitable to the human race as it is and to the prevailing special conditions.

Erik H. Erikson's observations concerning the importance of rites and rituals in human society, which have recently aroused the most intense interest, especially in the United States, represent an enlarged and refined application to the human race of discoveries made by Konrad Lorenz. In the latter's famous book *Das sogenannte Böse*, translated into English with the title *On Aggression*, Lorenz has shown what an important role ritual plays even in the animal kingdom, giving the individual animal a sense of security through the knowledge that there is a certain order and things are likely to follow certain rules. He has also shown that rituals of this kind prevent the individuals of the same species from destroying one another.

It is of the utmost importance for the mental and emotional health of individuals and communities alike that in typical situations naturally laden with great emotional impact, of which birth, death and burial, marriage and the relation between the sexes as well as the relations between parents and children, the old and the young are the most important, there should be certain predetermined rules and rites so that men know how to act and what to do. These regulations and rites can be very different with tribes and communities without this difference affecting the sense of security of the individual very much. But it is very important

that there should be such rites and regulations and that they should be surrounded by a certain sanctity. At the same time these rites and rituals give the individual a feeling of belonging to a larger body: a feeling of what recently has been designated by the term "identity." Where tribes or races with different rites and regulations come closely together there may be violent clashes, as with the Jews of the Old Testament and their Babylonian and later their Roman conquerors, and the results may be catastrophic, as was very often the case where Christian rites and regulations were imposed on African tribes with totally different traditions. But elements of the older rites and religion may also enter into the new framework and merge with it to produce a new whole, as was largely the case with the adoption of the Christian religion by the American Negroes. Such a merger may finally result in a certain balancing out of various traditions and the emergence of a more comprehensive whole, as has happened to some extent with Western European nations and also the United States and Canada, though there always remained a great deal of variety within the whole.

But whenever the enormous variety of completely different and even contradictory "sacred" rites and rules among different tribes and nations was discovered, there always arose men who contended that the fact proved that all rites and regulations held sacred by different tribes and nations were in fact quite arbitrary and irrational and therefore should be done away with in order to replace them by perfectly rational rules of conduct and a perfectly rational construction of human society. This was done by many of the so-called sophists of the fifth century in Greece. It is also the case with the type of modern young rebels who contend that the whole of what they call the present establishment must be destroyed, by any and every violent means if need be, in order to replace it by a completely rational society. But Erikson has demonstrated beautifully that the young men and women who try to do away with all traditional rules and rites are not able to live for one moment in the vacuum created in this way. They gather together in groups in which they create new rites and rituals—accompanied by special kinds of attire by which they recognize one another and within which they find their "identity." Whoever agrees with these rites and rules and lives accordingly is accepted by the tribe. All others are considered

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as belonging to a hostile world, comprising both those who have adopted different rites and rules which appear right and rational to them and those who continue to adhere to the old traditions. It appears evident that compared to a society whose ritual foundation results from a merger of different traditions and consequently makes allowance for a good deal of variety, for change, and for continuous adaptation to new conditions, yet at the same time provides a fundamental basis of rules of conduct enabling men to find their way through life, this new trend is a reversion to the social conditions of primitive society, where everybody not belonging to the tribe is considered, so to speak, as a specimen of a different species, who can be dealt with as one pleases. We find this principle of the most primitive tribalism in increasingly frequent application in our times, when a group or tribe that has a grievance against a specific establishment considers itself justified in capturing, maiming and killing an individual who is not only completely innocent but even has no connection with the establishment in question. It is amazing that many otherwise decent and reasonable people do not recognize this reversion to primitive barbarism for what it is.

What has been pointed out by Erik H. Erikson in his discussion of ritualization and ritualism was also clearly observed in its various aspects by ancient historians, poets and philosophers. Herodotus expressed the opinion that a man could do nothing worse than deliberately to violate the rites and religions of other nations, even though these might be completely contrary to the sacred rites and beliefs of his own nation. Sophocles in his *Antigone* showed that Antigone was right in trying to bury the corpse of her brother against the command of her King and uncle, even though if she had been a Persian she would have had to do the very opposite. Socrates expressed the opinion that religious rites and beliefs should be criticised or rejected only where they conflict with more fundamental rules of justice and human conduct. Above all he established it as an absolute rule never to do wrong to anybody, even if previously wronged by him.

It would be easy to go on showing with many more examples how the most outstanding scientists of our time, in the most different fields, have made one after the other apparently new discoveries which in their essence are nothing but rediscoveries

of truths and insights that had been found in Greek antiquity. These discoveries have been made piecemeal and without connection with one another, in our time. The rediscovery of the usefulness of the *Topics* was made without reference to the doctrine of the new political realism and vice versa, though there are obvious intrinsic relations between them. Neither of the two has in modern times been brought into connection with the behavioral science of Konrad Lorenz. The reëmergence of Aristotelian teleology in Lorenz's thinking is all the more significant because he was brought up as a Darwinian and still theoretically adheres to Darwinism although his empirical observations and studies have clearly carried him beyond it. Erik H. Erikson's discovery of the extreme importance of rites and ritualization in human society is closely related to discoveries that were made by Konrad Lorenz with regard to the animal kingdom. These discoveries in their turn were made in close connection with an analysis of the behavioral structure of different species of animals which has a striking resemblance to similar analyses made by Aristotle on the basis of this teleology. But there is no direct relation between Erikson's discovery and Aristotelian teleology. Thus all these important new discoveries have been made independently and isolated from one another. In antiquity, on the contrary, all of them were integrated in one great whole.

Naturally the modern discoveries mentioned here have often, thanks to modern specialization, been elaborated with greater attention to detail, greater precision of observation, and greater accuracy of theoretical analysis than had been the case with their ancient equivalents. Thus in this respect the modern theories can often be called more advanced, though even this is not the case with all of them. But what we lack and need most in our chaotic and anarchic times is a comprehensive and integrated understanding of human life and its problems, incorporating all the most valuable discoveries of our time and establishing the connections between them.

In promoting such integration, it seems to me, classical studies can do an immense service. In order to achieve this, it is true, we will have to give up the still widely held view that the integrated study of large fields must necessarily be superficial and only concentration on very small problems is truly scholarly or "scientific." I have tried to show on another occasion, with



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many examples, that too narrow specialization, far from producing the most accurate results, frequently results in egregious errors. We shall also have to give up the widespread modern tendency to value "originality" more highly than truth. Original ideas, in my opinion, are not worth a dime a dozen, if they are not true. Apart from this, it seems to me, we have in our times a surfeit of new ideas and a dearth of true insight and wisdom. We would therefore do better to concentrate on the rediscovery and reaffirmation of ancient insight. This in fact might also be a better kind of originality, since the application of these old insights to the infinite variety of changing condition provides a large field for new thought.

If I have stressed the great service that classical antiquity, in my opinion, can perform for our time by promoting the integration of different insights, I do not wish to say that more specialized studies cannot also be of very great service. One very large field, within which one can, however, concentrate on special objects, is the study of the history of terms and concepts. To point out the usefulness of such studies in the political field, one has only to point to the utter confusion prevailing in our time in regard to the use of the word "democracy," a word laden with emotions and bandied about by everybody but used with the most different, even contradictory, meanings. In antiquity it meant unrestricted or nearly unrestricted majority rule. As such it was not very highly regarded by serious political thinkers, and the opinion prevailed that it would almost inevitably disintegrate in the end and be replaced by tyranny. In the United States the word was for a long time used, and still is very widely used, to designate what in ancient Greece was called a mixed constitution and a system of checks and balances designed to guarantee equal rights for everybody, and especially to protect minorities and individuals against arbitrary decisions of the majority. In the so-called socialist countries it means the nearly absolute and unchecked rule of a small minority that pretends and in some cases believes that it knows better what is good for the people than the people itself. To some of the young rebels of our time it means complete anarchy, where everybody can do as he pleases; to some of them, that a man can do what seems right to him without having to spend any

serious thought on the often difficult question of what is right or wrong in a given situation.

There are a great many other terms, political or philosophical, which cause great confusion in modern thought because they are used with different meanings without their users being aware of this fact, but which can be clarified by going back to their origin in antiquity.

With all this, I have mentioned only a very small part of the innumerable possibilities for making the study of classical antiquity directly and immensely useful to us. In order to make use of these possibilities we have to ask the question what we can learn from the ancient Greeks and Romans, instead of considering them merely as objects of historical curiosity.