The *Phronetic* Political Scientist

Raymond Scupin
Anthropology and International Studies
Lindenwood University

Chaiwat Satha-Anand has become an extremely well known public intellectual and Muslim scholar in Thailand. This essay describes the biographical and intellectual influences in Chaiwat's career, including the influence of Leo Strauss. Chaiwat's ability to synthesize the Straussian project with a political science that is both descriptive and normative has enabled him to become a significant scholar and political activist in Thai society.

Introduction

Partially motivated by Jurgen Habermas' discussion of the necessity for the development of a public sphere for democratic participation, a number of scholars have been investigating the emergence of such a sphere in Islamic societies (Eickelman and Piscatori, 2004). As is well known, the consequences of 9/11/01 have tended to reinforce the Huntington thesis regarding the clash between Islamic and Western civilizations (1996). Huntington's thesis continues to resonate with many in the West as well as in the minds of many in Asia and the Islamic world. Some Muslims are calling for a united, universal *umma* that will confront the Western world of capitalism and democracy. As Huntington's prognostications include ethnic-religious and regional-cultural blocs as fragmenting the world order and resulting in more conflict and instability between Islam and the West, the aftermath of 9/11 has reaffirmed these primordial-essentializing and Orientalist and Occidentalist tendencies in the media and public sphere in the West and in the Islamic World.

Yet, simultaneously, a number of Muslim intellectuals have emerged since the 1980s and have had an enormous influence on Islamic discourse and political activism within a new multimedia based public sphere. These Muslim intellectuals are situated within the development of new national and transnational media and increasingly accessible forms of communication which include the internet, fax, telephone, periodicals, magazines, audio-cassettes, radio and satellite television, and a greater ease of travel that have played a significant role in fragmenting and contesting political and religious authority throughout the Islamic world. In addition to the new media and accessibility of communications, these Muslim intellectuals are involved in governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), human rights groups, Muslim women's rights groups, peace studies groups, and a "civil society" in various Muslim communities. As contemporary Muslim intellectuals involve themselves in these local, national, and international activities, they stimulate new forms of Islamic discourse alongside the primordialist prognostications of the Huntington thesis. These Muslims are expressing much more nuanced post-Orientalist and post-Occidentalist expressions of Islamic discourse. New voices such as Omid Safi, Seyyd Vali Reza, Khaled Abou El Fadl, Emran Quershi, and Abdullah Ahmed An-Na'im in the U.S. and others in Canada, Europe, and within the Islamic world are involved in a new campaign to go beyond the older debates of Samuel Huntington or Edward Said.

One influential Muslim intellectual who is contributing significantly to the public sphere in Thailand is Chaiwat Satha-Anand, Abdul Qadir Muheideen, a professor of political science at Thammasat University in Bangkok. He has not only been a principal contributor to the discussions of political theory and violence issues, but has also been a major peace activist in Thai society. Chaiwat has been able to merge an active program of scholarship with a vital moral and ethical imperative that represents the best in what has been called *phronetic* social science (Flyvbjerg 2001).

Biographical Influences

Chaiwat Satha-Anand's family instilled some of the elements that are evident in his current research and writing (Scupin, forthcoming). He was born on January 25, 1955 in the Bangrak district on Silom Road in Bangkok. Silom Road is associated with the Indian community in Thailand. Chaiwat's father was involved as a merchant in the cloth and textile trade between Surat, India and Thailand and settled in Thailand in the 1920s. His father was a serious practitioner of the Indian Sufi tradition and because of his extensive travels he learned to speak different languages including Chinese, Arabic, and English. Chaiwat's father died when he was 12 years old. Chaiwat's mother was a native Thai Muslim woman whose grandparents were from India and had married within the Thai community for generations. Chaiwat's

family was associated with the major Indian Muslim mosque in the Silom Road area, Haroun mosque. However, Chaiwat attended a Catholic school, the prestigious Assumption College, for his primary and secondary education. His Islamic education was received part-time through special tutors through which he was introduced not only to Arabic, but also to the translation of the *Qur'an* into Thai. During his high school years at Assumption College, Chaiwat read Mohandas Gandhi along with some Buddhist intellectual writing of Sulak Sivaraksa and others. His views on nonviolent activism were kindled by these readings and he knew many members of the student association for nonviolence known as the Ahimsa group. After secondary school Chaiwat took his entrance examinations for the university and scored among the top one percent of his graduating class. He received a scholarship to attend Thammasat University in 1972.

After October 14, 1973 in which a massive popular uprising led by Thammasat University students among others ousted the long-entrenched military dictatorship in Thailand and inaugurated a civilian-led national government, Chaiwat participated in students' elections and from 1974-75 he was the Vice-Chairman of the Student Council. These political activities dovetailed with his studies of political philosophy with Professor Sombat Chantornvong. Sombat introduced Chaiwat to the writings of Plato, early Marx, as well as many other political thinkers including the American political philosopher Leo Strauss with whom Sombat had studied with in the U.S. Chaiwat's engagement with Strauss's political philosophy was employed in his scholarship at Thammasat. He helped translate the work of such thinkers such as Mao Zedong and other political philosophers from English sources into Thai for students and other interested parties. He graduated from Thammasat with a B.A. in Politics and Government with first class honors in 1975 and received the King Bhumiphol award for his excellence in study at Thammasat.

The Turning Point

The trajectory of Chaiwat's life changed dramatically when on October 6, 1976 a bloody military coup occurred that overthrew the civilian government and resulted in gruesome attacks at Thammasat University. The Thai military and other right wing groups launched a frenzied invasion of the Thammasat University campus resulting in the beating, killing, and burning of a number of university students. Some students were shot while others were doused with gasoline and set on fire. Thousands of students fled into the countryside and rain forest to escape the brutalities of this military takeover. Many others were arrested and spent considerable time in prison for their political activism and opposition to the Thai military during the 1973-76 democratic period. Chaiwat went through a considerable personal transformation and crisis during the period of this turmoil. His nonviolent philosophical orientation was challenged dramatically by these horrific acts of cruelty towards his fellow

students and colleagues. Faced with increasing political criticism from rightist elements and his own personal crisis, Chaiwat made a decision to study aboard for an advanced degree. He applied for and received a scholarship from the East-West Center, which funded his study at the University of Hawaii at Manoa where he spent 1977-1981 working toward his PhD in political science.

University of Hawaii Influences and the Islamic Revival

At the University of Hawaii Chaiwat studied with Glenn D. Paige, a professor of political science and Asian studies. Paige had been trained at Princeton and was well-known for his work on the Korean War, but was also interested in nonviolent political alternatives. In a critique of his own book *The Korean Decision, June 24-30, 1950* in an essay called "On Value and Science" published in the *American Political Science Review*, Paige argued that the war might have been avoided with more peaceful negotiations. He had been a Korean War veteran who had taken it upon himself to build his career campaigning for nonviolent, peaceful strategies in international affairs. This was a perfect intellectual match for Chaiwat's personal and political sensibilities. Through Paige and other professors at University of Hawaii, Chaiwat continued his studies of political philosophy. In addition, Chaiwat studied with the German political scientist Manfred Henningsen, a student of Eric Voegelin, and was thus exposed to Voegelin's political thought and his intellectual relationship with Leo Strauss (Strauss 1994, McAllister, 1996).

However, during this period in Hawaii, international political events in the Islamic world stimulated a revitalization of Chaiwat's Muslim background. The Iranian revolution developed in 1978-79 and the seizure of the American embassy and the U.S. hostage crisis was a topic of considerable discussion and debate among the students in Hawaii. Amidst these discussions, Chaiwat found that many of the American students maintained Orientalist stereotypes of the Islamic world. He began to meet with other Muslim students on campus as a means to help correct these mis- representations. Chaiwat joined the Muslim Student Association and eventually became the secretary of this organization. Through reading groups in this organization, Chaiwat began to become more familiar with Ali Shariati, the Iranian sociologist who combined Marxist approaches such as Frantz Fanon's work with the Shia tradition, along with Syed Qutb, Ali Maududi, Muhammad Arkoun, Syed Hossein Nasr, and other contemporary Islamic political philosophers. Chaiwat studied Arabic with a Libyan student and also re-read the classical Islamic philosophers such as Al-Ghazali. Other students, including Palestinians, Sudanese, and Afghans were part of this association. Chaiwat synthesized this renewal of his Islamic religious sensibilities along with his Gandhian and post-Gandhian nonviolent philosophical orientation while in Hawaii. Eventually, he developed a remarkably unique philosophical standpoint which was expressed in his PhD dissertation entitled *The Nonviolent Prince*, an

original interpretation of the non-violent aspects of Machiavelli's political philosophy. His dissertation was nominated by the Department of Political Science for consideration for the International Dissertation Award.

The Thesis of Nonviolence

Chaiwat's 1981 dissertation reflects an enormous range of sources and an overview of the issues of political theory and empirical studies on violence and its relationship to the state, the individual, and groups. He integrates the post-positivist philosophy of science and the 1970s emergence of postmodernist thought, with reference to Kuhnian paradigms and Foucauldian "discursive practices," with the empirical studies of violence and ingroup-outgroup ethnocentrism, nationalism, and racism by social psychologists, anthropologists, and political scientists. Chaiwat begins his approach to understanding the pervasive violence throughout the history of humanity by recognizing that violence has been an instrumental mechanism to resolve conflict. However, he draws on Gandhi and Krishnamurti to assert the ethical imperative that the "violent paradigm" is an anomalous and dangerous paradigm in a world with the proliferation of nuclear weapons and Cold War politics of the time period. While referring to his own experiences with violence at Thammasat University, like Machiavelli, Chaiwat's recommendations for a nonviolent paradigm are directed toward the princes or rulers who are the source or cause of much violence throughout the world. Realizing that a move towards a fully nonviolent paradigm will take time, Chaiwat calls for this new form of just society in the future.

Chaiwat describes Johan Galtung's distinction between person to person violence versus structural violence. This distinction reflects the differences between the methodological individualist or utilitarian emphasis versus the holist and neo-Marxist strategies within the social sciences. Drawing on Foucault, Chaiwat dismantles the demarcation between these approaches and indicates that there is a dialectical causal relation between personal and structural violence. Within a Foucauldian perspective, Chaiwat argues that in particular socio-cultural and political contexts, violence can be accepted as a normality and acceptable means of politics and conflict resolution between individuals and groups. Chaiwat gives examples of how violence has become an embedded form of discursive practices within various societies around the world including the United States.

In an in-depth chapter evaluating Machiavelli, Chaiwat views the various readings of *The Prince* and *The Discourses* from various vantage points. He contrasts the interpretation of *The Prince* by Bacon, Rousseau, Spinoza, Hegel, Marx, and later philosophers of history (such as Cassirer) with that of the Jesuits, the Elizabethan writers, Bertrand Russell, and Leo Strauss – the former casting Machiavelli as a humanist and realist who provided the foundations for the Enlightenment, the latter group considering him evil incarnate. Chaiwat tacks between

these positions to develop a nuanced appreciation of the Italian author. Agreeing that Machiavelli does have a dark and pessimistic view of human nature, he reads him as a radical humanist who needs to be understood within the context of his political and personal life circumstances. After elucidating the concepts of *Fortune* and *virtù,* Chaiwat argues that *The Prince* was written by Machiavelli as an attempt to resist *Fortune* and to restore control of his life. He notes that *Fortune* is conceived of by Machiavelli as a category of history that drives civilizations either up or down. However, Machiavelli opens up a secular discourse by arguing that humans can struggle against history to direct social, political, and cultural changes. *Virtù* represents human courage to involve oneself in politics to assist in directing this change by resisting *Fortune*. In Chaiwat's words, humans must emancipate themselves from historical destiny. The prince or ruler must have this courage to re-direct the course of history in positive directions. Chaiwat notes that although Machiavelli condemns the excessive use of violence as evil, the way of the lion – violence and brutality – were part and parcel of the life of Italian city-states at the time and he could not have had any other view of violence as a constituted aspect of politics.

Yet, in Chaiwat's reading of Machiavelli, he sees an opening for the prince or ruler to develop nonviolent strategies in the practice of politics as both a practical and an ethical imperative in a nuclear world. He suggests that Machiavelli is open to the sentiments of love rather than fear or hatred if it could be a realistic alternative. By emphasizing the secular and radical humanist aspects of Machiavelli's work, Chaiwat establishes a platform to replace the discursive practices of violence with a nonviolent paradigm based on Gandhian metaphysical foundations that would be less costly and more productive and effective for rulers. This becomes the basis of the chapter with his advice to the prince or ruler in the midst of the contemporary conditions for nuclear proliferation.

In his chapter on why the prince or ruler ought to adopt nonviolent political action, Chaiwat draws on religious, ethical, and practical reasons for his argument. He reviews the Buddhist and Christian emphasis on nonviolence and goes on to examine the neglected nonviolent expressions of the Islamic tradition. He culls passages from the *Qur'an* and the Hadith that emphasize the sin of excessive violence and offer peaceful resolution as a fundamental component of Islam. He criticizes the early simplistic anthropological views that maintain that humans are violent predators and argues that violence or nonviolence can be influenced by different historical and political conditions. Drawing on Gandhi, Krishnamurti, and others, Chaiwat argues strongly that the prince must develop nonviolent strategies based on religious, ethical, and practical grounds for the twentieth and twenty-first century or humans may not survive the aftermath of violent politics.

Later Chaiwat co-authored the book *Islam and Nonviolence* with his former professor Glenn Paige and co-authored another with his wife, Suwanna Satha-Anand entitled *Struggling Dove and Plastic Lotus: Peacemaking in Thai Society* (1987).

In a book entitled *Islam and Violence: A Case Study of Violent Events in the Four Southern Provinces, Thailand, 1976-1981* published by the Department of Religious Studies at the University of South Florida in 1987, Chaiwat draws on Foucault and the sociological tradition of Schutz, Berger, and Luckman to combine an "archaeological" and "phenomenological" study of violence in South Thailand. This theoretical work marked the emergence of a distinctive merger between the continental philosophical developments and the indigenous Muslim and post-Gandhian traditions espoused by Chaiwat (Scupin, 1990). Chaiwat has published other more recent essays and chapters in books on nonviolence such as "Crossing the Enemy's Line: Helping the Others in Violent Situations as Nonviolent Action" and "9/11, 9/20 and Gandhi's Puzzle: Fighting Postmodern Terror/Modern Warfare with Peaceful Alternatives." He has also written extensively on Islamic issues and ethnicity in Thailand. Throughout all of his scholarly works and teaching he has emphasized his nonviolent orientation along with his Islamic cultural and religious experience.

The Strauss Connection

One of the intriguing aspects of Chaiwat's political and intellectual developments is the role of Leo Strauss in his educational background. Leo Strauss is considered a thinker who produced many disciples and who developed the ideals that shaped the emergence of the neo-conservative movement associated with Irving Kristol of the 1980s, the Reagan administration, and Paul Wolfowitz as the president of the World Bank. Neo-conservative intellectuals such as the late Allan Bloom, Dinesh D'Souza, and Francis Fukuyama have espoused Straussian philosophical and political ideals. Since the development of the Middle Eastern foreign policies of the Bush administration there has been considerable discussion and criticisms of the Straussian influence in American politics (Schlesinger, 2004).

Chaiwat absorbed his readings of Strauss through Sombat Chantornvong who had studied with Strauss at Claremont College where another major Straussian Harry Jaffa taught. Jaffa had written Goldwater's speech for the 1964 Republican convention and helped launch the neo-conservative movement in the United States that resulted in Ronald Reagan's election and the entrance of many Straussians into the beltway and the inner sanctum of the halls of Washington, D.C. Yet, Chaiwat was definitely linked with a more "liberal" orientation within the Thai political scenario. How could a Straussian be connected with this liberal orientation in Thai politics?

A New Exegesis of Strauss

An autobiographical book written by Anne Norton called *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire* (2004) reveals some of the inner workings of the Straussian influence in the U.S. and also holds some of the keys to resolving the discrepancy

between Chaiwat's intellectual influence and his political affiliations and orientation. Norton was trained in political science by some of the Straussians at the University of Chicago and learned about the considerable sway they had in the academy and in political circles in Washington. She launches an acerbic attack on the Straussian political philosophy and strategies in academe, the capitol, and the Middle East foreign policy that led to the invasion of Iraq. Norton identifies two genealogical lineages of East and West Coast Straussians radiating from Chicago where Strauss taught for most of his career. She characterizes the East Coast Straussians as more philosophical and less political, including Joseph Cropsey of Chicago (her former teacher) and Harvey Mansfield of Harvard. Cropsey was the teacher of Paul Wolfowitz while Mansfield taught Francis Fukuyama, the author of the *The End of History* (1989), and William Kristol, editor of the influential *Weekly Standard* and son of Irving Kristol. The dominant figure of the West Coast Straussians is Harry Jaffa, who directs the Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy. Norton indicts Jaffa and his cohorts as excessively ideological, combative, and devoted to partisan politics rather than to political philosophy. As a case in point, she refers to a quote by Jaffa:

> The salvation of the West must come, if it is to come, from the United States. The salvation of the United States if it is to come, must come from the Republican Party. The salvation of the Republican Party if it is to come, must come from the conservative party within it (Norton 2004: 8).

Norton also maintains that the Straussians have a persecution complex within the academy, as they believe that the liberals control the reins of political power, the journals, and other related academic enterprises. She refers to the Straussian neoconservative students and faculty as "truth squads" who roam the halls of academe to refute the liberal and leftist postmodernists. Although Norton acknowledges that the liberal influence is profound in the academy in the U.S., she concludes that this persecution complex has been exaggerated for political reasons within the Straussian academic network.

In one chapter, Norton gives her exegesis as to why Strauss and his followers became conservatives. She refers to the gossip about how Strauss had courted Hannah Arendt, who shared his religious and political background as a refugee Jew from Germany. As this story unfolds, Arendt rejects Strauss and they became philosophical enemies in the U.S. (Arendt's romance and association with the deconstructionist philosopher Martin Heidegger, who had collaborated with the Nazi's, has often been employed by Straussians as an ideological stance to distance themselves from the political leftists and postmodernists in the U.S.) According to Norton, a formative influence on Straussian conservatism was Carl Schmitt, the Catholic who became the leading jurist of the Third Reich under Hitler. In 1932, Strauss wrote a

commentary on Schmitt's book *The Concept of the Political*. Prior to that time, Schmitt had written the letter that enabled Strauss to leave Germany and develop his career in England and the U.S. In *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt absorbed some of Strauss's political theory and wrote about how the "political" had become submerged within the "social" by the liberal political theorists. Schmitt argued that the political was a separate category from the moral, the economic, the social, the cultural, or the aesthetic. He suggested that the political was defined as the relationship between friend and enemy. The political could not be reduced to the social or to culture. According to Schmitt, the liberal political theorists of the modern era had abandoned this conception of the political and reduced it to the social or to culture.

According to Norton, initially both Strauss and Arendt read Schmitt in a sympathetic manner and they were both looking backward at Europe and what they perceived as the linkage between Enlightenment modernity and the horrors of Nazi Germany. With the emergence of protests against the Vietnam War, draft resistance, the feminist movement, and the other elements of the counter-culture in the 1960s, the students of both Arendt and Strauss deplored how these elements were absorbed into political debates. However, with time, Norton notes there was a shift in how Arendt and Strauss's students interpreted these movements:

> While the students of Arendt saw these conflicts as misplaced and urged people to return them to their proper (social) sphere, the Straussians were ready to meet their enemies on common ground. Recognizing that culture had become the terrain of politics, they prepared to fight the culture wars (Norton, 2004: 42).

The Straussians initiated the culture wars against the liberal and leftist movement in the U.S. and Irving Kristol and other Straussians abandoned their earlier leftist orientation to embark on the culture wars, which persist up through the present. The late Allan Bloom and the Straussians at Cornell in 1969 perceived the beginnings of the decline of Western civilization and attacks on academic freedom, as seen in the development of "Students for a Democratic Society," the student critiques and attempts to control the academic curricula, and the emergence of the black studies movement in the halls of academe. Bloom's popular conservative treatise *The Closing of the American Mind* in the late 1980s – with its attack on Hegelian historicism, Nietschzean philosophical views, and Weberian sociology, which he argues resulted in cultural relativism and nihilism in American education – was rooted in his experience at Cornell in 1969. Norton argues that Bloom, like the other Straussians such as Dinesh D'Souza, Eugene Genovese, the Kristols, Fukuyama and others, are afflicted by what Nietzsche called *ressentiment* against an older form of Waspish hierarchy in the U.S. As outsiders they had made their way into the established hierarchy through their own merits and they did not want others who did not have the expertise or appropriate talents to enter this arena. According to Norton, these new Straussians

reinforced the rigid boundaries of the academic hierarchy and elitism into which they had entered.

This exploration of hierarchy and elitism is explored further by Norton with an examination of the Straussian view of nature as expressed in Strauss's work on *Natural Right and History*. Although Strauss had argued that nature was not the realm of certainty, the political followers of Strauss such as the ethicist for the Bush administration, Leon Kass, have suggested that nature is self-evident and certain. Nature and non-nature can be demarcated by common sense. Norton asserts that the controversial social issues that divide "red state" and "blue state" in American politics, such as how to define the foundations of marriage and gender relationships, are dominated and have been politicized by the Straussians. In addition, Norton asserts that these issues have spilled over into the humanities and social sciences with the Bush appointment of the Straussian Daniel Pipes to the Institute for Peace Studies. Pipes runs a web site called Campus Watch that has attempted to list faculty who are hostile to the U.S. political strategies in the Middle East and recruits students to criticize the political orientations and reading lists of these so-called "politically correct" liberal academics who are "soft" on Islamic terrorism or critical of Israeli policies including prominent scholars such as John Esposito.

In respect to the Islamic world, Norton endorses the view that there is a family resemblance between the Straussians and the followers of Syed Qutb. As the Straussians discern only one fundamental and authentic meaning of the classic texts of Plato and Aristotle and other foundational texts such as the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, Qutb and his followers in the Islamic world read and interpret the *Qur'an* and the hadith in the same manner. Disciples of both of these groupings read and interpret these texts to condemn modernity, which they view as a liberal and secular attack on God given natural rights, mass society preoccupations, and religious foundations resulting in nihilism and relativism. The Straussians view postmodernism as even more threatening, Norton avers, because of its attacks on foundational canonical texts, reason, logic, and rationality.

Norton writes a chapter on why the followers of Strauss have become conservatives and mentions that she was told that at one time there were liberal and leftist Straussians, but she argues that these species have become extinct. She refers to an early form of American conservatism that followed in the footsteps of the Anglican conservatism of Edmund Burke. These early conservatives revered and were deferential to past custom and ancestry as the repository of cultural wisdom and knowledge to be protected against chaotic and disruptive forms of utopian projects. This conservatism expressed itself within the agrarian South with its generational ties to the land, civility, and a paternalistic Aristocratic hierarchy. This form of conservatism had an inherent distrust of the state and strong, centralized forms of the federal government. Ronald Reagan's disdain for the bureaucratic structures of the centralized government drew on these early conservative and

Burkean cultural values.

However, Norton asserts that all of this changed in the late twentieth century and especially since 9/11/01 with the Straussians embracing big government with a vengeance. The neoconservatives have argued for the expansion of the state into many arenas such as Homeland Security and larger budgets for military expansion and a global political crusade as expressed in the Straussian "Project for a New American Century," authored by Irving Kristol and others. Kristol argues for a new form of American conservatism that is revolutionary optimistic and patriotically robust with what Norton refers to as an authoritarian democracy and a military with a long global reach. The Straussian new world order will be established through military force to forge a *Pax Americana* based global empire. The Bush presidency expressed this utopian global crusade in the statement about how "We will rid the world of evil-doers." Norton describes this Straussian program as also being based on a corporatist emphasis that allies the state with the corporations, tax cuts to the wealthy, and the populist rhetoric of family values and fears of a world government and international institutions such as the U.N.

Will the Real "Strauss" Please Stand Up!

In a two part essay in the *New York Review of Books*, Mark Lilla reviews a number of books about the influence of Leo Strauss in U.S. politics and has some critical comments regarding Anne Norton's thesis (2004a, 2004b). In the first essay on European books about Strauss, Lilla notes how the mainstream media in the run-up to the invasion of the Iraq war focused on Leo Strauss as the master thinker behind U.S. foreign policy. Journalists were "trawling" his commentaries to seek secret anti-democratic doctrines and to find in-criminating evidence indicating these tendencies. Later, the demagogue Lyndon LaRouche wrote a hysterical pamphlet on the Strauss-neocon connection that was widely perpetuated on the internet. This resulted in paranoia and claims that Strauss was a "fascist." Strauss's daughter, the scholar Jenny Strauss Clay, responded in the *New York Times* to these paranoiac claims and emphasized that her father believed in and defended the ideals of liberal democracy and that his heroes were Churchill and Lincoln.

The European books reviewed by Lilla indicate how Strauss's legacy is based on his works that are read all over the world and his pedagogy which influenced primarily American scholars and politicians. Strauss's philosophical premises developed within the context of his reaction to the abandonment of religion by the Enlightenment philosophers as they coped with the religious wars of their generation. After Strauss grappled with these issues, he concluded that philosophers needed to re-evaluate the theological and political questions for humanity. He argued that the Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire wanted to erase religion completely from civilization and politics, which resulted in ideological struggles, historicism,

relativism, nihilism, and a new second cave (the first cave was Plato's) of illusions. Strauss re-examined the classical philosophers, Spinoza, and the modern period to argue that the hidden wellspring of Western civilization is the coexistence of both democracy and religion that appears in his well known essay "Athens and Jerusalem." He draws on the Islamic thinker Al Farabi who had influenced Maimonides to support his thesis. And, as Lilla notes, Strauss's oeuvre was an extended response to Nietzsche and Heidegger and how they both attempted in their own way to restore the loss of classical philosophy within the modern world.

The second review essay of Lilla's, wryly called "The Closing of the American Mind," focused on two American books that deal with Leo Strauss, one by a Straussian and the other Anne Norton's book. He gives an account of Strauss's experience in the U.S. and the post-World War II impact on his work. In his defense of natural rights in *Natural Right and History*, Strauss emphasizes the importance of America as representing a destined country that espoused these ideals against relativism and nihilism. This has had appeal to many of his students, including Paul Wolfowitz, who made their way from the classical philosophers of Athens to Washington. Like Norton, Lilla indicts some of the neoconservative Straussians within both academe and Washington for their ideological and partisan bent. In his review of the Straussian politician Carnes Lord's book on political leadership called *The Modern Prince*, Lilla remarks how Lord refers to the "feminization" of politics as it represents the decline of masculinity in American politics, a neoconservative obsession. The conclusion of Lord's book deals with Machiavelli's last chapteR in *The Prince.* In that final chapter, Machiavelli argued for a patriotic defense of Italy from foreign invaders or barbarians. Lord argues that as Americans we need to defend our barriers against the barbarians within ourselves that has resulted in the multiculturalist mentality and the decay of our moral standards. Lilla suggests that this view is sure to satisfy the neo-conservatives but will lead to dismay for most Americans.

In Lilla's review of Norton's auto- biographical account of the Straussians, she gets credit for her account of the Straussian method of pedagogy based on a close intensive reading and interpretation of classical texts and the development of close mentor-disciple relationships. In doing so, Norton debunks the notion that there is a secretive nature and cabalistic aspect of Strauss's teaching. Lilla seems to concur with her admission that sometimes these intensive mentor-pupil relationships can result in harm both psychologically and intellectually. However, Lilla indicates that Norton is too loose with the academic urban legends and slanderous rumors about the Straussians. He argues that for these reasons, the book will appeal to the liberal-oriented faculty clubs just as Lord's book will resonate with neoconservatives. Lilla concludes the review by suggesting that Strauss's legacy is being squandered by some of the short-sighted provincialism of some of his self-proclaimed followers. Nevertheless, the books of Strauss remain a rich source of seminal thinking on profound philosophical and political issues that can provide sustenance for many

generations. As Lilla says, Strauss's legacy is being re-discovered by many in the world who have no relationship to the neoconservative movement in the U.S.

The Religious and Islamic Influence

Obviously, Chaiwat is a scholar who has been influenced by Strauss, but is not a Straussian. For example, the Norton book notes some positive strengths of Strauss in contrast to the Straussians. She writes about Strauss's disdain for patriotism and extreme nationalism as he saw its consequences for Europe in the 1930s and 40s (Norton 2004: 139). Strauss' philosophical premises were important in forging Chaiwat's democratic ideals within the context of the domination of the military and rightist authoritarian politics in Thailand. Strauss was adamant about the expansion of liberal and representative democratic regimes throughout the world. Through his interpretative reading of Strauss, Chaiwat has been engaged in promoting these democratic, liberal ideals and institutions within Thailand and other areas of the world.

In addition to the liberal democratic ideals of Strauss, Chaiwat was also influenced by the religious and spiritual aspects of the Straussian tradition that were prominent within the writings of Harry Jaffa and Muhsin Mahdi, the Iraqi intellectual and friend of Jaffa. In their writings, all of these thinkers emphasized the role of both reason and revelation in their political philosophy. In their view, absolute faith and modern rationalism had both resulted in negative consequences for humanity. Absolute faith had led to the union of altar and throne and the Inquisition, whereas modern rationalism, with its rejection of biblical faith, resulted in the Jacobins, the Bolsheviks, the Nazis, and other ills of modernity (Jaffa 1994, 1999; Strauss 1953). Both Athens, as a representation of critical inquiry in the Socratic tradition, and Jerusalem, expressing the moral corpus of mono-theism, had to become the basis of constitutional democracies that shaped the character of their citizens by the free and un-coerced dissemination of ideals and virtues. This merger of religious and political ideals appealed to Chaiwat as he was inspired by his Islamic faith. In addition, the radical critique of moral and cultural relativism, which is at the heart of the Straussian program inspired, Chaiwat in his criticism of moral nihilism that was sometimes engendered by the process of modernization and secularism (Khan, 2003).

Phronesis and Political Activism

In Chaiwat's remarkable essay "Praying in the Rain" (2004) about Muslim protests in South Thailand, he refers to the *phronetic* social science method as outlined by Danish philosopher Bent Flyvbjerg (2001). Flyvbjerg draws on the *Nicomachean Ethics* in which Aristotle argued that there were several branches of knowledge distinguished by their various goals. *Sophia* or theoretical wisdom, usually translated

as "philosophy" in English, is concerned with the ultimate answers to what is true and real. Although Aristotle rejected the transcendence of Platonic forms or "essences," he maintained the Platonic ideal of discovering the universal. Like Plato, Aristotle believed that this aspect of knowledge was linked to the rational aspect of the soul concerned with the contemplation of unchangeable truths. This theoretical wisdom is the highest "virtue" in the scale of Aristotelian values. *Episteme* is the branch of theoretical knowledge including science, mathematics, and physics concerned with discovering universal and invariant laws of nature (N.E. 1139b 18-36). *Episteme* is based on general analytical rationality and is known today within the sciences and philosophy as "epistemology" and "episteme." Both *sophia* and *episteme* are concerned with truth or knowledge for its own sake. *Techne* is another branch of knowledge that is much more practical and is focused on productive technology for both useful and beautiful objects (N.E. 1140a 1-23). This form of knowledge related to crafts and arts is more pragmatic and variable and is sometimes referred to as "practical instrumental rationality."

Phronesis is yet another branch of knowledge that has both a descriptive and normative aspect. As defined in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *phronesis* is a "true state, reasoned, and capable of action with regard to things that are good or bad for man" (N.E. 1140a24—140b12, Flyvbjerg, 2001). Thus, *phronesis* is the form of practical wisdom, or practical common sense, or "prudence," and has a pragmatic action-oriented dimension. However, it is also intimately connected with the ultimate "ends" of life for humans or *eudaimonia* (living well). *Phronesis* involves making normative value judgments rather than just producing knowledge for descriptive or practical purposes. In this sense, *phronesis* is also oriented to the "particular" aspects of life rather than just the "universal." Aristotle says:

> "Prudence" [*phronesis]* is not concerned with universals only, it must also take cognizance of the particulars, because it is concerned with conduct, and conduct has its sphere in particular circumstances ... That is why some people who do not possess theoretical knowledge are more effective in action (especially if they are experienced) than others who do possess it … prudence is practical, and therefore it must have both kinds of knowledge, or especially the latter (N.E. 1141b8-27).

Although Aristotle used the term *politik episteme*, which is translated today as "political science," he emphasized that political science and prudence [*phronesis*] are not identical. Prudence is also found at the household and individual level whereas political science is directed at understanding the polis and legislative level of analysis (Flyvbjerg 2001: 59). Flyvbjerg argues that in contemporary philosophical and social scientific thought, one dominant tradition of Aristotle resulted in the rationalist thinkers from Plato to Hobbes, from Kant to the modernist Habermas, whereas the other

tradition of Aristotle combined with earlier Sophist traditions led to Nietzsche through Foucault and postmodernism (Flyvbjerg 2001).

Chaiwat's *phronetic* form of social science appears to stem from the Foucauldian merger of scholarship and activism. Foucault has had a formative influence on Chaiwat's intellectual development and also his peace activities. As is clear in his essay "Praying in the Rain," Chaiwat is not a "top-down" ethical and universalistic moralist, but is rather a moralist who is sensitive to local context and meanings in order to ask morally important questions as Foucault would advocate. One needs to contextualize the study of power relationships with concrete examples and detailed narratives of power and its consequences. In addition, this *phronetic* social science becomes the basis for recommending how these power relationships might be changed to improve the human experience (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 140). Chaiwat's scholarship and activism fully demonstrates how a valid *phronetic* social science has relevance for the twenty-first century.

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