SCEPTICISM AND POLITICAL VIRTUE

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MR VICE-CHANCELLOR:

As the third person to give an inaugural from the Faculty of the Social Sciences I find myself somewhat fortunate in that, owing to the diligence of Professor Aboyade, I do not, in this lecture, have to give an account of the history and growth of the Faculty. Nevertheless, following the pattern which has been set by Professors Aboyade and Mabogunje, I feel I should say something, briefly, of the history of my department. I do this not only because it is a tale well worth telling, but also because it does give me an opportunity to pay tribute to the many people who have played so vital a part in that tale and whose initial efforts I have been in the happy position of furthering.

From being a sub-department run by one person, Father James O'Connell, the department has grown, over the last thirteen years, into a fully fledged department with a staff of thirteen, and a student population of one hundred and thirty. It was the first department in the Faculty of the Social Sciences to produce a Ph.D., and during the last five years, has graduated four Ph.Ds—one of whom is currently a lecturer on the Staff of the Jos Campus, and five holders of the Master's degree. Besides James O'Connell, the founding father, so to speak, who currently holds the Chair of Political Science at Ahmadu Bello University, several other distinguished academics have served and passed through the department: John MacIntosh, who until the last British election was a member of Parliament, was one of these. Others are Ken Post, who is currently a Professor at the Hague; David Murray, who holds a Chair at the Open University; John Ballard who is at the University of New Guinea, Papua, and Ronald Wraith, a one time Registrar with Special duties at this University and currently on the staff of the Administrative Staff College of the United Kingdom. Besides these, we have also had Nigerians who, having served an apprenticeship in the department,

are currently helping the nation: Ukpabi Asika, the Administrator of the East Central State; Larry Ekpebu, a Commissioner in the Rivers State, and my immediate predecessor, E. U. Essien-Udom, who, until very recently, was Head of Service of the South-Eastern State and Secretary to the Military Government.

The first to hold the Chair of Politics was Professor Joseph E. Black who is, at present, executive director for the Social Sciences at the Rockefeller Foundation. It was during his tenure of office that the broad framework of the department was established. Professor Black was succeeded in 1965 by Professor Essien-Udom, who held the Chair for seven years, during which time the department passed through its most difficult and trying period. It is a tribute to Professor Essien-Udom that he was able to hold the department together even when the staff had fallen to three which included himself. By the time I succeeded to the chair in 1972, the department had overcome many of its earlier teething problems, leaving me with the task basically of consolidation and development.

There is, in the minds of many people, some confusion over what Political Science is all about. I think, for many, the typical conception is not much different from that expressed by the former Inspector General of Police, Mr Louis Edet, who, interviewing one of our graduates who had applied to join the Police Force, and on learning that the candidate read Political Science, replied with the statement: "We do not want people who cause revolution in the Police Force." Politics for him, and I suspect for many, means simply 'revolution'. It is not easy to give a definition of Political Science. In fact to ask "What is politics?" is not to ask for a definition. The question "What is politics?" is logically analogous to the question "What is Carpentry?", and, faced with the latter question, one does not attempt to offer a definition, but merely gives a description, and one way of describing what politics is, is to state what its components are and these I would say consist of five elements: first, there is what one might call consciousness formation, that is, the evoking of an awareness amongst a collectivity of the issues and problems confronting that collectivity; secondly, there is social mobilization, which is the organization of a collectivity for joint, collaborative action. Thirdly, politics is, as the continentals would put it, contestation, the contesting of the determination of national priorities through the

process of argumentation and debate. Fourthly, there is institutionalized struggle, or in the words of Rappoport, the conversion of fights into games and debates and fifthly, transcendence, the bringing about of change both at the level of the person and at the systemic and sub-systemic levels. Political Science then, I would say, is the systematic study of these various components of politics. At the level of recent research, such study has taken varied and diverse forms, from game theoretic studies of war, and the correlates of war, to cross-national profiles of different polities, preferential modelling and even the politics of sex choice. If it now seems feasible and likely that parents can choose the sex of their offspring, then we cannot but expect some societal consequences from such a choice and some of the recent study of politics has been precisely of this. One result of such research interest has been to extend the catchment areas of political study from the traditional disciplines of Law and History, Economics and Sociology into such fields as psychology and psychiatry, biology and even pharmacology. The extension has been matched by the increasing use of different tools of analysis, ranging from the conceptual analytic techniques of modern philosophy to the employment of sophisticated mathematical models. It may not be too far-fetched to say that within the next decade the innumerate political scientist will be an illiterate political scientist. At the level of teaching, what the department has sought to do over the last couple of years has been to make the teaching of politics reflect in greater measure the new concerns of political study and to improve the technical skills of our students, while at the same time broadening the range of their interests. In this respect, the department is proposing, jointly with the department of philosophy, a joint honours degree in Politics and Philosophy, a degree which we expect to complement the existing joint honours degree in History and Politics. There is little doubt that in the future more varied and more challenging combinations of disciplines will be evolved in an attempt to break away from the present, cripplingly narrow specialization and to produce a better and more soundly educated type of graduate, of which I think our society is so much in need.

So far, I have been talking about what political science is about and what we have sought to do in the department. Let me now turn to the title of this lecture: *Scepticism and Political Virtue*.

The thesis that I want to put forward is a simple one. One might even say, obvious. I make no apologies for this if only because the obvious is too often ignored to the disadvantage of all. I do not propose to report any research findings. There are enough graduate students to do that and a surfeit of journals and seminars where such reporting can be easily made.

Rather, what I want to do is to reflect on the nature of our society from the perspective of my discipline—which, I take it, is one of the purposes an inaugural is supposed to serve. Inaugurals, to digress for a minute, had their origin in the demand for a confessional. In an absolutist age when education was for the rich and the privileged, the State, in not wanting to exalt a prospective heretic, regarded it as legitimate to demand of anyone about to be offered a chair to profess what views he held of his discipline. In time, of course, the confessional element gave way to a critical, reflective outlook or a reportage of some new advance in a discipline. In the lecture, I want to adopt the former of these two approaches. But let me, in order to avoid any confusion, first define my terms. By scepticism, I do not mean that negativity of withdrawal and self-alienation which Hegel describes in his *Phenomenology*. That attitude would be better described as cynicism, the attitude encapsulated in the expression "nothing matters". Whatever politics is, it is certainly not true to say that nothing in the activity of politics matters. It was the cynicism of the large majority of the people of Nigeria, and particularly of the educated *elite*, that in many ways contributed to the difficulties which we experienced with the first republic and which ultimately led to the collapse of that regime. For the large majority of the educated *elite*, politics did not matter because politics was a dirty game anyhow. The cynicism of the *elite* infected the rest of the population, so that, with the exception of 1959, the percentage of voters fell with each succeeding election. It thus became possible for politicians to believe that however the electorate voted, it would in no way influence the outcome of an election. Political cynicism gave way to electoral manipulation and ultimately to communal violence, military intervention and finally to civil war.

Equally, I do not mean by scepticism, that philosophical stance which denies the reality of the external world and which issues into a self-defeating solipsism. As Wittgenstein rightly pointed

out in the *Tractatus*, the philosophical scepticism of the solipsist is not just irrefutable, it is simply nonsensical when it tries to raise doubts where no questions can be asked. As he put it, "doubt can exist only where a question exists, a question only when an answer exists, and an answer only when something can be said." The same point is made in the essay "*On Certainty*" where it is stated that "our doubts depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn" and that "the game of doubting itself presupposes certainty." The references to language games implied in the expression "the game of doubting" would also rule out the moral scepticism of the positivist for whom moral judgements amount to no more than mere ejaculatory utterances, or statements of one's emotional states.

By scepticism, I mean a general intellectual outlook which has an affinity to the epistemology of English empiricists such as Hume, an outlook which does not deny assent but withholds it until justification is given. The intellectual outlook that I am talking about is nothing new. It is a tradition which runs from Socrates to the present and is poignantly reflected in someone like the physicist Niels Bohr who enjoined on his students never to take his statements as assertions but as questions. But it is a tradition which, unfortunately, is not a feature of African thought, where authority, whether of the elders or of the ancestors, is taken as constitutive of "fact", and "facts" expressed in assertive statements, are never supposed to be questioned. In this mode of thought it would be as absurd to ask how do you know what my interests are, when confronted with the statement "I acted in your best interests" as it would be to ask how one knew witches existed when told they did exist. Thus, to take a contemporary example, someone like Mobutu Sesse Seko could talk of authenticity and ask all Zaireans to change their names, and not expect anyone to ask what he meant by authenticity, or to demand justification for whatever authenticity might be said to mean.

The talk of justification in this context raises a host of very complex questions, such as the relationship between morality, law and politics, which I cannot go into in detail here. It is sufficient simply to offer a few comments. Let me first of all state that when I talk of justification, I am not suggesting that all acts and specifically acts of the government need to be justified. That would be a Whiggish

conception which few people would today entertain. We do not, for example, ask for a justification when the State imposes a penalty for the offence of stealing, though we may question and demand justification for particular penalties. But to say that not all acts need to be justified is not to deny that some do. To justify is to offer reasons, it is, again as Wittgenstein would say, "to appeal to something independent." Reasons are not causes though a reason in some contexts could function as a cause. But deontically, reasons and causes are analytically distinct. In the sense in which justification is here used, it would not be legitimate to utter as a reason any statement which has as its subject the first person singular. Since we are concerned about acts of government, we would accept as legitimate only justificatory statements expressible in the first person plural. Thus to appeal to conscience or to the good faith of an actor would not count as justification in the sense here required. No doubt we do accept first person singular statements as reasons for action, for example, the statement: "I did it because. . ." where the because phrase serves not only to explain but to justify. Be that as it may, there is no inconsistency in saying, "I know you did it because. . .but, you nevertheless acted wrongly" and hence denying the because phrase a justificatory status. In any case, the acts I am concerned with are not private acts, where private has as its referrent the individual person. By "acts" I mean public acts and acts in this sense would cover policies and programmes, that is, act would refer not only to what a government does do, but also to what it says it proposes to do. Similarly, and taking up Wittgenstein's argument that to justify is to appeal to something independent, it would not be legitimate to cite the law, as H. B. Acton has shown, as a justificatory warrant. Thus, for a government to do X or to order X and cite as justification, a law of the land—the University strike in April 1973 and the government's reaction is sufficiently recent to serve as an illustration—would not be legitimate, for an individual, or a set of individuals acting in a given way could have initiated such action in order to call in question the very rule which government appealed to in ordering X. It is not inconceivable that an individual might want to act in a given way, and knowing the consequences of his so acting, nevertheless goes ahead because he wants to call into question a specific rule which provides a penalty for the action. Consider the case of someone, who in a state of emergency, makes statements which purportedly are forbidden

under such a state. To tell such an individual that he is being punished because he has infringed some rule or the other provided for by the state of emergency would not be to tell him anything meaningful. He uttered what he did not because he was unaware that a state of emergency existed but because he wanted to call into question the state of emergency itself; and hence, for him, it would be no justification, no explanation, to be told that he was being punished because there existed a state of emergency. I realize that there are many difficulties in this line of argument. But I think the distinction I am trying to make is sufficiently clear for there to be no confusion. There is a world of a difference between, say, a thief who, on being convicted for stealing, argues that he was only trying to challenge the laws of property, and the conscientious objector who accepts going to jail to call attention to the morality of conscription. I do not believe we could be confused, or be misled about the logical difference between the two cases.

We can extend this line of reasoning and say that political principles, where "principles" are statements encapsulated in some ideology or the other, should also be discounted. For example, to say X is in the interest of the working class, where" in the interest of the working class" is cited to warrant X, is not a justification of X. Such principles, as Weldon rightly argued, though in some contexts legitimate, nevertheless function more as "keep out" notices—an end to argument—rather than reasons for or against action. Utilitarian considerations can be permitted; as can appeal to such notions as "national interest" provided that is understood in a Barry sense, where, "national interest" is the interest of a non-assignable group. Thus we may want to say, for example, that the salary awards based on the Udoji report are in the *common* interest, but we do not say *ex-definitione* that they are in the national interest. In the sense here intended, to justify would thus be to offer a statement (or set of statements) the acceptance of which not only enables us to understand why a given act was initiated or a policy promulgated, but also enjoins on us, if not the obligation to accept the act or policy, then certainly the duty to suspend judgement about the act or policy, and therefore to react in a manner which could be construed, epiphenomenally, as acceptance. Put in the terminology of the political scientist, to justify would be to render legitimate.

It should be obvious at this stage that my use of scepticism is closely tied up with the related notions of dissent and of protest.

For to demand justification for any given action is to suggest that where this is withheld or where the reasons given are thought inadequate, then assent can be denied, which is to say that one dissents and where the latter is strong enough that dissent could give rise to protest. What form protest would take would of course depend on the contextual situation and this need not necessarily be violent. Violence, for its own sake, is self-defeating, and by violence, I do not mean structural violence, which is a property of social institutions and which denies the individual the possibility of self-realization; or psychological violence which seeks to debase the self. I mean direct violence, which, directed against authority, we variously describe as rebellion, revolt, or even revolution. Rebellion, revolt and revolution are modalities of protest against structural violence and/or direct violence where the latter is acts carried out by instrumentalities of the government. This is why direct violence, whether structurally warranted, or alternatively directed against repressive structures, is in the final analysis, self-defeating. The belief, among some intellectuals, that change can occur only through violence was criticized by Raymond Aron, who dubbed it the "opium of the intellectuals." Violence is only one modality of action and there is no reason why it should be conferred a peculiar logical status. Gellner has made the same point more recently but where he was directing his attack against the nihilists of contemporary society. Aron's attack was aimed at Marxist revolutionaries. Violence, thus, is not self-justificatory. Its use has to be justified and this can only be done when all other avenues of effecting change have been exhausted.

Let me now take up the notion of political virtue which I use much in the same way as one would find it used in Plato, Aquinas or Hegel. Political virtue, for these, consists in commitment or loyalty to the State; in the acceptance and recognition of a supervening political authority; and further, in the acceptance that in committing one's self to the State, one realizes, existentially, the self. Plato, Aristotle and even Hegel thought of political virtue as something which proceeded from the way a society was structured. I am not here interested in offering a critique of all three. It is sufficient merely to say that by the time Plato came to write his two latter dialogues, the *Statesman* and the *Laws*, he had come to realize how wrong his earlier thoughts were. Aristotle puts forward a view not unlike that which we find latter-day political

scientists such as Coleman and Rosberg, making. I will argue later that such views are misguided. Hegel admittedly came close to the views I intend to propose but unfortunately he was caught up in the web of his own metaphysics and ended up idealizing the State. Political virtue is an attribute or property we predicate of individuals, but it is not difficult to see that it has a collectivistic analogue, this being, in the jargon of contemporary political science, the notion of political integration. Now, the thesis I want to examine can be stated fairly simply: it is to argue that unless a people cultivate a sceptical attitude, or alternatively, unless a governmental system accepts and tolerates political scepticism on the part of its citizenry, that citizenry cannot exhibit the property of virtuousness as I have used it. The logic of this is straight forward enough. Spinoza put it quite succinctly when he said all determination is negation. Related to that thesis—and by extension—I want to suggest that much of what political scientists talk about when they talk of political integration is not only misplaced but also misguided. To do this I would like to adapt the argument developed by Kuhn in his fascinating study—*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.*

Kuhn's analysis of science rests on the fundamental distinction which he makes between what he calls "normal science" and "extraordinary science". What most scientists practise at any given moment is normal science and this is established once a given scientific theory, say Copernican astronomy or Newtonian mechanics, becomes accepted by the scientific community. This, then, becomes the paradigm and it is the paradigm, once established, which defines what are scientific problems, procedures and the selection of data. As Kuhn put it, "scientific fact and theory are not categories separable, except perhaps within a single tradition of normal-scientific practice." What Kuhn calls normal science is thus paradigm-based research, the main concerns of which are the "determination of significant fact, matching of facts with theory and articulation of theory." With some few exceptions, such as mathematics, Kuhn believes we can date normal science from about the 16th or 17th century. Before that what we had was a collection of facts and theories. There were no definite paradigms and without a paradigm there could be no normal science.

Paradigms not only provide a framework for problem solving, they involve a series of other commitments besides epistemological, ontological and even aesthetic commitments. Put differently this is to say that for the scientific community, a paradigm does constitute some sort of a weltanschauung but one which inevitably "restricts the phenomenological field accessible for scientific investigation at any given time." But the restriction equally inevitably leads to the discoveries of anomalies, anomalies which are both of fact and of theory, of observational and conceptual recognition, and which ultimately result in a change of paradigm categories and procedures often accompanied by resistance. To quote Kuhn, "the transition from a paradigm in crisis to a new one from which a new tradition emerges is far from a cumulative process, one achieved by an articulation or extension of the old paradigm. Rather it is a reconstruction of the field from new fundamentals, reconstruction that changes some of the field's most elementary theoretical generalizations as well as many of its paradigm methods, and applications." The transition phase, according to Kuhn, is the period of extraordinary science.

The foregoing is a brief and somewhat truncated account of Kuhn's analysis. But before leaving that analysis, there are three issues arising from it to which I would like to call attention. The first is the incommensurability of paradigms. It is not clear whether this is to be taken as a logical or an empirical statement, but the presupposition would be that it is logical and follows from the concept of a paradigm. The second is that between the choice of paradigms, though one can show that a competing paradigm may be neater logically and aesthetically, the ultimate choice of a competitor rests not on the weaknesses of the existing paradigm but on the promise of the competitor. Thirdly, there is a paradoxical view of progress. On the one view of progress, this can be interpreted as paradigm change. In which case, this would confer on anomalies and crises a particular role and we therefore see progress as a function of anomalies arising within a given paradigm and leading to a crisis. But this could suggest that progress is always a movement towards some goal and in this lies the paradox: that paradigm change logically is never towards a goal and hence we are faced with the fact that progress does not depend on a goal or set of goals postulated but on scientific activity itself.

I think a parallelism can be drawn between Kuhn's notion of a paradigm and given polities, and that the former can be used to illuminate aspects of the latter. Such an exercise is by no means original. Wolin has in fact already done so for the metalanguage of politics.

However, to say a parallelism can be drawn is not to suggest any homologous relationship between a scientific paradigm and a polity. A model need not be homologous with the social state it models before it can be used as an analogue. Analogies, after all, are no more than metaphors, as Max Black has shown. They are, in a way, a manner of speaking and a given manner of speaking is helpful, makes sense, only to the extent that it serves to communicate and to elucidate. Metaphors help us to transcend the limitations which language imposes on reality. A somewhat misleading metaphor may still be useful if it points the way to a better conceptualization. Thompson's metaphoric way of describing the structure of the atom was misleading but it did lead Bohr and others to a better understanding of that structure. Thus, to model a polity on a scientific paradigm may seem absurd to some but there is no reason why the absurd should not be tolerated if it is heuristically useful. But to return to the parallelism.

The institutional complex which we call a polity or a political system is, like a scientific paradigm, a framework for problem solving. However we look at the polity, whether systemically or sub-systemically, the phenomenological reality of the state is that it is a problem solving device. We can, if we want to, talk about the polity, in the jargon of system theorists, in terms of input, conversion and output functions, but whatever jargon we employ, ultimately, it is the state which defines which of the varied issues that confront a society at any given time are to be regarded as societal problems, how such problems are to be solved, with what tools and what are to count as solutions. In time, of course, rules are developed in the activity of problem solving to govern the processes involved, which rules then serve to differentiate one system from the other much in the same way that by examining the rules which govern normal scientific activity, we differentiate between the paradigms employed by different researchers. Normal scientific activity and normal political processes have this in common, that they can be likened to games and just as with games, it is the

rules which help to differentiate one game from another by demarcating not only what are the structural boundaries of the game but also what are to count as legitimate moves of the game. The same is true of political processes and polities. Whatever the way in which we choose to describe a polity it is by a study of the set of rules which defines the polity's structural boundaries and what are proper moves within those boundaries that we differentiate one polity from the other. Looking at the polity in this way, one fact should be immediately obvious and that is that we relegate that which is so much beloved by some political scientists—ideology—to the realm of the epiphenomenal and categorize it, as Marx did, as false-consciousness.

I will come to this later, but let me at this point anticipate some objections and possible criticisms. The objection can be made that in relegating ideology to the epiphenomenal, I might be unwittingly over-emphasizing my notion of rules, because, so it could be argued, even rules have to be validated and this we cannot do unless we have a higher order metasystem within which those rules can be explained and justified. The reply to this is simple enough. Suppose someone watching a game, say soccer, were to ask why a referee blew a penalty when he saw a player carrying the ball in his hands. We would, of course, reply that it is a rule of soccer that none other than the goal keeper is permitted to touch the ball with his hands. Suppose the questioner now asks why that is a rule; we can restate that rule and say the players are playing soccer and not some other game; should he still insist on asking why, we would be left with no other choice but to terminate the argument. It would be meaningless for us to seek another metasystem to explain why it is a rule of soccer that a player should not touch the ball with his hands. Analogously, it would be meaningless to look for an ideology by which we seek to validate what are the rules of a political system. I realize, of course, that there are polities where this might be possible. But I would argue that in that case, the validating ideologies are largely redundant.

In the rules which a polity develops we find the analogue of normal science, but unlike normal science where research activity inescapably uncovers anomalies in a paradigm, polity problem-solving rules once established tend to be suppressive of anomalies, and hence reflexively to become self-sustaining. This, in the language of functionalists, is what is known as system maintenance,

a partially true, but perhaps trivial point. The reasons for this are not too difficult to appreciate, and it will be sufficient simply to give a few. There is first, the logical difference between a scientific fact and what we could call "societal facts." Whereas it could be argued that the former are value-neutral, the latter are rarely ever so. In saying this, I am not unaware of the fact that in the selection of his data, the scientist is influenced by his value preferences. But that is not what is in question here, which is that even the language which we employ in describing societal facts is itself value laden. So that in describing what is a societal fact, we inescapably exhibit our values and it is these which make a societal fact a fact. Here, I am of course making what is essentially a Winchian-type argument which I believe is valid irrespective of the objections of positivistically minded thinkers. For all the effort which positivists have expended in trying to devise a neutral language, it remains true that we cannot translate a given language into another without a remainder. This difference between what I call a societal fact and a scientific fact has a consequence not only for the corrigibility of facts—what fits or does not fit within a given paradigm—but also for the definition of problems, that while in normal science it is the problem which determines the selection of facts, the reverse is more often than not the case in the polity paradigm. In other words, in a polity, we do not start with the theory and then seek to see how the facts fit or do not fit the theory; more often than not, what we do is to observe a series of facts and then see how we can link these together within some conceptual framework. A second and perhaps more important reason why polity problem-solving rules tend to be suppressive of anomalies lies in the nature of the problems themselves as these are paradigm-defined. It is of the nature of scientific problems that they can, in principle, be solved, and because the paradigm itself is closed, the consequences of a solution relative to the paradigm can also be said to be known. This is rarely the case with societal problems, of which it would be more appropriate to say we overcome rather than solve, a point which has been well made by Weldon in his *Vocabulary of Politics* where he discussed the logical geography of terms like puzzles, problems and difficulties. But the crucial point here is of course that because polity paradigms are open rather than closed, we can hardly ever stipulate *ex ante* what the consequences of a societal problem being overcome will be, or worse still, what the

unanticipated consequences are likely to be. To say that we can is what Popper has called an historicist fallacy, the exposition of which constitutes his main point of attack on Marxists and other holistic social thinkers. Oakshottian conservatism stems equally from similar epistemological premises. There is, thus, built into every polity a certain kind of inertia, an inertia which encourages systems to look for the tractable while avoiding the seemingly intractable. Even then, in selecting the tractable, a system will seek a solution within that which is given by the rules, and where these are seen not to apply, will redefine the tractable until the rules can be made to fit. It should now be clear why polity problem-solving rules should be repressive of anomalies.

It is however the case that unless anomalies occur we cannot adequately test, or put differently, articulate, a paradigm. As I have sought to show, progress, in one of its senses, consists in the continous articulation and elaboration of a paradigm through the resolution of anomalies. For the polity this can be possible, I would like to argue, only though the inculcation of a sceptical outlook. For scepticism, as I have used it, the withholding of assent till justification is given, serves essentially to bring out anomalies in the problem-solving rules of the polity, and without anomalies being generated there can be no progress, only a deadening sterility.

The political history of what are usually called the developed nations bears out this contention. Consider, for example, the case of Britain, whose political system, even though criticized by a few, is admired by most. At whatever time in history we wish to choose to date the establishment of the British paradigm, whether in the 13th, 17th or 19th century, the history has been one of a continuous elaboration of that paradigm through the conscious generation of anomalies. We have only to read the description of that system as it stood in the 18th century, the description given by, for one, Sir Lewis Namier in his "*The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*" and compare that with what we know of the system today to see how far and how radically the system has changed. But the changes have come, not in the manner suggested by Oakshott and others like him, through "attending to what is intimated" by the system or through that advocated by Marxists, a complete restructuring of society and its institutions, but through a process of confronting the paradigm with anomalies : in the 19th

century, the anomaly between the claim of representativeness and the disenfranchisement of a large segment of the population; in the early 20th century, between the claims of popular sovereignty and the existence of established privilege. In more recent times, we find the relationship between scepticism, anomaly and paradigm articulation exhibited all too clearly in Britain's negotiations and relationship with the European Economic Community. As an undergraduate, I well remember reading a paper by one of my teachers, Professor C. J. Hughes, who, in an article in the journal *Parliamentary Affairs*, was derisory of the Swiss for instituting plebiscitary procedures as part of their problem-solving rules. As he put it, the British lion was no less lord of the jungle for not being part of it. I wonder what Hughes' judgement would now be about more recent innovations in British politics.

None of these changes, I must remark, have occurred without some resistance from those who, at any given time, control and manage the polity. One could in fact interpret much of British political history in terms of resistance to paradigm elaboration. Nevertheless the system has witnessed continuous elaboration because few have been prepared to grant assent without justification. The dialectics of British political history has been none other than one of dissent, protest and change, or in the terms I have been using, of scepticism, anomaly and paradigm elaboration.

If we turn to the United States, we again witness the same dialectical process. Let me add here that by "dialectical" I do not mean a doctrine of logico-historical inevitability. Such a doctrine, as Popper has shown, is not just formally absurd, it is meaningless. If from a given proposition and its negation, anything can be said to follow, then every other proposition follows and hence no proposition follows. I use dialectics in its older and more ordinary sense in which the word simply means a process of doubt and confirmation, of trial and error, of change and interchange, of anomaly and elaboration. If the British are sceptical about their institutions, the Americans are no less so. A minimal familiarity with American political institutions shows these to be the outcome of a thoroughgoing scepticism and a healthy pragmatism, a combination of attitudes which have continued to shape the polity paradigm.

In the European continent, on the other hand, we find a scepticism which has been married to a logical orientation, and which, as exhibited in France and Italy, has accepted paradigm change

almost as a way of life. Observers would no doubt describe both polities as "unstable" but such a description could be derogatory only if we make a virtue of stability and convert sterility into a mark of progress. Paradoxically, some studies have shown that for Frenchmen and Italians, political commitment tends to vary with what others describe as political instability. It would seem that for these societies, to put it crudely, the people are happier when there is political contestation and when contestation gives rise to the generation of anomalies.

One might want to object and say all I have been doing is really to make a case for the institutionalization of opposition; or, put differently, that what I have been doing is to talk about the form and structure of political institutions and hence that I am reifying when I talk of scepticism. But so to argue would be mistaken. The relationship between thought and change may be much more complex than Gellner makes it out to be, but he is nevertheless right that thought is logically prior to change. Institutions develop and change not through fortuitous events or through some Weltgeist manifesting itself in an unconscious world historical process, but through design and criticism and specifically, criticism which proceeds from a sceptical outlook. Modernity and change come only from a preparedness intellectually to deny, to withhold assent and to oppose.

Opposition as I am here using it is not necessarily institutionalized opposition. Consider, for example, the case of the Chinese. It is sometimes thought that their phenomenal advance has been achieved through their good fortune in having a leadership which is committed to the welfare of the people, a state structure which disallows factional opposition and a holistic ideology. But as Franz Schurmann, Joan Robinson and a number of other commentators have shown, the central fact of Chinese history since 1957 has not been an adherence to ideology or loyalty to the leadership but, to quote Schurmann, an "attack on the nature and structure of the Chinese Communist Party," an insistent and over-pressing demand that every policy has to be publicly justified before it can be accepted and implemented. Criticism and justification has not been restricted to the party alone. It has also been extended to every facet of Chinese life and society. In 1967 criticism was elevated to an operational principle and was styled by Chairman Mao, the "three-in-one principle" of "struggle-criticism-transformation."

China is about the only state today where critical scepticism has been accepted as an operational way of life. Admittedly after the initial outburst of 1956—the "let a hundred flowers bloom" period, some attempt was made to stifle criticism, but by 1960, it had become obvious that that policy could no longer be sustained. The absence of criticism was already making for rigidity. The outcome is known to all, the explosion of dissent which became known as the Cultural Revolution. For many a Sinologist, the cultural revolution was no doubt the end of Chinese society, but interestingly, nothing came of the expectation and dire predictions of these experts. Not since the Long March can we find a significant parallel to the cultural revolution in engendering commitment to the polity paradigm. In this respect, there can be no greater contrast than that between China and the USSR, where the principle of democratic centralism has become a key instrument for propping up what Djilas would describe as "The Unperfect Society." In place of the alienation which Solchenytsin has so poignantly described in *The First Circle*, the result of a sceptical outlook has been that the Chinese paradigm is being continuously transformed, a transformation which has served to heighten the commitment of the average citizen to the paradigm, to create, in other words, that sense of political virtue which I defined earlier on. Von Wright brings out this sense very clearly in the distinction he makes between "auto-commitment" and "alio-commitment." To illustrate this distinction, consider a hypothetical norm which orders that a given state be produced if an antecedent state obtains. If the agent who produces the ordered state is the subject of the hypothetical norm then we speak of auto-commitment; if different, then we have alio-commitment. Commitment in the former sense is not unlike a promise. Having made a promise, I have a moral obligation to bring about the state described by my promise. To be auto-committed is to be morally committed, it is to accept that one has a non-prudential obligation to bring about successive states of affairs to which one is committed by his antecedent action. The logic of auto-commitment is thus the logic of total mobilization, something which no African State, unhappily, has been able to achieve.

I realize that the objection can be made that in my argument I have seriously underestimated the role which ideology plays in Chinese life and society. There is a ready reply to such an objection. This is to point to other polities, such as the USSR, with an ideology

not unlike the Chinese but where the nature of the individual's commitment is radically different. This can be seen from an examination of the system of controls applied in the two societies.

For all that has been said of the place of ideology in Chinese society, the curious fact remains that the ideology has remained extremely flexible, so flexible that but for what one might loosely call the syntax of the ideology it would hardly have been recognizable as Marxist. One wonders in fact whether we should talk of ideology at all and not simply of a sophisticated mix of epigrammatic statements and metaphors, a mix which no doubt is derived in part from Marx, and in part also from Lao Tse and other codifiers of Chinese traditional wisdom.

Whatever claims we might wish to make for ideology, I think it is indubitable that wherever it has been construed holistically and programmatically, ideology has always been antithetical to change and to paradigm articulation. The virtue of Russell's little book—*Science and Religion*–which otherwise is a didactic and misleading book, lies precisely in showing this and for a contemporary example we can do no better than to compare and contrast the state of Polish philosophical thinking between say, 1890 and 1939, with the post-war period until the mid-sixties. The ideological mind is a closed mind and the paradigm of the closed mind is the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, and there is little that can be said for that. I have said this much about ideology because there are not a few who would like to see in the imposition of an all-embracing ideology in Nigeria, the panacea for all of our ills. To subscribe to such a viewpoint is to fall prey to the myth of the Grand Inquisitor. It is to accept, at an existential level, that human beings are a-rational entities incapable of reasoning and hence, should they exhibit traits of rationality, to pronounce them non-human. The world of the ideologue leads necessarily to a Pavlovian universe.

If the foregoing is accepted, then the implications for a society such as ours are not far to seek. It would follow, almost as a matter of logical necessity, that to advocate—as someone like Major General Hassan Katsina has, and there are many more like him in and outside the military—that we should concern ourselves with the development (whatever this may mean) objectives of the regime and not with the polity paradigm and its related problem-solving rules, is not only misplaced, it is decidedly pernicious. It is

misplaced because it seriously misconstrues the role of scepticism for the articulation and elaboration of the polity. It is pernicious because to accept it would be to undermine the sense of commitment on which the development which the regime seeks so crucially depends.

When one looks at the different African States, the most striking feature about them is what little room they leave for dissent, for critical questioning and the need for justification. Hardly is there to be found a state which accepts that its citizens should want to call in question whatever is government policy at any given time. Even Tanzania, which many hold out as the near-ideal paradigm, can introduce a policy of villagisation in which more than a million peasants within the last six months (Oct1974–March,1975) have been forcibly collectivized and yet insist that no questions be asked. Like Pavlov's animals, the people are simply to respond in ways into which they are supposed to have been conditioned. Except, of course, that they are not, and cannot be conditioned, a-rational entities.

Nigeria presents, in many respects, an almost unique, if not unique case. If we exclude places like South Vietnam and Haiti, which properly would fall under what J. R. Lucas calls "pathological States," then Nigeria, at present, is the only country in the world which has twice as many soldiers as it has teachers. Were we to rank-order, in terms of certain select indicators, the 132 countries of the world, we would find that in terms of *per capita* income, Nigeria would rank 102nd, surpassing, in effect, only 30 other countries; 123rd, that is surpassing only nine other states, in terms of school age population per teacher and public expenditure *per capita* on health care, and 113th in terms of population per physician. On the other hand, Nigeria occupies about a median position in terms of public expenditure *per capita* on the military and the ratio of armed forces to population respectively. If our universe were the 42 States in Africa, including South Africa but excluding Egypt, then the rank-ordering would show Nigeria to be in the following position: 24th in terms of GNP *per capita;* 32nd in terms of *per capita* expenditure on education; 35th for proportion of school age relative to total population; 7th in terms of public expenditure *per capita* on the military and 4th with respect to the ratio of armed forces to total population. In aggregate terms, Nigeria spends more on defence than any other African State and ranks

first with respect to the proportion of GNP spent on the armed forces. Taking the last indicator alone, that is proportion of GNP spent on the armed forces, we find interestingly enough that Nigeria is surpassed only by the United States, the USSR and South Vietnam. Though we now find that we can barely feed ourselves nevertheless we are confronted by the odd fact that in respect of capital expenditure we spend more on defence than we do on agriculture and health taken together and about the same on education (taking UPE into consideration) and health together. I do not doubt that Nigeria has defence commitments but it would be absurd to argue that such commitments could ever warrant the sums we are currently expending on defence.

Facts such as these are more than sufficient to make anyone sceptical about whatever purposes or goals the State could be said to be furthering or pursuing. In any other state, except of course those that deny a legitimate place for scepticism, facts such as these would have been called in question and explanation and justification demanded. An anomaly would have been revealed if it were then seen that no adequate explanation, no rational justification could be offered. And it would hardly be credible that one could feel any sense of commitment when confronted by the non-rational.

Let me generalize, though at a different level, the argument for scepticism which I have been making. Assume for a moment that a society is growing at an annual average rate of, say 3.3%. It does not matter whether we conceive of this growth rate in terms of GNP *per capita;* in terms of capital investment, or even of population. Under such an assumption then, it will be the case that the next sixteen years will produce the same level of change as was experienced in the previous forty years, or alternately, that the next forty years will yield an increase of change five times greater than the preceding forty. Since decision makers too often take a limited time perspective when making decisions it would follow that, inescapably, they will underestimate the future, having as they do, the past as a guide. The errors of the present become distorted exponentially in the future to produce a distorted future. But unless we can be sceptical about the present, there can hardly be a hopeful future. That will have been mortgaged. It does therefore seem ironical that just at the time when the developed nations are becoming increasingly sceptical about the problem-solving capability of their polity paradigms, the developing African nations,

without comparable technological resources and skills for future-forecasting should embargo a questioning of the present.

Without scepticism there can be little room for paradigm articulation and ultimately for paradigm change and without paradigm articulation there can hardly be progress or room for development and certainly no basis for political virtue. A parallel argument to that which I am making is stated by Adam Schaff in replying to those who accused him of "revisionism". Schaff's argument was that Marxism is an open system and as such is in constant need of elaboration. Hence the "revisionists" were not those who sought to articulate the Marxist doctrine but the orthodoxists who wanted to impose on the doctrine the rigidity of a closed system. Such men, Schaff argued, were not just "revisionists" in the true sense of revisionism, they were in fact un-Marxist. Similarly, those who deny a place for scepticism in politics seek not to preserve the State; they in fact undermine the State.

Two other brief comments may be made. The first is that if my general argument is valid, then it follows that we cannot legitimately compare a polity paradigm and its successor. In other words, attempts at comparing the civilian regime and its military successor—however we do this—are redundant. The paradigms are incommensurable. Secondly, and related to what has just been said, any suggestion that paradigm change should not be attempted—or even sought—because we would not know what the successor paradigm would be like—the familiar argument of "Wouldn't we simply be returning to the dirty politics of the civilian regime"—would be misplaced. For so to argue would be to imply that there are some goals which we move towards, and such an implication would be illegitimate. There are no milleniums and no utopias. Paradigm change, when it does occur, is its own justification and whatever uncertainty there might be, such uncertainty would be no grounds for insisting that a paradigm persist.

A different way of conceptualizing the argument I have been making is to see it as a case for what one might call anarchic conservatism. It is anarchic because it denies any special status to authority and refuses to accept that any social state is beyond or above questioning. A preferred world is a Heracleitian world. Stability is not only not desirable, it is the very antithesis of progress and progress comes about only through continuing change, which in turn arises from struggle and criticism, or, to be more accurate, from criticism and struggle.

Before I am misunderstood, let me add that I am using the adjectival form of anarchy deliberately to distinguish my concept from the familiar abstract noun form of the same term. The word anarchy as it has been traditionally used connotes a complete rejection of authority in whatever form. Hence it is extreme individualism. I am not rejecting all authority, only denying it a special status, a status which exempts authority from criticism and seeks to equate criticism with the absence of political virtue. There is also in my use of the term nothing which makes it incompatible with various forms of collectivism. The goal of the traditional anarchist, of a truly atomic society, would be meaningless in my conception, meaningless because my argument rejects the notion of goals if by goals we mean certain end-states which are uniquely to be preferred or to which all tends or ought to converge. Other connotations of anarchy, the rejection of private property, of any form of social organization other than the atomic, are redundant in my terms. The anarchic, in my use, is thus essentially limited.

The conservative element in my position comes from my rejection of that view which sees social change as meaningful only when it is holistic and total. To the protagonists of a holistic view, reformism, gradualism or incrementalism are anathema. Politics is an all or nothing game in which there are no mixed strategies. Politics, in my view, is not an all or nothing game, and a gradualist, reformist or incrementalist strategy is perfectly compatible with my notion of anarchic conservatism which states that a certain level of disorder is necessary and inevitable if order is to be achieved. In a way, this rests on my acceptance of society as a "counter-intuitive system" by which I mean a system which responds differently from what one would expect. Economists and, I suppose, political scientists are well aware of this. One initiates a policy, for example to restore confidence in the value of money when confronted with an inflationary situation, only to find that more people lose confidence and the inflationary situation is worsened. Or to take an example from my discipline, the introduction of a policy aimed at ensuring accountability may succeed in making office holders less accountable. Now, it is of the nature of counter intuitive systems that crisis within such a system tends to encourage greater interdependence between the elements of the system and hence to lead to uncertainty which is resolved by a restructuring of the system, a restructuring which then has the effect of shifting the

system on to a higher level of performance. But in restructuring, what is required is not steering from outside, a change of the path of development, to some postulated goal; what is needed is an internal restructuring which enables the component elements each to solve its own problems and in so doing, solve the problems of the whole. Only when no such restructuring is feasible does a change of path occur. To return to Kuhn, the state I have been describing corresponds to his notions of changes which occur within a given paradigm, changes which have the effect of elaborating and further articulating the paradigm. Paradigm change occurs only in a period of extra-ordinary science at which time it becomes obvious that no elaboration of the existing paradigm is capable of effecting a resolution of the anomalies then existing within the framework of the dominant paradigm. Counter-intuitive systems, like Kuhn's paradigms, progress only through crisis and criticism; order is possible only when there exists some degree of disorder.

I should also add, as a further clarification, that in arguing for scepticism I am not indirectly or unwittingly making a case for participation. It is logically conceivable that we could have a paradigm which permits of a high degree of participation, however we measure this, and yet in which criticism is minimal. In present day Africa we have the examples of polities like Guinea and Tanzania. No doubt there is a relationship between scepticism and participatory politics. I would say the latter is contingent on the former and the relationship is asymmetric.

My view of scepticism is not unusual. Similar viewpoints can be found in the collection of essays by Paul Wolf, Barrington Moore and Herbert Marcuse entitled *A Critique of Pure Toleration*, but where these other perspectives may be said to have started from what might be regarded as ontological considerations—views about man and his nature—or alternatively considerations about the dialectics of society, my point of take-off can be broadly regarded as epistemological. That, in itself, is nothing new as can be seen by a cursory glance at J. S. Mill.

However, I would like to conclude by taking a quick look, given what I have had to say, at some issues in my own discipline. First, if my general argument is tenable, then much of what goes as political socialization research can be regarded as either redundant or deleterious. Basically what such research seeks to do is to explore how learnt behaviour patterns, perceptions and attitudes

can be channelled so that they become supportive of polity paradigms. But if my general thesis is accepted then it is not too difficult to see that the outcome of such research is deleterious where this has the effect of suppressing anomalies or redundant where the outcome in no way contributes to the fostering of a sceptical outlook. In either case socialization theorists would be not unlike Schaff's "revisionists".

While we can no doubt find elements of the theory of socialization in Plato or F. H. Bradley, it is nonetheless true that much of what goes as political socialization derives from American social science and like most of the products of that social science, the concept of political socialization was rediscovered when people had become highly sceptical of the polity paradigm. The concern was obvious enough. To be sceptical about the system was somehow to be un-American. Since being un-American from the point of view of the power-holders was thought to be "bad" then ways had to be found to produce "good" Americans. If only one knew what the unquestioning American believed, what motivated him and what were his attitudes to society, then one could easily teach these to the young and so produce "good" Americans. Should we wonder why men like Skinner are so much beloved by the power holders? A Skinnerian world is a Pavlovian world. It is also the world of Orwell's 1984 but it is a world in which the notion of political virtue would be uterly meaningless, which is indeed ironic.

The second point I want to make pertains to what is often called the problem of national integration. Essentially, what political scientists mean when they talk of national integration is not unlike what I mean by political virtue. But having said this, a quick look at the contemporary literature shows all too clearly that there is not much agreement amongst those in the discipline as to how national integration is to be achieved. For some, salvation lies in the creation of a "cultural-ideological consensus of a very high degree of comprehensiveness." But shed of the rhetoric, this amounts to no more than a misleading restatement of the problem. For others, the way out is to be found in structuring society in the model of what MacPherson has called a "possessive market society." Yet still for others, the solution is seen to lie in the bridging of the gap that is said to exist between the *elite* and the masses.

These and other related views raise issues not unlike that which I have predicated of political socialization. But there is about the viewpoint of the integrationists, a fact which is well worth mentioning: this is the view that there is a paradigm of the polity, some specific structural form only, under, or within which, political virtue is possible. But however plausible the presumption may sound, it is nevertheless rendered suspect by the results of accepting it. For it has led integration theorists—and I was one until a few years ago—to propound a variety of descriptions of the political field which have patently different denotations, which are so logically incompatible that it is hard to think of anyone but a political scientist embracing them. As a small consolation, let me hasten to add that such a situation is not unique or peculiar to political science. It is also to be found in moral philosophy.

Now, if my general argument is tenable, then a re-examination of what has so far been accepted as conventional wisdom about integration by political scientists would seem to be called for. And this would be particularly important for those of us political scientists in the developing countries where the problem of national integration is supposed to be paramount.

I would like to end this lecture by making one remark on the pedagogic implicate of my argument. One way of looking at that argument is to see it as a plea for all authority to be questioned. In over a decade of teaching, one of the things I have been constantly struck by is the readiness with which students accept that which they see as authoritative. Lectures are gospel truths and lecturers are of course apostles of the truth. I suppose that is an outlook which must have been acquired from pre-University schooling and ultimately from early childhood. Even now, it would be unthinkable for the average Nigerian child to challenge its parents. The uncritical acceptance of authority at a very early stage thus finds itself reflected in an acquiescence in whatever is dished out at the University level, and a University education amounts to no more than another *rite de passage*. Let me explain what I am trying to say by making a distinction between a student coming to read Physics and one coming to do Physics. Most students who enter a University come to read, not to do. By reading, say Physics or Mathematics, I mean an orientation to education which sees education simply as the acquisition of a given body of information and/or set of techniques. The case of the economist who sees economics simply as an

exercise in sophisticated model building but who is unconcerned about the policy relevance of his models is something we are having to live with. The contrast to "reading" is "doing", an orientation which takes education not as an initiation into a mystery but an enterprise in exploration, an unceasing inquisitiveness even about that which is familiar.

Let me here introduce a brief autobiographical note. For the past three years or so, I have been in the habit of starting my lectures in political theory by saying to the students that they should not expect from me any body of knowledge or information. I had no holy writ to impart, only a series of questions geared to fostering some degree of intellectual disorder. The reaction, time and again, has been one of unbelief, a look which seems to suggest that perhaps I am not quite balanced. I mention this, not in an attempt at self-congratulation,—others no doubt have had not too dissimilar an experience—but to illustrate what I believe is a general tendency amongst our students—a tendency carefully to take down whatever is said, hardly to question it, to regurgitate at the appropriate time that which has been taken down, and hopefully expecting that would receive approval, to leave the University with a scrap of paper which proclaims the student is a Bachelor of one discipline or the other. One wonders, in fact, if students bother to question why a set of intellectual activity is referred to as a discipline ! By extension, I also wonder if we as teachers sometimes question the significance if not the relevance of some of the things we teach. To take the Social Sciences. One might want to ask why it is thought necessary for us to produce graduates in Economics or Political Science, Geography or Sociology. Why not a graduate in Social Science where social science constitutes a balanced mix of sub-sets of the set of disciplines we presently call the Social Sciences ? I realize that is what the course system is intended to achieve but I doubt if there is any member of the Social Sciences who would not admit failure in that respect. But I would like to suggest that if we have failed we have failed not because we do not see the rationale for a restructuring, but for the reasons which Gellner gave in his description of the sociology of contemporary analytical philosophy.

No doubt, as teachers, a good many of us would prefer to be seen as priests and guardians of the esoteric. It all contributes to a certain mystique about education and hence grounds for a claim to privilege. I suspect that for as long as such an outlook persists,

for so long will we and our students be hide bound to that commonplace which masquerades as the profound. In the process, we deny our calling which requires of us, as teachers and students, that which the greatest of all teachers, Socrates, sought to inculcate, a sceptical outlook.