REALISM AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: ENGAGING WITH HANNAH ARENDT AND LEO STRAUSS

ANANYA SHARMA

PHD STUDENT,
INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DIVISION
CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, ORGANIZATION AND DISARMAMENT,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI.

ABSTRACT
International Relations theory has benefitted greatly from growing interaction with political theory and philosophy over the last twenty years\(^1\). The works of Foucault, Derrida, Rorty, Lyotard, and Gramsci among others have become an accepted part of the international relations theoretical discourse. However, there has been a tenuous relationship between realism and political philosophy with the former dealing with hard material realities and the latter theorizing in abstraction. Even though there are common concerns addressed by realists and political philosophers, both reach different conclusions and seek distinct explanations and answers. This research paper attempts to understand the political philosophy of two of the most significant thinkers in contemporary philosophy - Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss. It is an attempt that seeks to widen the lens through which realism is usually examined, identifying patterns of similarity and difference between realism and the work of Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss. Suspicious of utopianism, and of optimistic visions of self and society, realists of different stripes concentrate on power, violence, and inevitability of war, themes which are of consequential significance in the writings of Arendt and Strauss. But the conclusions they draw from this focus vary greatly. Through the course of the paper one can gauge that the interaction between realism and political philosophy can be enriching, leading to a better understanding of contemporary issues.

KEY WORDS: Realism, Political Philosophy, Power, Violence, Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss.

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