

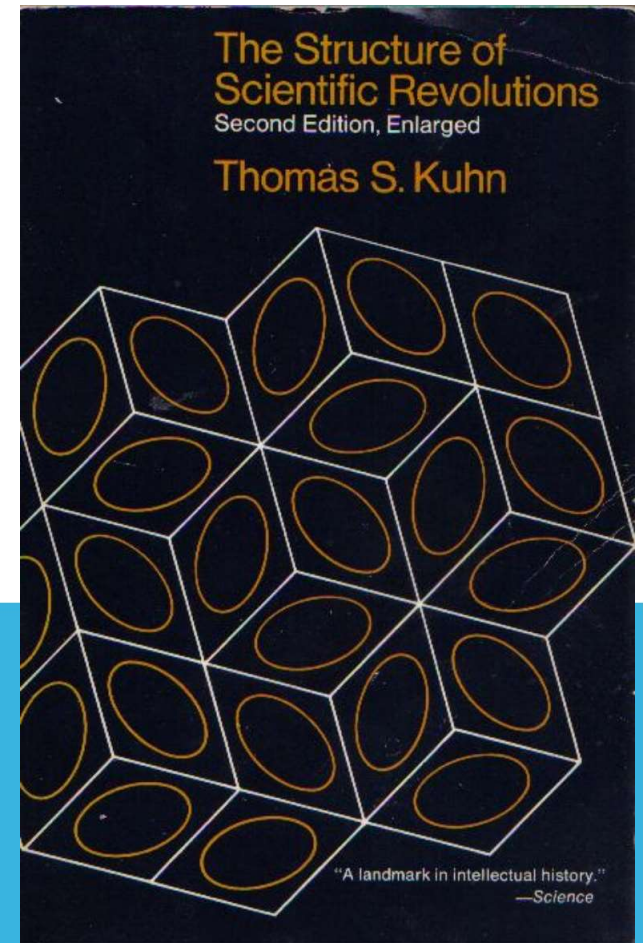
**UNDERSTANDING AND CRITICALLY ANALYZING
POLITICAL THEORY**

**Analyzing Political
Theory
and
Buddhism**



UNDERSTANDING AND CRITICALLY ANALYZING
POLITICAL THEORY

Thomas Kuhn on *The
Structure
of Scientific
Revolutions*



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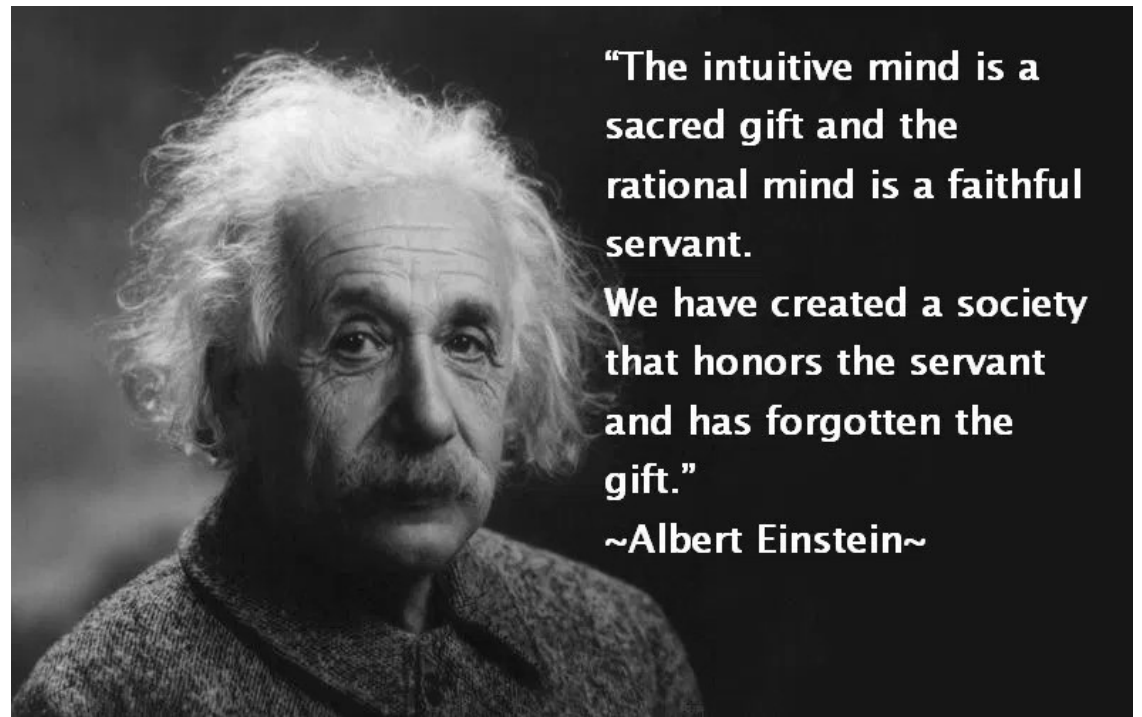
I. Can politics be studied “scientifically”?



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1. Nonscience

- a. Common sense
- b. Theology
- c. Intuition
- d. Ideology



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2. Science

a. For Kuhn, it is a culture (language, family, etc. such as physics, chemistry, biology)

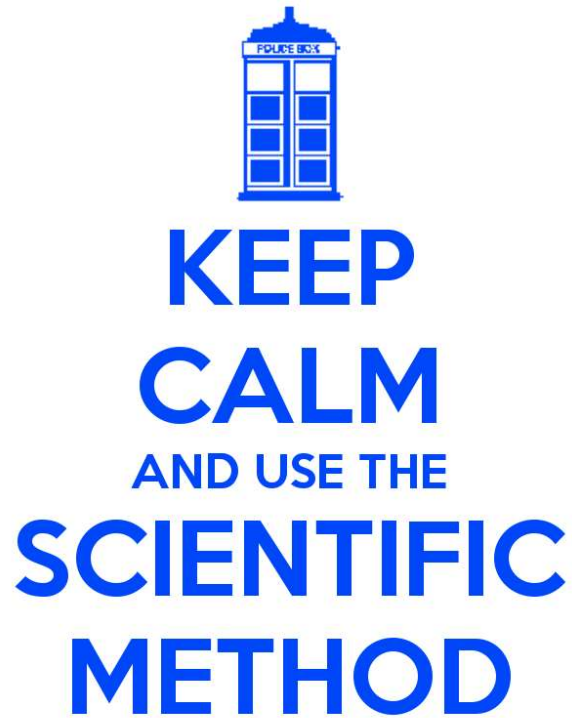


...As Thomas Kuhn pointed out in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, new scientific theories in any field are regarded with skepticism because scientists become attached to the old perspective earlier in their careers.

— Marilyn Ferguson —

AZ QUOTES

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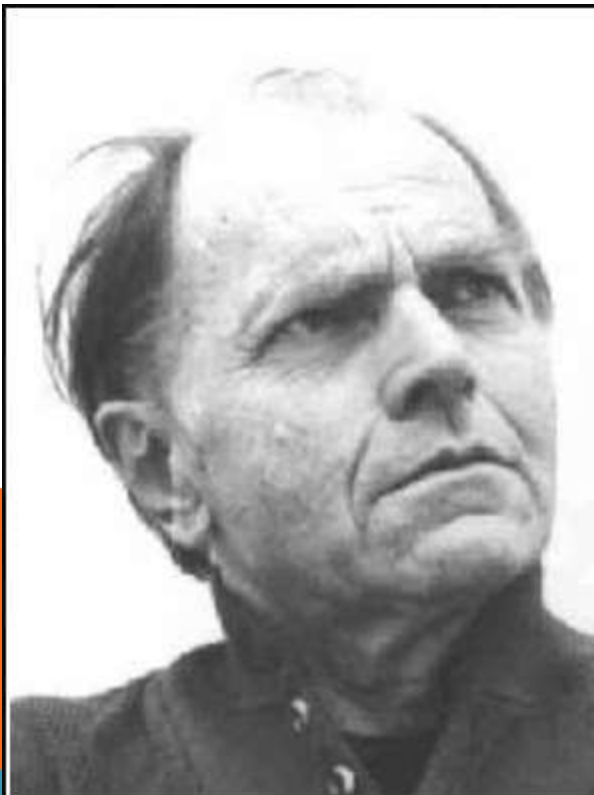


b. Each “science” has its own distinct methods and community.

Incommensurability – impossible to measure or compare; lacking a common quality with which to compare.

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c. Follows a pattern: concept formation >
induction > prediction



Given any rule, however
❖ fundamental ❖ or ❖ necessary ❖
for science, there are always
circumstances when it is advisable
not only to ignore the rule, but to
adopt its opposite.

— *Paul Feyerabend* —

AZ QUOTES

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d. Composed of
“paradigms”



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II. What is a “paradigm”?

1. It is a scientific culture. It tells its members *what* to study and *how* to study it.

Examples of Topics that are Organized Bodies of Knowledge

Subject	Topic
Social Studies	Compare climates, cultures & economies of 3 countries
Life science	Compare different animal phyla and the characteristics of each
Health	Compare well-balanced and poorly balanced meals
Art	Compare art forms of different historical periods
Literature	Compare the works of Faulkner, Fitzgerald & Hemingway
Early Elementary	Compare different community helpers
History	Compare northern & southern colonial settlements
Music	Compare Baroque, Romantic & Classical music

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2. It has four components:
- a. Symbolic generalizations
 - b. Shared metaphors/models
 - c. Shared values
 - d. Shared exemplars

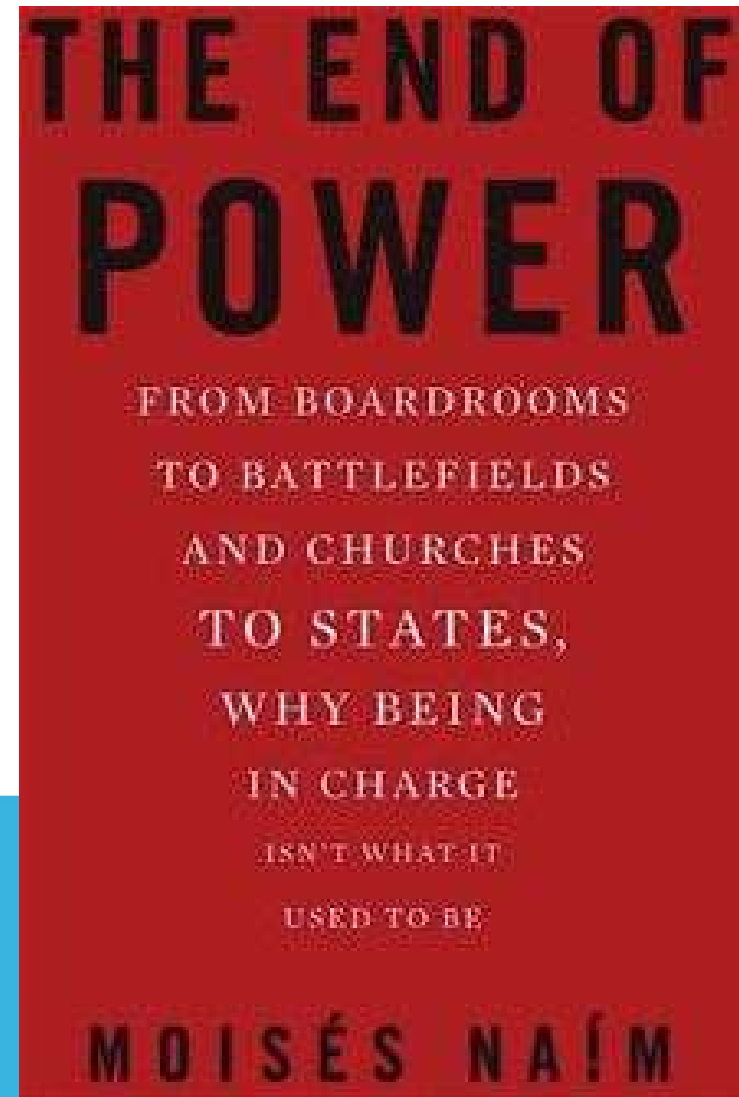


(puzzle problems and their solutions. An extraordinary achievement which people in the field accept as extraordinary)

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III. What is an anomaly?

1. A violation of a paradigm's expected result.
2. In science, anomalies are puzzles that need to be solved *within* the paradigm.



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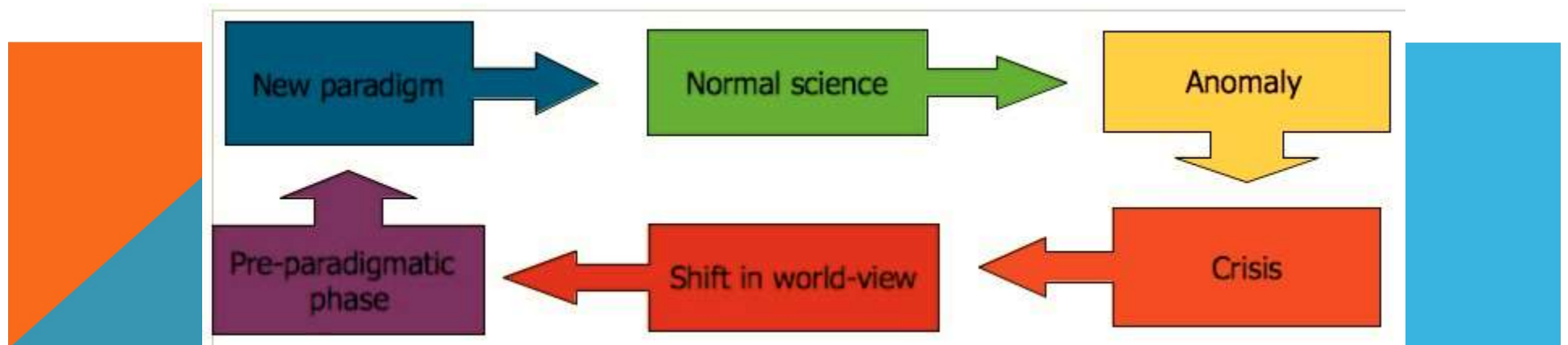
IV. How then,
does science
work?

4 stages:



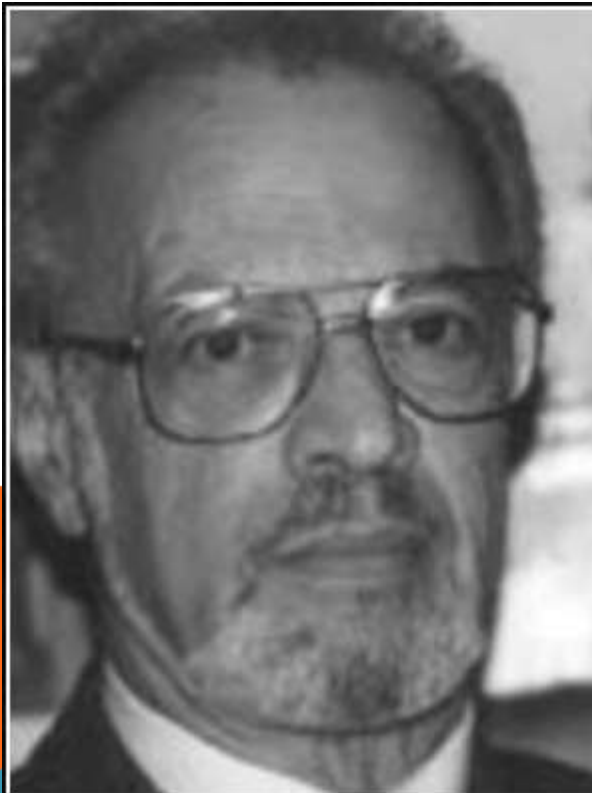
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1. Preparadigm – politics, philosophy, sociology, economics. These disciplines do not share core values.
2. Normal science – established paradigm.
3. Extraordinary science – paradigm in crisis due to too many anomalies or one important anomaly.
4. Scientific revolution – also known as a “paradigm shift.” Old paradigm thrown out, new paradigm accepted by scientific community.



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For politics, **Kuhn** did not argue a science of politics was impossible, but that it was in a preparadigmatic stage...



Modern economics is sick. Economics has increasingly become an intellectual game played for its own sake and not for its practical consequences for understanding the economic world. Economists have converted the subject into a sort of social mathematics in which analytical rigour is everything and practical relevance is nothing.

— *Mark Blaug* —

AZ QUOTES

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the structure of scientific revolutions:

Pre-science



Normal science/
central paradigm



Result fails to
conform to the
paradigm? Fault
of researcher.



New
paradigm



More
anomalous
results?



CRISIS!



**UNDERSTANDING AND CRITICALLY ANALYZING
POLITICAL THEORY**

Critiques of the Discipline



UNDERSTANDING AND CRITICALLY ANALYZING POLITICAL THEORY

- a. Although criticisms have come from many quarters, the most common focuses on the applicability of the natural science paradigm (a serious misuse of the term: recall **Kuhn!**) to the study of society and thus the possibility of a social science modeled on the rigor and predictability of the natural sciences. Therefore, social science *cannot* produce useful scientific generalizations or accurately predict human events.

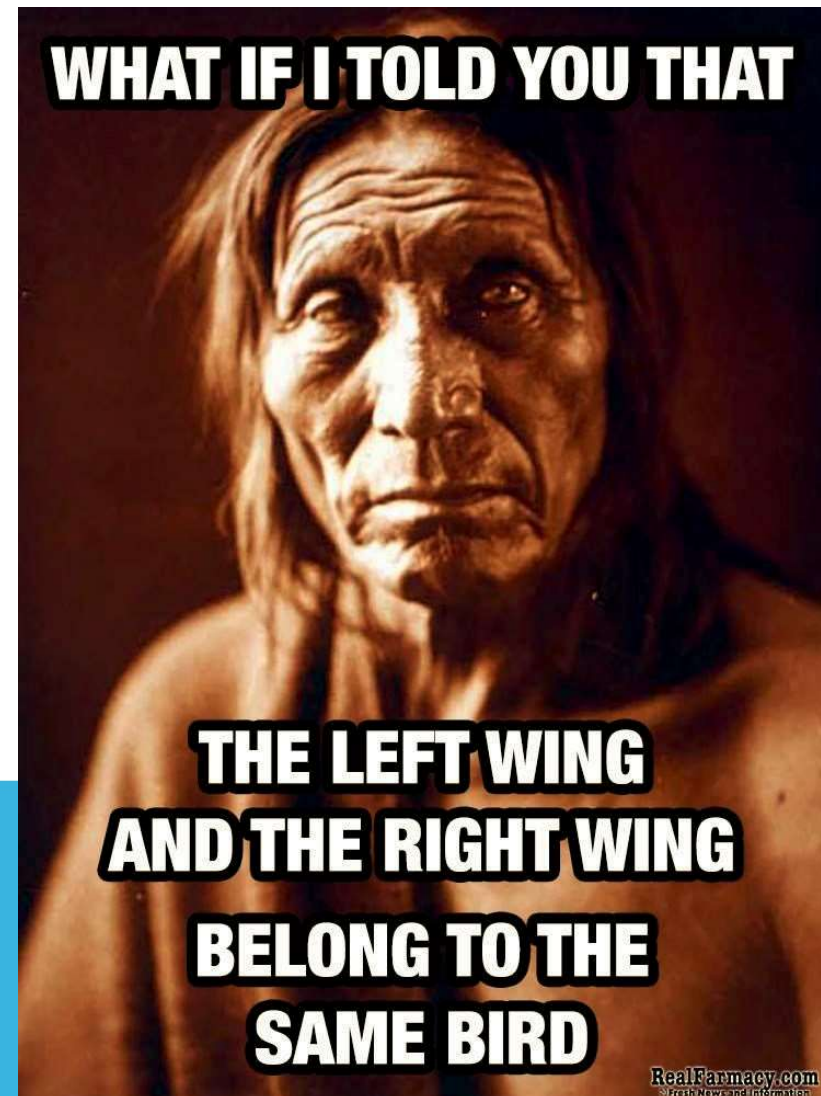


**To avoid criticism, do nothing,
say nothing, and be nothing.**

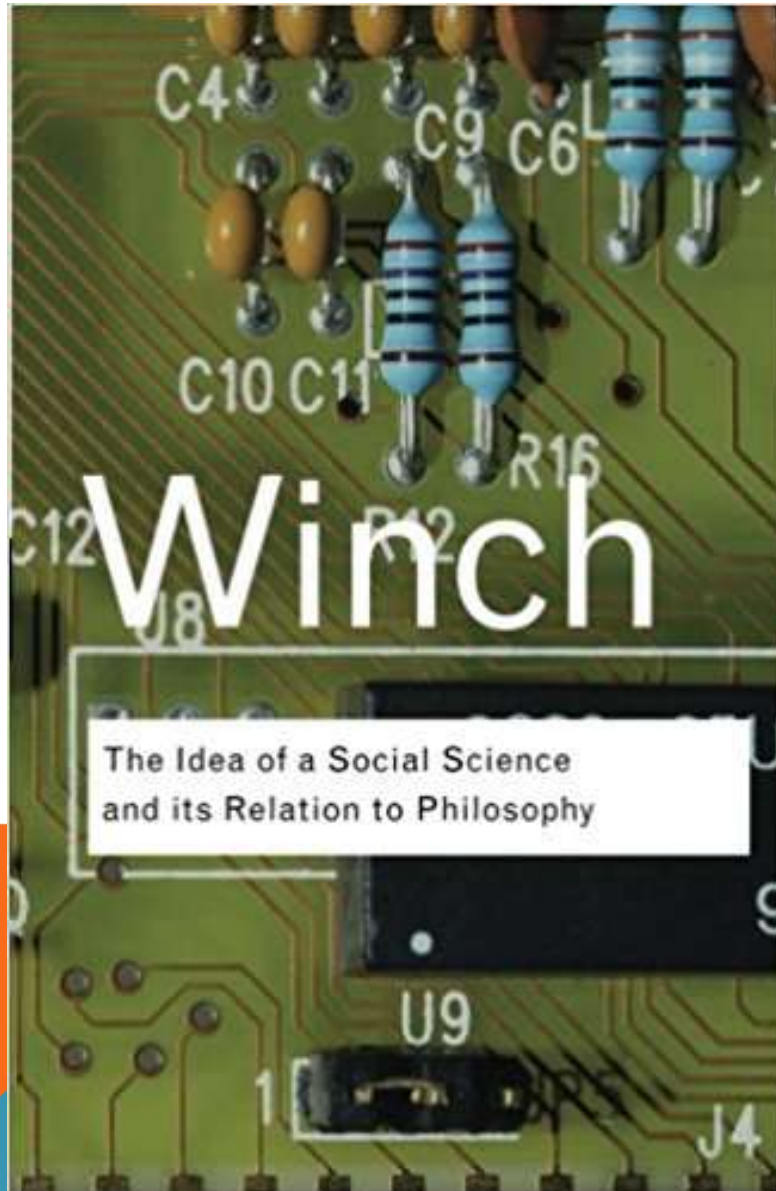
Elbert Hubbard

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b. Some of the more important critiques of the **social** sciences *generally*:



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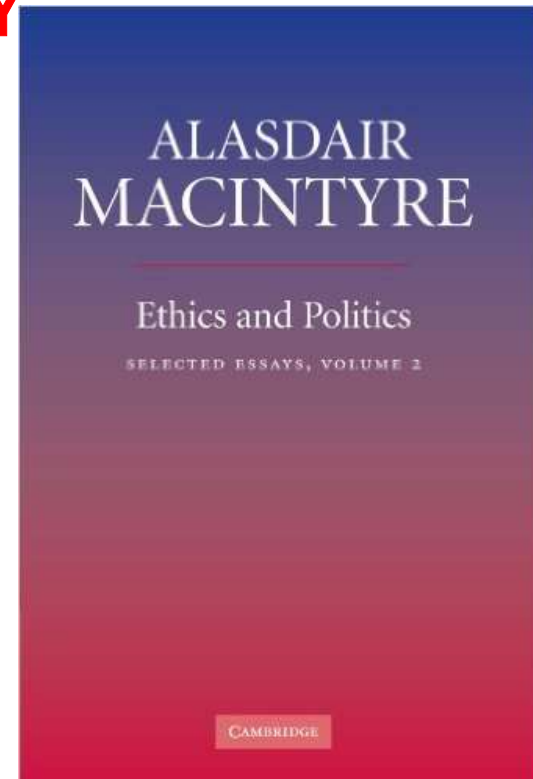
1. Peter Winch

Severe limitations
to the scientific
approach.

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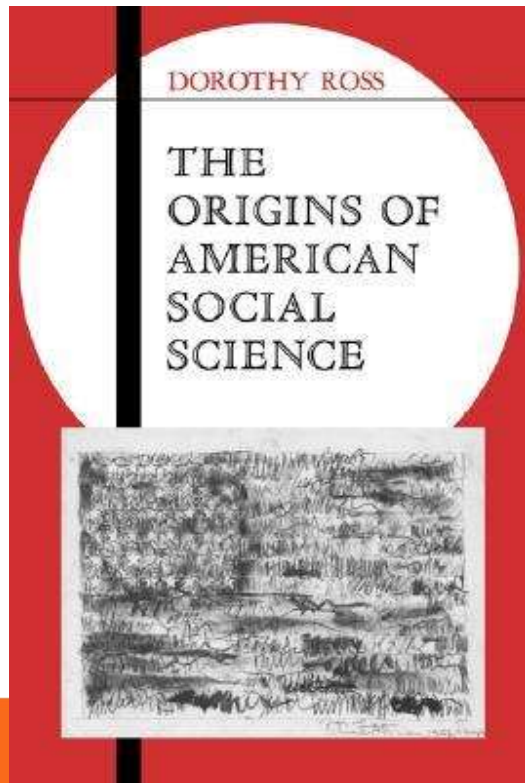
2. Alasdair MacIntyre

Attacks the so-called
“predictive” power
of social sciences
and as a discipline
that offers the
possibility for
controlling social
behavior.



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3. Dorothy Ross



Focuses on the ethnocentric nature of American political studies aka “American exceptionalism.”



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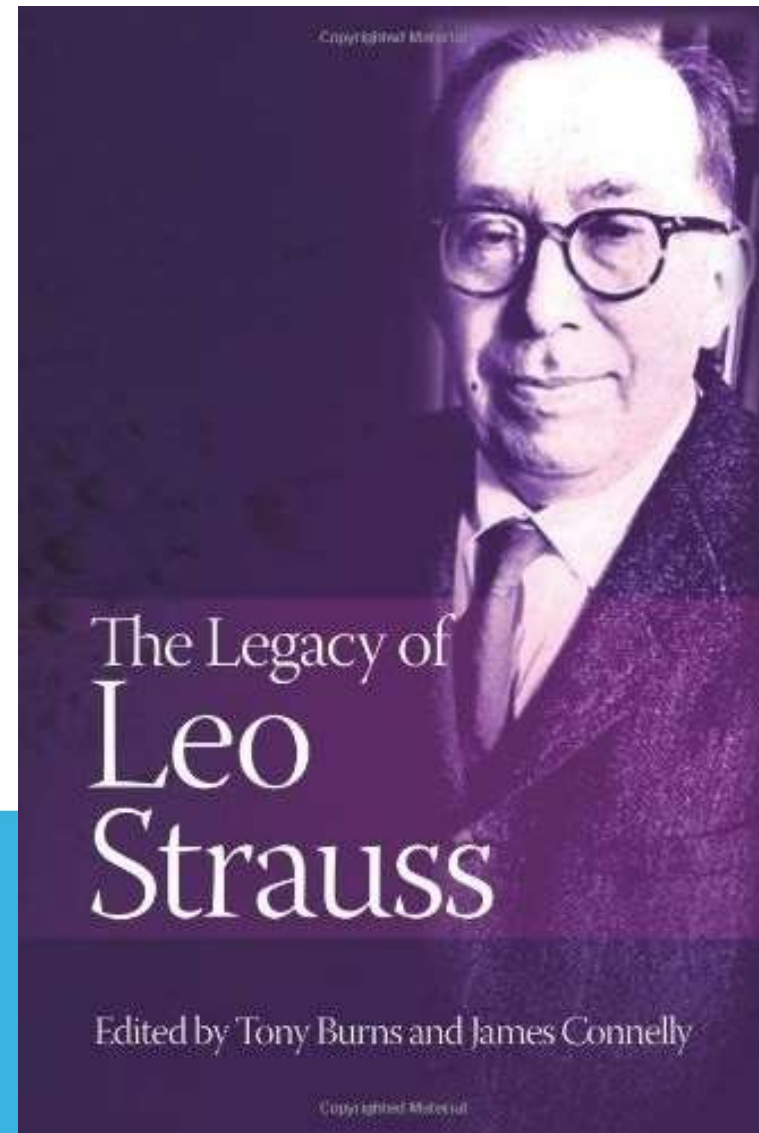
c. Some of the more important critiques of **political** science *specifically*:



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1. Leo Strauss

Suggested the “new” behavioral political science was inferior to “old” philosophical political science; trying to separate facts from values led to relativism and threatened democracy.



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Note: **Heineman** gives a very generous interpretation of Strauss. Other scholars suggest that he was actually extremely distrustful and hostile to democracy.

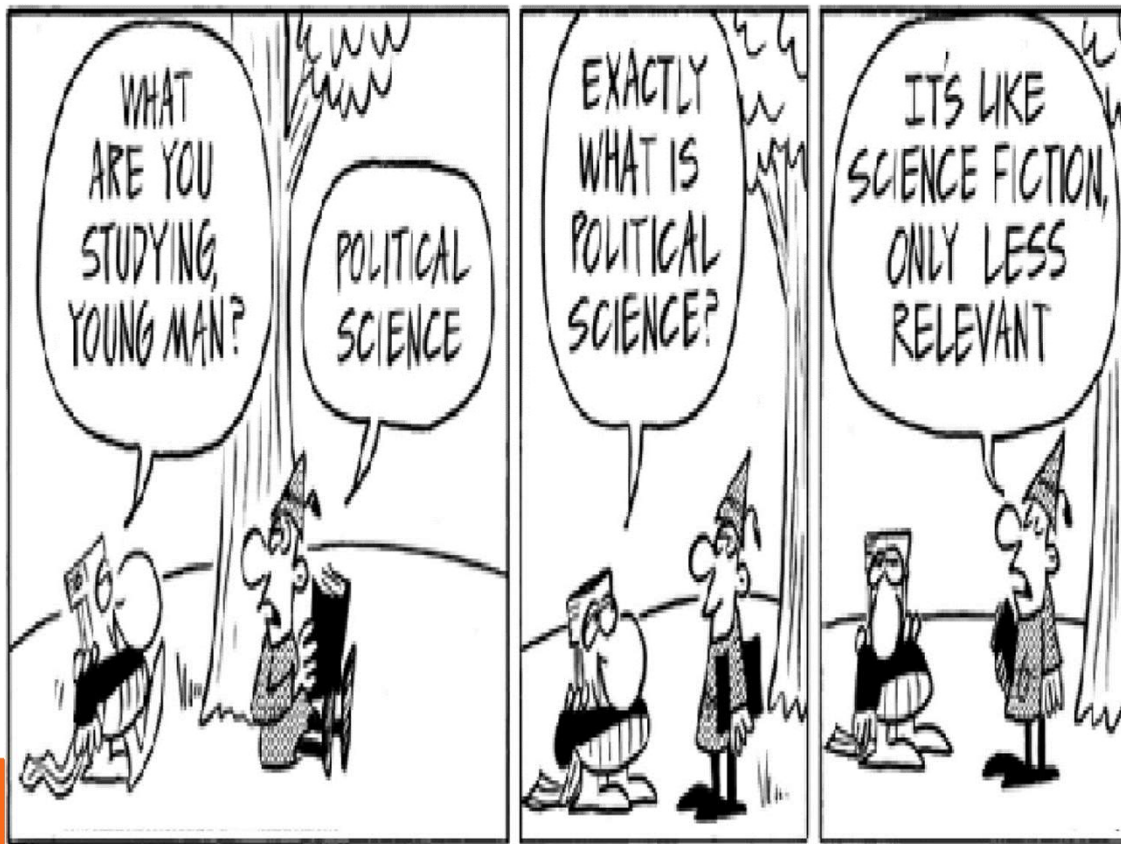


Leo Strauss's discoveries in the history of political philosophy had the effect of liberating his students from the yoke of contemporary thought.

— *William Kristol* —

AZ QUOTES

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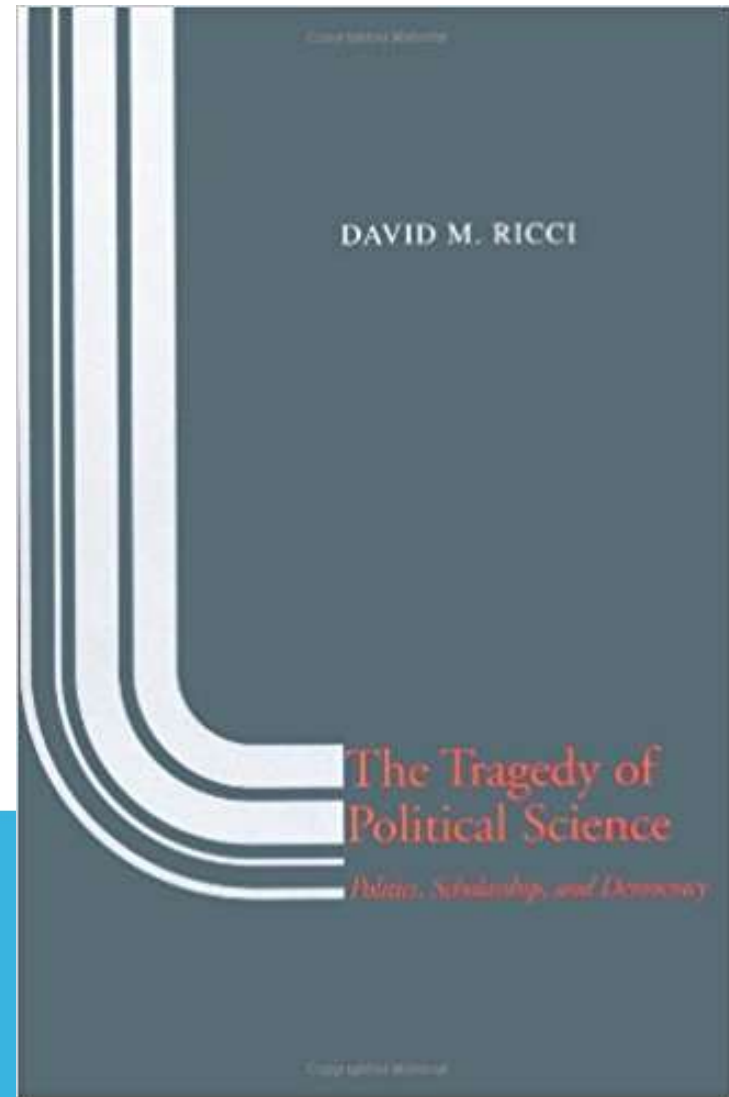


2. David Ricci

Political science as
“tragedy”; also
critical of a
“scientific”
approach to
politics.

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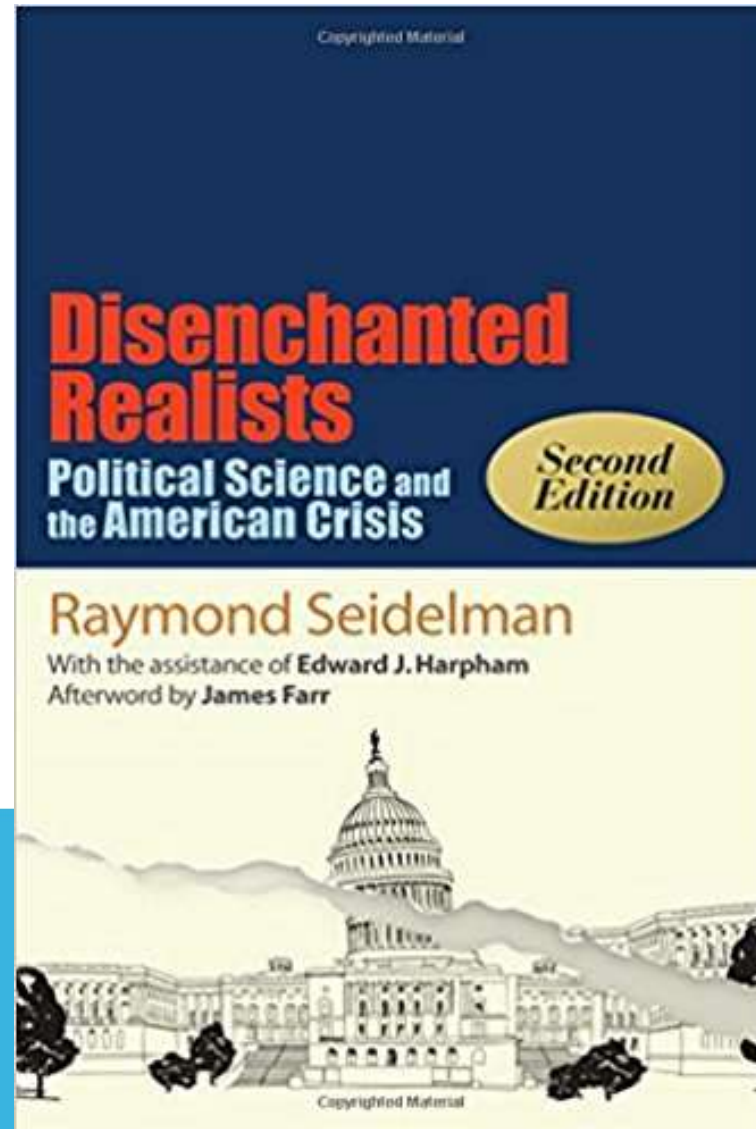
He also noted the rise of complicated jargon that “new” political scientists adopted and contended that political science had not come close to universal explanations or reliable predictions.



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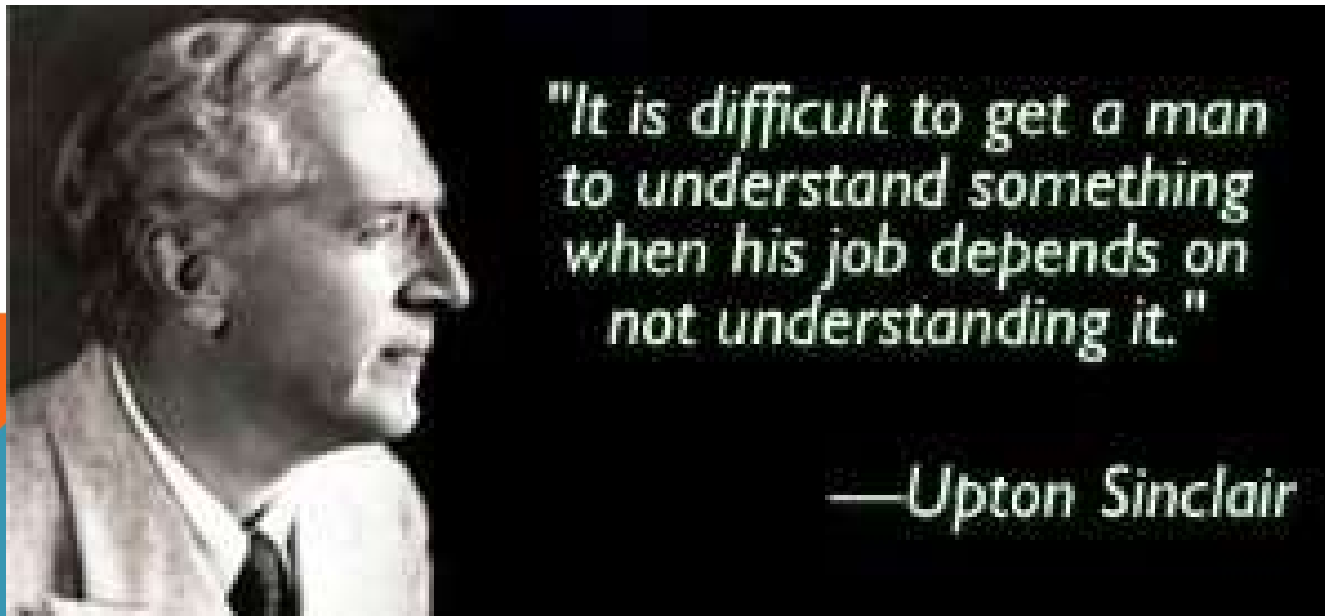
3. Raymond Seidelman

The “third” tradition
in American
culture situated
between
institutionalism
and radical
democracy.



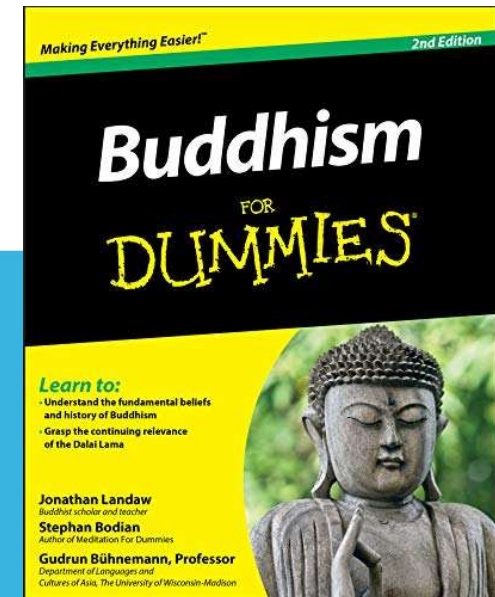
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He noted that political scientists applying scientific methodology have found themselves the tools of political vested interests or have simply been isolated or ignored by those with political power.



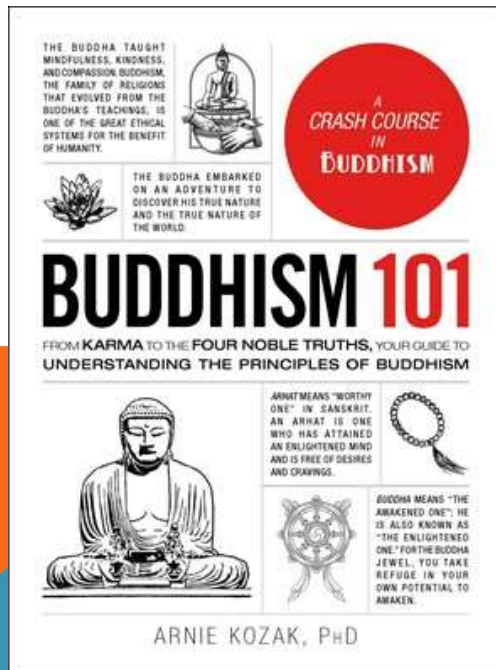
BUDDHISM

Buddhism: In the Footsteps of the Buddha



BUDDHISM

Your **Stevenson** text notes that “Buddhism is a multifaceted religious tradition that includes a variety of teachings and conceptions of the Buddha, as well as many different pathways to the ultimate goal.”



BUDDHISM

Most Buddhists regard their tradition as a way of following the Buddha to the goal of Nirvana or Buddhahood.



BUDDHISM

There are 3 branches of modern
Buddhism:

1. Theraveda – “Way of the Elders”
(Southeast Asia)
2. Mahayana – “Great Vehicle” (Central
and East Asia)
3. Vajrayana – “Diamond Vehicle” (Tibet)



BUDDHISM

Divisions in Buddhism

- **Theravada**

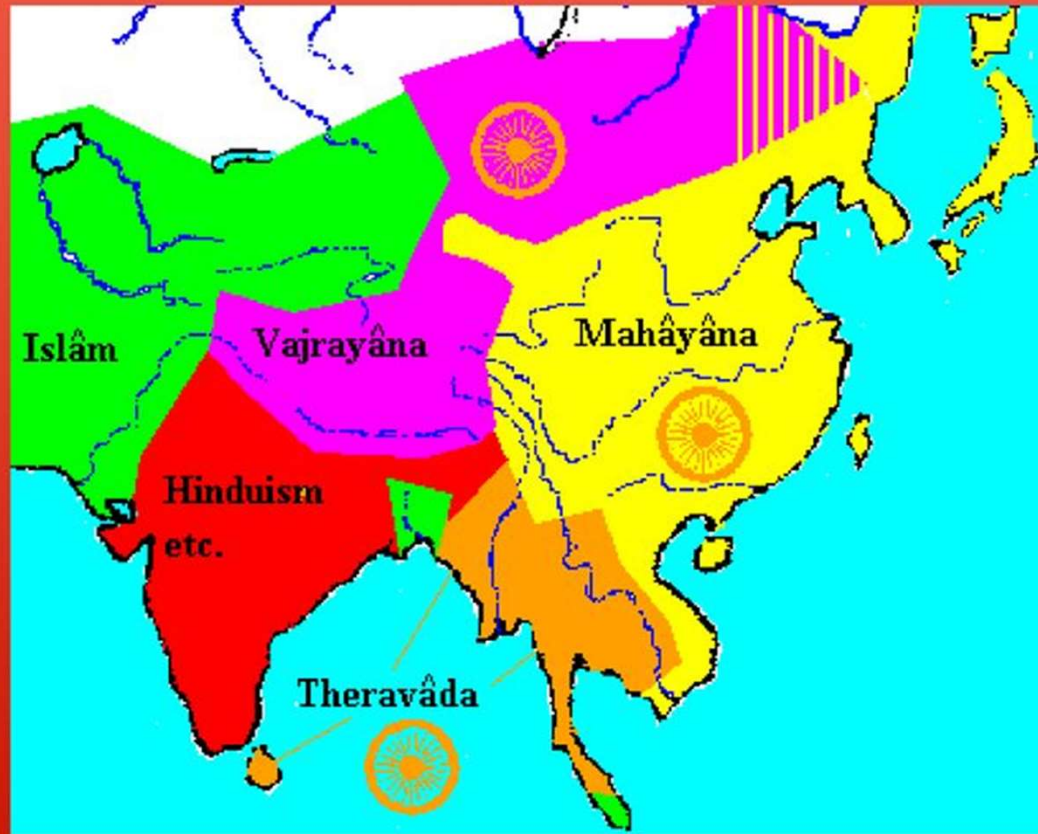
- Oldest strain of Buddhism and closest to original teachings

- **Mahayana**

- Emphasis on Buddha as a savior increases, and believes in the possibility of all living beings to be liberated from suffering

- **Vajrayana**

- Practice rituals, meditations and harness magical energies; Dalai Lama



BUDDHISM

The story of the life of the Buddha is a major cornerstone of Buddhism. But as **Stevenson** asks: How are we to read this story?



BUDDHISM

Theory of Existence

(notice we won't use "theory of the universe")

CONCEPT:

QUESTION OF EXISTENCE

BUDDHIST?

NO

WHY?

The Buddha thought it was pointless to question theories of creation and eternity as it was impossible to ever know. Buddhism is considered to be practical and free of mythical obsessions.

BUDDHISM

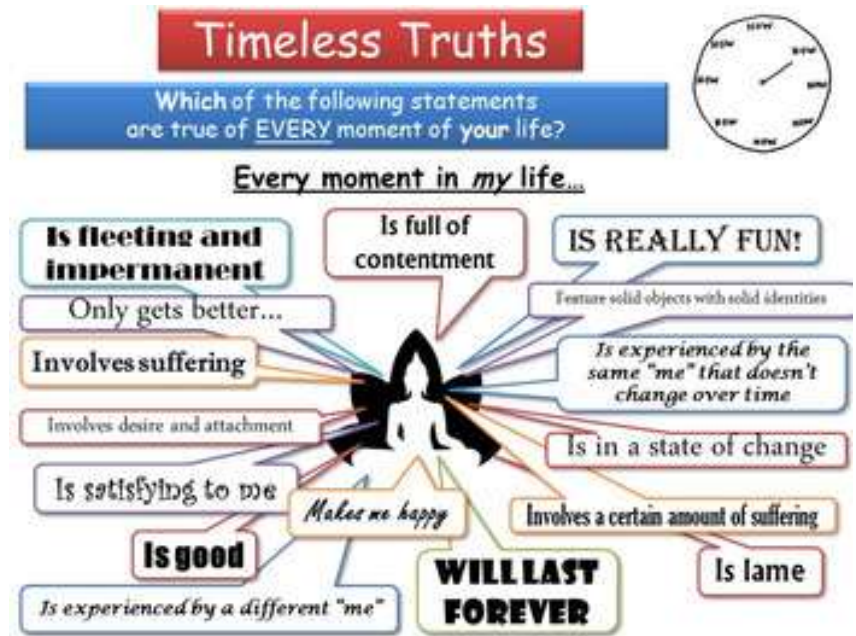
3 characteristics of existence: Human reality is characterized by:

1. Impermanence (*anitya*)
2. Lack of a solid self (*anatma*)
3. Unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*)

"The Middle Way of Wisdom and Compassion"


Three Truths of existence are:

1. **Impermanence** (*Anitya*):
Everything is impermanent and changing
2. **Suffering** (*Dukkha*):
Impermanence leads to suffering, making life imperfect
3. **No self** (*Anatman*): *The self is not personal and unchanging.*



"The root of suffering is attachment"

The Buddha



BUDDHISM

The Theravada tradition maintains that while he was meditating under the Bodhi tree, the future Buddha comprehended the interdependent nature of states of being in terms of a 12-fold chain of causation...



Theravada Buddhism

- The oldest school of Buddhism.
- The "Way of the Elders" or the "Small Vehicle."
- Found in southern Asia.
- The monastic life is the best way to achieve *nirvana*.
- Focus on wisdom and meditation.
- Goal is to become a "Buddha," or "Enlightened One."
- Over 100,000,000 followers today.

BUDDHISM

Dependent origination / Dependent arising (S. Pratītyasammutpāda; C. 緣起)

Twelvefold Chain of Causation (十二因緣)

1) Ignorance
(Avidya 無明)

2) Predispositions
(Samskāra 行)

3) Consciousness
(Vijñana 識)

4) Name & form
(Nāmarūpa 名色)

5) 6 sense bases
(Āyatana 六入)

6) Sensory contact
(Sparsa 觸)

7) Sensation
(Vedanā 受)

8) Thirst
(Trṣṇā, Taṇhā 愛)

9) Grasping
(Upādāna 取)

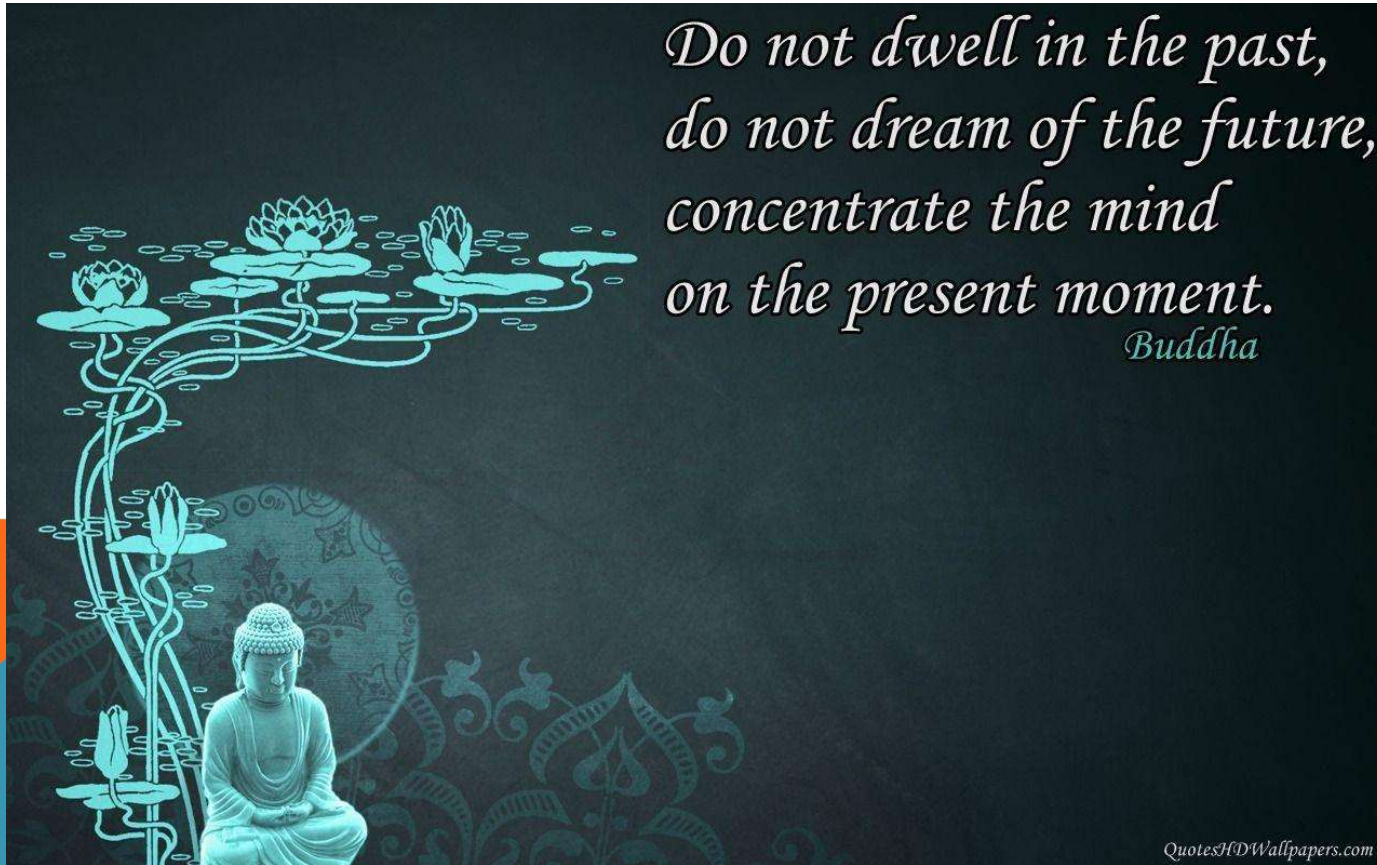
10) Existence
(Bhava 有)

11) Birth or rebirth
(Jāti 生)

12) Old age & death
(Jarāmaraṇa 老死)

BUDDHISM

The 12-fold chain of causation, in effect, functions like a creation myth in other religious traditions.



BUDDHISM

Theory of Human Nature



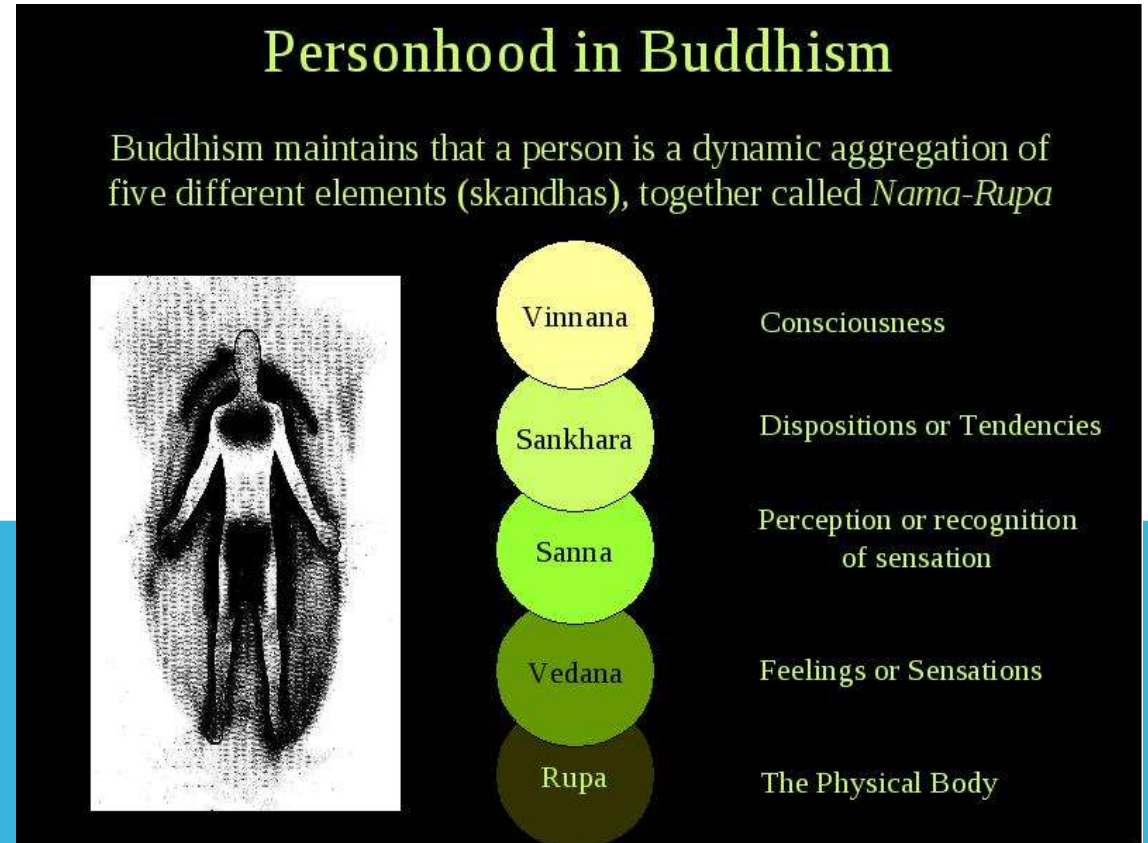
BUDDHISM

For most Buddhists, our “nature” is centered around 5 *skandhas*, “components” or “aggregates” of a person, the first of which is “form” (*rupa*), or the material aspect of a thing or person.

Engage	Endeavour	Explore	Elaborate	Evaluate	End
<h2>The Five Skandhas / aggregates</h2> <p>We have no soul, or permanent self. Humans are made up of these impermanent skandhas (bundles) which all change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form (physical body)• Sensation (senses – experience the world through these)• Perception (recognising objects, being aware of sensory information)• mental formations (thoughts, beliefs, reactions)• Consciousness (being aware we exist) <p>Only karmic energy and some consciousness remain for rebirth but these also change...</p>					

BUDDHISM

The second *skandha* is the aggregate of “sensations” (*vedana*), the physiological process resulting from contact of form with form, of the senses with their corresponding objects.



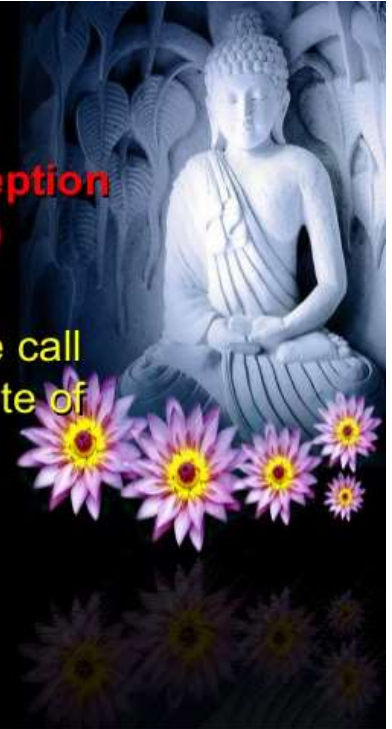
BUDDHISM

The third aggregate is “perception” (*samjna*). When the six sense organs come in contact with their corresponding objects, sensations are produced that then lead to recognition of objects.

5 SKANDHAS

3. The Third Skandha: Perception (Samjna, or in Pali, Sanna)

- *Samjna* is the faculty that recognizes. Most of what we call thinking fits into the aggregate of *samjna*.

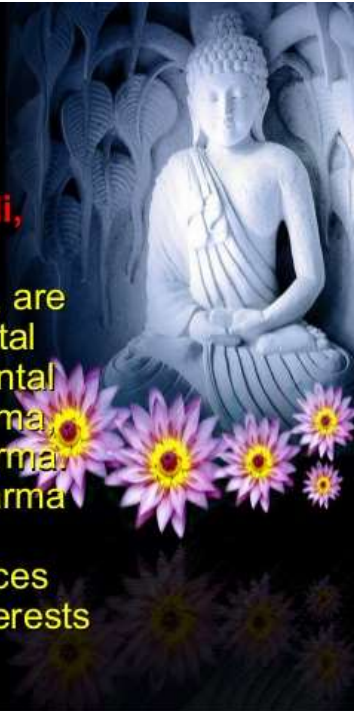


BUDDHISM

5 SKANDHAS

4. The Fourth Skandha: Mental Formation (Samskara, or in Pali, Sankhara)

All volitional actions, good and bad, are included in the aggregate of mental formations. The aggregate of mental formations is associated with karma, because volitional acts create karma. **Samskara** also contains latent karma that conditions our attitudes and predilections. Biases and prejudices belong to this **skandha**, as do interests and attractions.



The fourth skandha is the aggregate of “mental formations” (*sanskara*). They include our predispositions, impulses, attitudes, and tendencies that make up the unique character of our own personality.



BUDDHISM

The fifth and final aggregate is “consciousness” (*vijnana*). Consciousness is comprised of moments of awareness (i.e. to not just *perceive* a table but to be *aware* of it).

5 SKANDHAS

5. The Fifth Skandha: Consciousness (Vijnana, or in Pali, Vinnana)

Vijnana is a reaction that has one of the six faculties as its basis and one of the six corresponding phenomena as its object. For example, aural consciousness -- hearing -- has the ear as its basis and a sound as its object. Mental consciousness has the mind (**manas**) as its basis and an idea or thought as its object.



BUDDHISM

Looking at the 5 *skandhas*, what are we to conclude about human nature? **Stevenson** notes that when the Buddha was asked directly whether a soul does or does not exist, he remained silent, suggesting a deep conundrum concerning the very nature of existence. In your opinion, what does this suggest how a Buddhist would regard politics and things political?



BUDDHISM

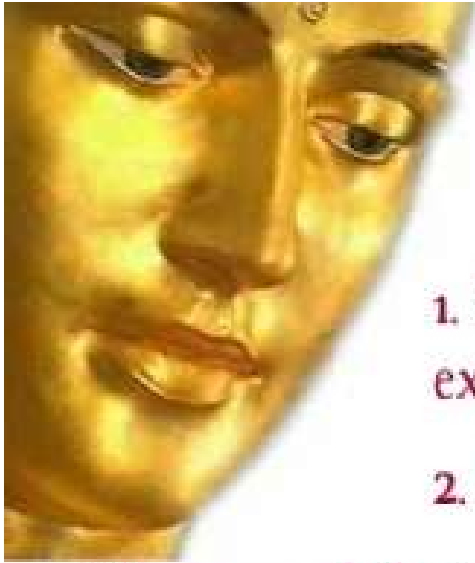
Diagnosis



The Four
Noble Truths
and
Eightfold Path
to Enlightenment

Mahatma Buddha

BUDDHISM



THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

The Central Foundation of Buddhism

1. Suffering is the unavoidable accompaniment of physical existence. "All life is suffering."
2. All suffering is caused by desire.

3. All personal desire, all ambition, must be extinguished by the person who wishes freedom from suffering and it can all be extinguished by walking the Path.

4. The Path which leads to freedom from suffering is a narrow path.

"Do not be self-confident about your spiritual progress unless you have reached to the very extinction of all desire." - Buddha



BUDDHISM

Prescription



Buddhism

Eightfold Path

BUDDHISM

The Eightfold Path

The first two steps involve preparing one's mind for a new way of life.

1. Right Belief	The first step is belief in and understanding of the Four Noble Truths.
2. Right Purpose	The second step is to make spiritual growth the purpose of one's life.

The next three steps involve taking charge of one's behavior.

3. Right Speech	The third task is to become aware of what one says. This means avoiding lies or statements that hurt others.
4. Right Conduct	The next task is to understand one's behavior and work to improve it. Right conduct means not killing, stealing, lying, or hurting others.
5. Right Livelihood	This involves choosing a livelihood, or profession, that supports one's spiritual growth. A person should earn a living in a way that does not harm other living things.

The last three steps help train the mind to gain enlightenment.

6. Right Effort	The sixth step involves making an effort to avoid bad thoughts and to hold only good thoughts in one's mind.
7. Right Mindfulness	Being mindful means becoming aware of what one thinks and feels. A person who has achieved right mindfulness controls his or her thoughts and emotions rather than being controlled by them.
8. Right Meditation	The last step is to practice the kind of meditation that can lead to enlightenment. Buddhists say that those who complete this step often feel as if they have awakened from a dream to experience a new reality.

BUDDHISM

Critical Analysis



BUDDHISM

Overall, Western feminists have pointed out that in traditional forms of monastic Buddhism women have been viewed as spiritually inferior to and as temptresses for male monks.



All living beings have Buddha nature
and can become Buddhas.

— *Gautama Buddha* —

AZ QUOTES

BUDDHISM

American Buddhist Women

There is still an imbalance in the roles and perception of women in Buddhism.

Although American Buddhist women take into account the history and general traditional views, they do tend to take a feminist stance.

As society has changed we should look to go beyond the teachings and focus on the aspect of impermanence, this idea that really there is no gender.

The feminist movement and rise of Buddhism in America happened at a similar time, so the way that Buddhism developed in America has been very different to some parts of Asia.

Equality is much more the status quo in American and western Buddhism as the religion merges with cultural influences – one of which is gender equality.

