Oakeshott and the Appeal to An Unconditionally Philosophical Political Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

When one thinks about political philosophy, it's common to comprehend it as the great abbey of the study of State and government, political doctrines, the role of laws, the organization of society, among many other matters of interest. In itself, this understanding of political philosophy is not incorrect; nevertheless, neither can it be said to be entirely accurate.

The English philosopher Michael Oakeshott examines the nature and concept of political philosophy in the essays "The Concept of a Philosophy of Politics" and "Political Philosophy", both included in *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*, from which he evokes a new vision of this field of knowledge—one so frequently misunderstood and, not rarely, excessively instrumentalized.

In his view, the widely disseminated concept of this branch of thought is "vague, unconvincing and unsatisfactory" (1993, p. 120).

Inspired by the works of Thomas Hobbes and Georg Hegel, the author of *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* thus develops his own worldview of a "philosophy of politics."

HUMAN REFLECTION AND THE ALLEGORY OF THE TOWER

As genesis of his interpretation, Oakeshott initiates an analysis regarding the act of reflection. Yes, reflection. After all, human beings reflect upon everything. Poetry, weather, love, and, of course, politics (understood here as the organization of social life arrangements).

The act of reflection, although complex, can be divided according to the key points of consideration that arise during the reflective process. From this distinction, there's a *limited* reflection and another relentlessly free, called *radically subversive* (1993, p. 140).

The first is characterized by the thinker's attachment to previously acquired knowledge, established dogmas and foundational principles concerning the field under examination. On the other hand, the second form of reflection is the one that isn't bound to any prior foundation, that rebels against already constituted knowledge and that refuses to rely on preexistent certainties.

The English philosopher exemplifies limited reflection as that common to historians and scientists, who rest on historical facts and hypotheses of empirical observation. As for the radically subversive reflection, the author of the two essays stipulates that it shall be the philosophical reflection itself: fearless in the face of uncertainties and free to reach the ultimate concepts of a given object of study. In other words, it must be free of restraints, preconceptions and presuppositions.

To enlighten this theoretical framework, Oakeshott proposes a metaphor that can be called "Allegory of the Tower".

The act of reflection is, in essence, the search for some knowledge, always starting from an aprioristic one. At long last, it's crucial to observe that, in Oakeshott's view, there's no "mere ignorance" (1993, p. 138)—which emphasizes an explicit criticism of the "tabula rasa" theory.

Human beings find themselves on the ground floor of a vast tower that possesses doors and windows on every level. The search for knowledge, through reflection, is the odyssey of achieving higher floors, walking through the challenges of the path.

Whenever a person reaches a certain floor, that individual gains access to the vision that is offered by the windows of that level. There, one sees, observes and, naturally, reflects from the viewpoint made available.

In limited reflection, the individual's vision on each floor will always be anchored in the experiences of preceding levels. It's a form of submission to the knowledge obtained on lower floors, which prescribes fundaments, dogmas and analysis indissociable from the new experiences.

Nevertheless, radically subversive reflection is the antithesis of this scenario. In the Allegory of the Tower, it's the one that completely breaks down the shackles inherited from previous floors. Each new level, the individual must be free of preconceptions and presuppositions, capable of redefining entire concepts and opening oneself to epiphanies impossible to be experimented before.

To summarize, radically subversive reflection imposes upon the philosopher an irrevocable and unavoidable duty to think without limits.

POLITICAL REFLECTIONS AND THE NATURE OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Beyond the ontological aspect of the different forms of reflection, Oakeshott also distinguishes the modes of reflection proper from political engagement (1993, pp. 146, 152).

One may engage in a "*reflection in the service of politics*", whose aim is to formulate recommendations about practical activity and the means to achieve tangible objectives. It's also possible to engage in a "*reflection to the construction of a political doctrine*", that seeks to provide explanation and theoretical systematization for political activity, usually by inserting it into philosophical doctrines already established (for example, schools of thought in moral philosophy or metaphysics).

Lastly, there's a third mode of reflection upon politics, the most radically subversive of all: "*political philosophy*".

Michael Oakeshott precisely teaches that the nature of political philosophy is the most radically subversive of all the forms of reflection upon social life arrangements. It shouldn't worry itself about orienting, guiding or organizing human activity, much less about attaching itself to preexisting philosophical doctrines.

It's precisely the opposite. Political philosophy must think philosophically about politics, accepting the inherent invite to all reflection—the invite to be radically subversive, to pursue the ultimate concept of things without getting attached to previously delimited knowledges.

There isn't, therefore, room for restraints, presuppositions or preconceptions.

THE COMMONSENSE: CONTRADICTIONS AND ANOMALOUS CHARACTER

Once the true nature of political philosophy has been established, Oakeshott builds his concept about it (inspired, as said before, by the texts of Hobbes and Hegel, for whom he nourishes profound admiration).[1] However, before coming to a concrete notion, the English philosopher explains the assessment of the theme under the optics of commonsense.

In general terms, it's understood that political philosophy is, *prima facie*, a panoramic explanation of the nature of life and sociopolitical activity, analyzed from the perspective of its purposes and ends. Moreover, it's assumed to constitute a general explanation of the nature of the State (*lato sensu*).

It's about, then, an applicable knowledge to the formation, organization and dynamics of social arrangements—a clear concern with correlating philosophical concepts to the reality of life in society.

This aprioristic understanding of political philosophy, particular to commonsense, tends to occupy itself, in last instance, with typical themes and expressions from political sphere. These concepts can be gathered in three broad categories: i) individuals, society, law, government and State; ii) right and wrong, good and bad, obligation and duty; and iii) political obligation, sovereignty, freedom, equality, justice and punishment.

With this eminently practical and attached to political life view, Oakeshott affirms that political philosophy, in commonsense, is genuinely "not philosophical" (1993, p. 126). For the sceptic thinker, it reduces itself to the application of preexistent ideas and philosophical doctrines to political life.

In summary, it seeks to conceive political life and activity in a way to make them illustrate already formulated doctrines. Political philosophy itself becomes, then, a special instance—a particular application of a general philosophical theory.

This premise can be illustrated as follows. The idea of "individual" acquires distinct connotations depending upon the field of analysis. The understanding of this expression in psychology doesn't coincide with the one in sociology, much less in biology. Likewise, the notion of "freedom" also varies ontologically according to different philosophical schools. It's known that libertarians, liberals, socialists and utilitarians attribute to it different meanings.[2]

Political philosophy, under this commonsense optics, is not far from an aspect of human knowledge subordinated to general philosophical theories, preexistent, that then concerns itself about expressions and themes proper to politics. The concept implies that political philosophy is "philosophical" only in a derivative sense (just because it relies itself, in a way, upon a general philosophy).

Within this perspective, it conforms itself to the so called "*facts of political life*" (1993, p. 123), that is, to an ordinary cognition produced by people driven by commonsense, still oblivious to philosophical speculation (or, in Oakeshottian terms, incapable of radically subversive reflection).

It's in this capacity that Oakeshott criticizes the subservience of political philosophy to three "masters", comprehended as incoherent limitations that render it conceptually anomalous.

According to him, a philosophy of politics must rationalize political life and practice, yet it also submits itself to another criterion: the one of conformity with the facts of political life, prior to any philosophical reflection.

In this common acceptance, political philosophy is submitted to three exigences. The first, that of reason, which requires it to provide a systematic and coherent interpretation of political life; the second, that of facts, that demands consonance with what commonsense recognizes as a characteristic of political practice; and the third, that of practical utility, which forbids the formulation of doctrines that can inhibit or paralyze tangible political action.

This way, political philosophy sees itself constantly pressured to balance theoretical rationality, empirical fidelity and practical functionality. For the author of *The Politics of Faith and The Politics of Scepticism* (2018), two of these masters (philosophical reason and commonsense facts) are frequently in conflict.

Whenever this occurs, facts tend to prevail, which implies that political philosophy becomes all the more unsatisfactory the more fully philosophical it becomes. At long last, the more philosophical it is, the less practical politics becomes, thereby conflicting with the third master to which political philosophy submits itself under the rule of commonsense.

This critique of the multiple masters reveals profound tension between the autonomy of philosophical investigation and the exigences of practical utility imposed upon the ordinary concept of political philosophy. That's why, under this view, it must function as determinant guide for the ends of political action—it is, in ultimate analysis, more political than philosophical.

In short, it's a philosophy that, for several reasons, is not truly philosophical and that if it were, would lose any linkage with politics. At best, it serves merely as an illustration of a doctrine to which it adds nothing.

It claims to be based on pure philosophy, but upon closer examination, it reveals that it lacks any philosophical content of its own. It's also said to imply it as a consequence, though this implication is never effective, except in the fragile sense of a particular application of a certain general view. Furthermore, it's limited to a criticism that is hardly philosophical, focused solely on the conformity with the so-called "facts of political life" (and with the other masters).

Well, how can the ordinary concept of political philosophy be full of so many contradictions? How can it be imbued with so many dogmatic discrepancies? These questions work as a true dynamo for Oakeshott's inquietudes.

It's worth noting that, at the beginning of this essay, a philosopher was described as the one who engages in radically subversive reflection. Frenetic, bustling, free of presuppositions and preconceptions thoughts, seeking the ultimate understanding of things.

It's from this premise that Oakeshott identifies the error within the usual concept of political philosophy – an error that is, in last instance, in the very understanding of "philosophy".

In other words, the mistake resides within the foundational structures of philosophical conceptualization itself.[3]

THE RESCUE OF PHILOSOPHICAL DEFINITION

Considering this affirmation, it's due to briefly recall the explanations presented at the beginning of this concise essay.

Philosophical thought and knowledge are, in essence, thoughts and knowledges deprived of reservations or presuppositions (in light of the radically subversive nature already examined).

For Michael Oakeshott, the purpose of philosophy is to achieve concepts that, precisely because they presuppose nothing, are complete in themselves; the aim is to formulate explanations so complete that nothing further needs to be added to them.

Philosophy begins in ordinary, daily significances, and consists in an extensive, detailed and exhaustive exposition of these concepts—an exposition that is, itself, a definition. There's no transition from absolute ignorance to full knowledge. The philosophical process is always to know more plainly what is, in a certain way, already known.

In this regard, the process of philosophical acceptance is the act of freeing itself or resolving presuppositions and reservations contained within the concepts presented to the one who reflects. It's a movement of purification and establishing the fundaments of a certain conception (a true inferential process).

Nevertheless, in view of the radically subversive character of philosophical reflection (or, more precisely, of the true philosophical reflection), it's mandatory to attain concrete concepts in which the division between "presupposition" and "conclusion" has disappeared. The only way for this to occur is through the interweaving and unification of both into a concrete conceptual symbiosis.

However, the customary understanding expects political philosophy to determine, roughly speaking, the objectives of political activity—that is, to define what its principal purpose ought to be. Political philosophy is therefore regarded as the great guru of political personalities, serving as practical manual for social life arrangements.

According to Oakeshott, though, an unconditionally philosophical political philosophy neither prescribes ends nor formulates normative doctrines. Rather, it analyses, previously, the general concept of an end itself.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPT

The resumption of philosophical definition is crucial for comprehending incongruences from the usual concept of political philosophy. After all, how can the philosophical application of politics be correct if the very idea of philosophy itself is mistaken?

For this reason, it's interesting to observe that Michael Oakeshott promotes a true intellectual revolution about the nature of philosophical thought and its application to other branches of human life. From this conceptual rescue, there are doubts about which criteria allow to characterize determined concept as philosophical. These criteria, however, are carefully elaborated by the English philosopher.

In this manner, Oakeshott establishes four characteristics or attributes that define if a concept can be, in fact, considered philosophical (1993, p. 129).

The first one is newness. A philosophical concept must be "*new*", because philosophy consists, essentially, of redefining notions already formulated. It's the effort of reinterpretation of concepts that are given to itself, in a concrete manner, in relation to the "totality of experience" (an idea that will shortly be examined in this essay).

A philosophical concept must differ from the one proposed by commonsense; it's indispensable that there's a rupture between them. Accordance with commonsense is not a real criterion. On the contrary, philosophical definition, being more complete, allows freedom of thought uprooted from vicious presuppositions.

The philosopher must, nevertheless, demonstrate how redefinition connects itself and derives from the less wide conception, through a process of inference. This characteristic challenges the empiricist notion according to which philosophical truth shall be validated through empirical observation.

Oakeshott affirms the autonomy of philosophical truth, judged by its internal coherence and scope, and not by its conformity with daily experience. This posture represents a decisive departure from common conceptions of validation within political investigation.

Beyond newness, a philosophical concept must be "*categorica*l", that is, conceivable and non-hypothetical. To define philosophically is to comprehend the character of a subject in its fullness. This characteristic emphasizes the completeness of philosophical knowledge even in a world dominated by contingency. It rejects provisional or conditional understandings and demands substantial comprehension.

It implies refusing every political philosophy that offers partial truths. Categorical nature, being complete, doesn't admit non-examined suppositions or fragmented views. Oakeshott demands a holistic and definitive comprehension, which means that political philosophy, when unconditionally philosophical, seeks a unified theory of political life, instead of a mosaic of dispersed observations.

The third attribute is the concept to be "*affirmative*" (or "positive"). In short, it's another way of saying that it must be categorical. The concept must possess the nature of affirmation, a positive sense. Negative conception is an incomplete acceptation and, therefore, non-philosophical.

This characteristic underlines the impulse of philosophy towards plenitude of cognition, rejecting superficial or incomplete definitions. Philosophy, thus, must move beyond what "is not" to achieve what "is".

This principle challenges, in a particular way, political theories founded in notions of limitation or absence (such as "negative freedom", "limited government" or "crime as privation of rights"). Oakeshott argues that "a negative always and unavoidably implies a positive, and until this positive is brought to the surface what we have must remain only partly coherent" (1993, p. 130).

Thus, political theories that are expressed solely in terms of restriction (e.g., "freedom from") remain philosophically incomplete and require further investigation to reveal their affirmative counterparts ("freedom to").

Finally, the philosophical concept must be "*indicative*." This characteristic expresses that "whenever an imperative is presented, philosophy must transform it into an indicative; wherever 'ought' presents itself

the business of philosophy is to uncover the implied 'is'" (1993, p. 131). A mere imperative is, for Oakeshott, an abstraction, and philosophy can't permit conceptualizations of this kind.

Oakeshott illustrates this point through the notion of punishment. When conceived solely in moral terms, it's philosophically inadequate. In this sense, Oakeshott praises the Hegelian concept of crime as "self-contradictory activity" (1993, p. 135) and punishment as its resolution—an attempt to transcend mere teleology and transform the "ought" into "is."

The Oakeshottian view considers normative statements to be philosophically underdeveloped. Philosophical process must delve beyond the superficial imperative in order to discover the factual or logical reality that essentially grounds it.

Such a transformation is necessary for a concept to become comprehensively concrete, converting political philosophy from a prescriptive discipline into an explanatory one.

THE NECESSITY OF THE TOTALITY OF EXPERIENCE AND THE NEW CONCEPT OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

In front of all this explanation, Oakeshott concludes that the usual concept of political philosophy is "nothing better than a contradiction" (1993, p. 126). As seen before, he describes it as a philosophy that, for many reasons, is not truly philosophical and, if it were, wouldn't have any practical correlation with politics. In the better scenario, it would consist of a mere illustration of a previously established philosophical doctrine.

This incoherence creates a dilemma: either political philosophy remains related to politics, compromising its philosophical integrity, or it becomes unconditionally philosophical, losing its relevance to practical life.

The author's project is to solve this impasse by redefining the contradiction itself. He sustains that a genuine political philosophy must worry itself with political life and activity from the standpoint of the "*totality of experience*" (1993, pp. 126, 127)—a key expression for the faithful understanding of his intellectual construction.

Totality of experience implies that political life mustn't be isolated and treated as a *sui generis* phenomenon, but rather be distinguished within the totality and, right after, related back to it, in a way that may be comprehended in its place inside the complete set of human experience. The totality of experience is reality itself, a unified and complex whole composed of interconnected thoughts and sensations that shall be comprehended by the various branches of life (for example, by political life and activity).

This conception reveals a totalizing and non-reductive epistemology. Political phenomena are not autonomous facts, but interconnected aspects of a broad and unified human experience. Such perspective challenges how to study politics in a purely empirical or positivist way, being mandatory an omnibus and integrated understanding.

It's from all this intellectual framework that Oakeshott finally elucidates his concept of political philosophy. And, out of respect for the elegance of his formulation, his words must be reproduced *ipsis litteris*:

> A philosophy of politics, then, as I see it, is not the application to political life of a previously thought out philosophical doctrine, it is not the attempt to illustrate a philosophy by a particular example or instance; it is the attempt to think out to the end the body of concepts which together seem to comprise the world of political activity; it is the attempt to define those political concepts by relating them to the totality of experience [...] the impulse of philosophic thought making itself manifest in connection with a particular body of concepts (1993, p. 131).

It's therefore evident that this formulation decisively breaks with the understanding of commonsense. Political philosophy is, before anything else, philosophy—and, as such, it must pursue its ends in a radically subversive way.

Michael Oakeshott affirms political philosophy is incapable of guiding action and one can't claim that it fails as philosophy merely because it doesn't provide guidance for practical activity.

It doesn't seek to offer a "view acceptable to commonsense of the purpose and end in political life" (1993, p. 136). The idea that politics are an activity aimed at realizing certain ends is replaced by a perspective founded in the totality of experience.

Philosophy understands change and activity as abstract aspects of a concrete, genuine and, therefore, intelligible generality. This radical separation between philosophical investigation and practical guidance redefines the very value of political philosophy itself.

Its merit doesn't lie in instrumental application to concrete problems, but rather in intrinsic capacity to offer a profound and wide comprehension of the fundamental concepts that structure social life arrangements.

In last instance, Oakeshott's view establishes that an unconditionally philosophical political philosophy is incapable of guiding political action because its objective is to understand political life from the concrete standpoint of the totality of experience—thus overcoming common notion of politics as the mere realization of an end.

UNCONDITIONALLY PHILOSOPHICAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND ITS INTERACTION WITH THE CONCEPTS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY

As seen in the quote above, Oakeshott's definition of political philosophy, for its own formulator, must also correlate itself with the body of concepts proper to political life and activity (such as government, State, society, and others).

The English sceptic maintains that it's a possible conceptual reduction of typical expressions from political-philosophical scenario. Commonsense, in general, fails to perceive the correlations among related concepts, which deprives them of genuine philosophical character. As an example, Oakeshott highlights Hans Kelsen's notable contribution who succeeded in articulating the idea of "State" with that of "Law".

Notwithstanding, another example gathers special attention in the works of the English theoretician. For Oakeshott, "freedom" and "equality" are indissociable conceptions, existing, within philosophical field, the possibility to unite them in a true concrete symbiosis.

Commonsense, however, tends to describe political life phenomena without the radically subversive character of philosophical reflection, producing definitions lacking the Oakeshottian conceptual rigor (such as the four characteristics or attributes of philosophical definition).

There's, indeed, an inclination from ordinary cognitions to treat the objects of study of political philosophy under a merely axiological perspective. For example, the analysis of a government. Invariably, it results in value judgments (good or bad, right or wrong), which maintains the exam at a superficial level.

Unconditionally philosophical political philosophy must, in its turn, as already said in this essay, come to the ultimate definitions of concepts. Thereupon, it's necessary, *a priori*, an analysis of these arising concepts themselves. Government, sovereignty, law, theme objects become more concrete when analyzed under the view of values, prevailing axiology and, finally, the totality of experience.

However, Michael Oakeshott advertises that the analysis of unconditionally philosophical political philosophy can't stop at this stage. After the exam of concepts in the light of an ethic-valuative position, it's also mandatory an enhancement of adjectives that are upon the analysis in question—a redefinition of what is good or bad, right or wrong.

The valuative terms, though extremely important, are inherently defective, as they were drawn without philosophical meaning. They're filled with presuppositions and fail to exhibit the indicative, affirmative and categorical characteristics (which contrast with radically subversive nature of philosophical reflection).

A philosopher's thought, and with it the unconditionally philosophical political philosophy, assumes, therefore, a double task. First, to unearth hidden presupposition; second, to rebuild concepts in a more

concrete and coherent manner. The central function of philosophy is to discover what is "in the mind" within formative assessments, in contraposition to what is only "before the mind" (1993, p. 134).

What is inexorably expressed in formative assessments (what is before the mind) will always be insufficient when compared to the view gathered from the perspective of the totality of experience.

For example, although the idea of "self-realization" may not constitute the consciously present criterion guiding political activity, it may nevertheless be the correct analysis, the concrete definition, of what truly resides within the mind and of what a philosophy of valuation requires in order to become complete.

The refusal to redefine these adjective concepts, relegating the task to metaphysics, results in a failure in being purely philosophical. This is Oakeshott's criticism regarding the body of concepts inherent to political activity.

Philosophy must entirely eliminate everything that's presupposed or assumed to achieve what is self-explanatory and all-embracing.

CONCLUSION

This essay condenses Oakeshott's main lines of thinking presented in two fundamental texts.[4] The research has sought to bring to light, the rationale and systematization of what Oakeshott understands to be the nature and the concept of political philosophy.

It's been seen that human beings have the intrinsic capacity to reflect upon everything. This capacity can be limited or radically subversive, such as the philosophical reflection. The latter form doesn't accommodate presuppositions, anchorages, immutable doctrines or conditioned thought.

Radically subversive reflection shall be free, bold and have the fundamental objective to achieve the ultimate concept of things. It's like the individual that ascends through the stairs of a vast tower, possessing the possibility to look at the horizon on each new floor and, in each opportunity, to break away from what has been seen on lower levels.

Politics, as human activity, is also object of reflective exam. Among the types of reflections directed towards it, political philosophy's reflection is the most disruptive of all.

However, the concept of political philosophy as understood in common parlance proves to be "vague, unconvincing and unsatisfactory." This is because it's nothing more than a mere illustration of a general philosophical doctrine, an attempt to explain political phenomenon with the aim of serving as a manual for practical activity.

Philosophy has been reduced to a conceptual anomaly, an empty expression of everyday life. Thus, it becomes essential to rethink it through a reinterpretation of its philosophical nature—a redefinition of the body of concepts particular to it, one that must observe its own proper attributes and characteristics.

Within this scope, all analysis must be conducted with an inherent examination in light of the totality of experience. No human activity is independent or unique; nothing within experience is an isolated phenomenon. Political philosophy, therefore, must be understood within this totality, recognizing itself as an integral and interconnected part of the whole of human life.

One should not expect political philosophy to dictate the ends of political activity (what one should or shouldn't do, how one should or shouldn't proceed). It's not a practical manual, nor can it be subsumed under partisan agendas or pre-established doctrines. Rather, it must be the bastion of concreteness and radically subversive reflection—the ceaseless drive in the search of the ultimate truth of things, situated at the heart of the totality of experience.

Nevertheless, it's natural for philosophy to come into conflict with the view of commonsense, for the latter is, by nature, incomplete. The goal of philosophy, however, is to attain a higher level of coherence and completeness as a whole.

To demand that a philosophy of politics conform to the facts of political life would be tantamount to expecting a fully developed concept to submit to another that has not even been the subject of serious thought.

In the words of Oakeshott himself:

> And a philosophy of politics is an attempt to get away from what political life appears to be for commonsense—activity for the achievement of some end—to a view of the character of political life from the concrete standpoint of the totality of experience. A philosophy of politics, then, is unable to give guidance for action, and it cannot be supposed to fail as a philosophy because it fails to give guidance for action. It is not itself a political programme; it is not a foundation or basis, a body of general principles upon which a political programme might be constructed. It is concerned with the ultimate, not merely the psychological and ethical, presuppositions of political beliefs, actions and institutions, and is the attempt to reformulate the concepts of political life so that they include those presuppositions. Or, more comprehensively, it is what occurs when the attempt—common to all forms of political thought—to define the concepts of political life is carried out with unqualified freedom, but is pressed to an ultimate conclusion (1993, p. 137).

The texts analyzed are veritable odes to a profound reimagining and reinterpretation of philosophy, with the clear aim of renewing the specific notion of political philosophy.

This renewal—which manifests itself as a decisive break with the traditional concept—proves not only relevant but, above all, necessary given the current political and social state of the contemporary world.

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NOTES

1 In particular, Oakeshott cites Hobbes's *Leviathan* and Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* as works that have succeeded in expressing, in an exemplary manner, the specifically philosophical nature of politics and other related subjects of inquiry.

2 The premise regarding concepts of "individual" and "freedom" is not found, in this sense, in the texts analyzed in question. This is an example devised by the author of this study, with the aim of better illustrating Michael Oakeshott's idea.

3 It is important to note that Oakeshott proposes a redefinition of the very concept of "philosophy" in order to clarify the meaning of "political philosophy." It is therefore essential to reexamine the characteristics of philosophical thought and the implications they have for the conceptualization of related terms.

4 Oakeshott emphasizes that his conception of political philosophy does not present itself as a definitive truth, but as a determined attempt to reject the anomalous and contradictory character that common understanding has ascribed to this field of knowledge.