

II. HOW LEO STRAUSS AND JACQUES LACAN MADE THEIR NAMES

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THE YOUNG STRAUSS: RADICAL CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY

In the wake of 2001, one motif amongst many defenders of Leo Strauss is to assert that, despite what is said by others about him, Strauss was a friend to liberal democracy. In the words of Stephen Smith, Strauss was “the best friend liberal democracy ever had.” (Smith 2006, p. 6) This assessment turns on its head that of Irving Kristol. In *Neoconservatism: Autobiography of An Idea* Kristol asserts:

Strauss’ critique of the destructive elements within modern liberalism, an analysis that was popularised by his students ... has altered the very tone of public discourse in the United States... To bring contemporary liberalism into disrepute is no small achievement. (Kristol 1995, pp. 379-380)

These opposed opinions can be reconciled by Strauss’ own prescription, in “Liberal Education and Responsibility”, that “we are not permitted to be flatterers of democracy because we are friends and allies of democracy.” (Strauss 1968, p. 24) A good friend or ally is not above criticising the flaws of their beloved. Indeed, should the beloved act badly or betray their own ideals, it is the duty of the friend to become her critic.

Certainly, Leo Strauss from the very beginning of his intellectual life did not shrink from criticising liberal democracy. Raised in an Orthodox Jewish milieu (Sheppard 2006), Strauss was from the beginning of his intellectual career attracted to reactionary critics of liberal modernity: Spengler, Nietzsche, Schmitt, and Heidegger. (REFS*) In a 1941 lecture, shortly after his arrival in the United States, Strauss boldly claimed that the “young” “German nihilists” who would become National Socialists were inspired by a high or moral calling: “a sense of responsibility for endangered morality.” (Strauss 1999, p. 359) These “very intelligent, and very decent, if very young, Germans” (Strauss 1999, p. 360) were moved by revulsion against what Strauss calls “cultural bolshevism” of the modern world, and “the subhuman beings of the big cities.” (Strauss 1999, p. 359) In Young Strauss’ brilliant 1933 critique of Carl Schmitt’s *The Concept of the Political*, Strauss discerned a

similar, moral motif behind Schmitt's radical critique of liberalism. Schmitt's elevation of the notion of "the political"—and equation of it with the possibility of naming and physically killing an enemy—is motivated by a sense that liberalism leads to a world in which moral seriousness is impossible. All that remains is entertainment. (*) This is why Schmitt returns to Hobbes, whose state of nature anticipates Schmitt's "political", in the attempt to find a way beyond the sub-moral horizon of modern liberalism. (*) However, Strauss counsels that Schmitt does not go far enough in this task. The reason is that Hobbes does not take seriously enough the "natural evil in man".(Strauss 1995, p. 101) Hobbes' positing of a natural fear of violent death implies that man is evil only in a limited, qualified sense:

Hobbes had to understand evil as innocent 'evil' because he denied sin; and he had to deny sin because he did not recognize any primary obligation of man that takes precedence over every claim qua justified claim, because he understood man as by nature free, that is, without obligation ... (Strauss 1995, p. 110)

This positing of man's merely animal evil makes plausible and needful the liberal project of "culture". This is the overcoming of this "innocent" animal aggression, and the securing of "life pure and simple"(Strauss 1995, p. 110*) through the cultivated removal of its natural causes. What is required for a genuine Right to "move beyond the horizon of liberalism", as Strauss' correspondence with Schmitt underlies, is an affirmation of "the principle of the natural evil in man", given which "he needs dominion". (*) In the same year, in correspondence with Karl Lowith, Strauss specifies that they should not, as Jews, falsely conclude that opposition to the "shabby abomination" of Nazism should mean opposition to the far Right. The sufficient and necessary ground for any "decent" opposition would be a more adequate, Right-wing position, its precedents in Caesar's Rome, its principles "fascist, authoritarian, imperialist"—as against liberal others' "laughable and despicable appeal to the droits imprescriptibles de l'homme ..." (Strauss 1933, May 19, p. 625)

However, Straussians argue, this is Leo Strauss as a young man, responding to the manifest weaknesses and illegitimacy of the Weimar Republic, a liberal democracy forced upon Germany by imperial powers after World War 1. When the mature Strauss moved to the United States' more robust, principled, indigenous, constitutional liberalism, Strauss moderated his speech, indeed his opinions. Natural Right and History's very title invokes the imprescriptable natural rights of the US's founding declaration, whose image adorns the 1953 book's cover, and in whose "faith" Strauss sees the source of America's strength.

(*) This is why, a youthful fascist truly, Leo Strauss became a friend to the liberal democracy he had despised in his youth. The problems for this position, which demand we embrace it with caution, come from Strauss' own continuing statements and rhetoric concerning modern liberalism and the modern enlightenment more widely. Throughout his career, Strauss underscores his perception of the "crisis" of the liberal West, with whose naming the 1964 *City and Man* opens, as we saw in Introduction. (*) This crisis has an external face in the cold war: in the "evil" and "Eastern despotism" of the Communist nations. (Strauss 1964, pp. 5, 3) Yet its deeper symptoms and sources are internal. Strauss' sources for understanding these internal sources of the crisis of the modern world remain those that moved him in his youth: Spengler (*The City and Man* (1964)), Nietzsche ("Restatement on Xenophon's Hiero" (1959); "Preface" to *Liberalism Ancient and Modern* (1968)), and Martin Heidegger. (Strauss 1989, pp. 40-43) In Strauss' remarkable debate with Alexandre Kojève, to which we will return, Strauss does not contest the descriptive plausibility of Kojève's claim that the horizon or actuality of the modern West is a "Universal and Homogenous State". In this state, the common human desire for recognition should be completely realised. Strauss contests the desirability of this imputed telos. On the bases first of Kojève's premises (Strauss 1959, p. 208), then of his own conception of the moral and philosophical ends of men (Strauss 1959, pp. 208-209), Strauss suggests that Kojève's "world society" will be the revolting nightmare of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*:

The state through which men are said to become reasonably satisfied is ... the state in which the basis of men's humanity withers away, or in which man loses his humanity. It is the state of Nietzsche's 'last man'. (Strauss 1959, p. 208)

The same synthesis of Kojève 'with' Nietzsche operates in the early essays of Strauss' *Liberalism, Ancient and Modern*. Invoking rhetorically the "ancient liberalism" of the classic to the "horrors of mass culture" in modern liberalism (Strauss 1968, p. 8), Strauss stresses the united premises of modern liberalism, together with both its conservative and Communist opponents. (Strauss 1968, p. ix) While Communists and liberals may disagree as to the means, the end they share is:

A universal and homogenous state of which every adult human being is a full member; more precisely, the necessary and sufficient title to full membership is supplied by one's being an adult nonmoronic human being for all those times when he is not locked up in an insane asylum or penitentiary. (Strauss 1968, p. vii)

In Strauss' brilliant "Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism", the philosopher receives the unusual praise that: "Heidegger is the only man who has an inkling of the dimensions of the problem of a world society".(Strauss 1989, p. 43) "The many forms of contemporary Western degradation," the mature Strauss observes in *The City and Man*, "consists of the West's having become uncertain of its purpose.(Strauss 1964, p. 3) The typical citizen of modern liberalism, Strauss repeats, can conceive of nothing more elevated to pursue than his own, base egoism and the satisfaction of his all-too-human needs. The technological surfeit that liberal enlightenment's attempt to master and possess nature, to replace the realm of necessity with that of freedom, has made democratically available pampers this ignoble, herd-like condition. It is only a lesser consequence of this that the liberal West risks breeding citizens unable to defend her from Eastern despotism, and so risk defeat in the Cold War. (*) In Strauss' *Thoughts on Machiavelli* of 1958, Strauss wonders whether the true name for the modern enlightenment should not be "Obfuscation," as we have said (Strauss 1958, p. 173). "Looking forward to the extreme consequences of Machiavelli's action," Strauss ponders in his book whether the new Machiavellian continent may not be "uninhabitable"* by man:

The transition or the jump from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom will be the inglorious death of the very possibility of human excellence. (Strauss 1958, p. 298)

Finally, we will return to how Strauss' "Restatement" to Kojève of the following year hence ends with this unlikely call, faced with the prospect of a world "in which there is no longer the possibility of noble action or of great deeds":

Warriors and workers of all countries, unite, while there is still time to prevent the coming of 'the realm of freedom'. Defend with might and main, if it needs to be defended, the 'realm of necessity'.(Strauss 1959, p. 209)

The mature Strauss' clam, pursued with similarly bellicose rhetoric, is that this general degradation of the modern West is tied to a specific, philosophical or intellectual cause. This is the "decay and putrefaction" of political philosophy, with the ascendancy of the modern social senses in general, and political science in particular. (Strauss 1988b, p. 17) In *Natural Right and History*, Strauss is so bold as to claim that the more we cultivate such modern forms of rationalism, "the more we cultivate nihilism."(Strauss 1965, p. 6) If contemporary political scientists can see in Machiavelli only a patriot, or

the first neutral observer of political affairs, Strauss asserts that this is because they are “corrupted” by Machiavellianism. (Strauss 1958, p. 6) They are corrupted most in the fact-value distinction of which they are most proud. The fact-value distinction originates in Machiavelli’s critique of classical philosophy’s predilection for positing unattainable ideal states. Its more proximate cause is the vaulting progress made by the natural sciences, from the seventeenth century. This science is predicated on the impossibility of rationally discerning the final causes or purposes of things (their ‘why’); instead pursuing things’ efficient or mechanical causes (their ‘how’). The scientific task becomes to discover how things come to be and pass away, a knowledge which allows for their prediction, harnessing, and technological mastery. The unprecedented progress of the natural sciences, their manifold successes in “relief of the human estate”(Strauss 1964, p. 3), has predisposed modern social scientists to the “positivistic” opinion that such value-free science is the only model for human knowledge. However, Strauss passionately contests the applicability of value-free language in the social sciences. The very element of political life, Strauss agrees with Aristotelian political science, is men’s opinions concerning what is noble and the base:

Political things are by their nature subject to approval and disapproval, to choice and rejection, to praise and blame. It is of their essence not to be neutral but to raise a claim to men’s allegiance, decision, or judgment. One does not understand them as they are, as political things, if one does not take seriously their explicit or implicit claim to be judged in terms of goodness or badness, of justice or injustice, i.e. if one does not measure them by some standard of goodness or justice. (Strauss 1988b, p. 12)

Modern political science is predicated not, as its ancient predecessor, on a dialectical ascent from out of the political opinion native to common sense: the viewpoint of the citizen or the statesman (*). It aspires rather to a “radical break” with such pre-scientific knowledge, a kind of “Olympian” freedom from the evaluative breath of political society. (Strauss 1988b, p. 23)

The aspiration of modern social science can only be aspiration. This is because “generally speaking, it is impossible to understand thought and action without evaluating it.” (Strauss 1988b, p. 21) To the extent it succeeds, modern political science proceeds to irrelevancies, since it lacks appropriate criteria for deciding the relevancies of political things. At worst, it accordingly sets itself to “prove” things, through surveys, knowable

to “every ten-year old child of normal intelligence (Strauss 1988b, p. 23); “entangled in the kind of research projects by which [Gulliver] was amazed in Laputa.”(Strauss 1988b, p. 25) Its search for universal judgments concerning all societies by-passes all those relevant distinctions which for instance cause citizens and statesmen to make war--pre-eminently those between monarchic, aristocratic, tyrannical, democratic regimes, and their competing conceptions of the ends of man. Hence, at best, the modern political scientist achieves:

... a formalism unparalleled in all the scholasticisms of the past. All peculiarities of political societies, and still more the political societies with which we are concerned as citizens, become unrecognisable if restated in terms of the vague generalities which hold of every conceivable group.(Strauss 1968, p. 215)

But the modern social sciences must fail, since even to choose directions for research implies “values, i.e., ... subjective principles.”(Strauss 1988b, p. 25) These values, however, cannot be explained by positivistic political science, even as its research presupposes them.¹ Evaluative language, expelled from the self-consciousness of the modern social scientist, return “through the back door”, like the proverbial repressed. Significantly for us, it is here that Strauss situates psychoanalysis: “the annex of present-day social science which is called psychopathology. Social scientists see themselves compelled to speak of unbalanced, neurotic, maladjusted people”. (Strauss 1988b, p. 21) More widely, following Hobbes’ founding, Machiavellian attempt to deduce a science of political society from humans’ base or animal fears, the social sciences are drawn to try to understand human beings in the light of what is base and low in them: their proximity to animals, rather than to God or the gods.(*)

Strauss for his piece does not conceal his evaluation of the “poverty” of modern social and political science (Strauss 1988b, p. 21), which he proposes for the reasons cited are “scientific” in name only. (Strauss 1964, p. 9) Modern social scientists, on the basis of their attempt to simply transcend evaluative judgments, are as “fools”. (Strauss 1958, p. 236) In *The City and Man*, Strauss snarls that “if the routinization of charisma is a permitted theme” in contemporary scholarship, “the vulgarisation of thought ought to be a permitted theme.” (Strauss 1964, p. 9) The most bitter fruit of the positivistic turn in the social sciences, however, is historicism. We saw in the Introduction one reason for the novel import history takes on in modernity: as the record of human progress in overcoming an indifferent or hostile nature. At its best, a purely empirical account of

different regimes or actions in history, Strauss notes, reflects and promotes the liberal virtue of tolerance and open-mindedness. At worst however, this tolerance comes perilously close to preaching cultural relativism—with the celebrated ‘value-freedom’ in truth a nobler-sounding maxim for a principled inability to rationally adjudicate the value or excellence, nobility or baseness, of the data uncovered. This is the basis for Strauss’ famous provocation concerning the inability as he sees it of the modern social sciences to adequately condemn the “tyrannies” of the twentieth century:

The prohibition against value judgments in social sciences would lead to the consequence that we are permitted to give a strictly factual description of the overt acts that can be observed in concentration camps, and an equally factual analysis of the motivation of the actors concerned: we would not be permitted to speak of cruelty. (Strauss 1965, p. 52)²

Also, before the objective eye of the empirical historian, all the human actions and thoughts analysed show up as the products of their time. To this extent, even more than the positivism from whence it comes, “historicism” promotes the “oblivion of eternity” Strauss suggests is coeval with modernity herself (Strauss 1988b, p. 55):

Historicism rejects the question of the good society, that is to say, of the good society, because of the essentially historical character of society and of human thought; there is no essential necessity for raising the question of the good society ... (Strauss 1988b, p. 26)

Yet it is not as though the historicist perspective can provide us with a more solid or lasting epistemological foundation than the views it replaces. Indeed, historicism fails prey to its own version of the liar’s paradox we encountered in another context, that of performative contradiction:

In fact, if the historicist thesis is correct, we cannot escape the consequence that the thesis itself is ‘historical’ or valid because meaningful, for a specific historical situation only. Historicism is not a cab which one can stop at his own convenience: historicism must be applied to itself. (Strauss 1988b, pp. 72-73)

This is how Strauss can assert the paradoxical self-destruction of modern reason: what we might ironically call a dialectic of enlightenment which ends, but from the progressive

Left, with the destruction of reason. Historicism leads to relativism: the inability to rationally adjudicate ends. Yet human political life is impossible without positing ends, and assessing actions in their light. While we cannot decide rationally between ends, then, intellectual probity allows us nevertheless to distinguish between choices of ends which are made on the basis of an illusory rationality, and those which are made authentically: aware of their own unevident basis:

... if the unequal rank of choices cannot be traced to the unequal rank of their objectives, it must be traced to the unequal rank of the acts of choosing, and this means eventually that genuine choice, as distinguished from spurious or despicable choice, is nothing but resolute or deadly serious decision. Such a decision, however, is akin to intolerance rather than tolerance. (Strauss 1965, pp. 6-7)

It is not the place here to assess the validity or sufficiency of Strauss' radical critique of the social sciences. We can only remark how prophetic Strauss' assessment is, when consider the predilection to forms of decisionism and messianism in post-Heideggerian European philosophy, up to recent pleas on behalf of Leftist intolerance. (Zizek*) Our aim here is to try to understand Strauss, then Lacan, as they have understood themselves. This means following their arguments in the directions they deemed these to have necessarily led them. As we shall see, Strauss' powerful critique of modernity and the modern social sciences delineates per negativa the course he himself would take after the mid-1930s. On the one hand, Strauss rejects the social sciences' attempt to transcend pre-scientific, political categories without "possessing a coherent and comprehensive understanding of what is frequently called the common sense view of political things". (Strauss 1964, p. 11) The mature Strauss will seek out and find such a comprehensive perspective first in medieval and then classical thought. On the other hand, Strauss' esoteric hermeneutics will arise out of his challenging the historicist view which implies that even for example the thought of the greatest philosophers are merely reflections of their particular epoch and its prejudices.

THE YOUNG LACAN: RADICAL CRITIQUE OF THE "HISTORICAL ERA OF THE EGO"

We have seen how psychoanalysis fits into Strauss' powerful critique of the modern social sciences. Strauss' remarks on psychoanalysis are rare, of this dismissive kind:

To a generation which was successfully exposed to the gospel of the blond beast, of the class struggle, and of the redemptive virtues of toilet training, Hobbes must appear as the incarnation of old-fashioned decency. (Strauss 1988b, p. 171)

Strauss' biting evocation of psychoanalytic discourse here—one which echoes its conservative critique from the earliest days—with those of Marx and Nietzsche is provocative in different ways. Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche have been dubbed the three modern "hermeneuticians of suspicion." They are three thinkers whose work is predicated on a radical suspicion of the appearances of normal political and individual lives, and the productions of human culture—comparable to that Strauss associates with the value-free political sciences. We have stressed already Lacan's project of a "return to Freud's meaning." (Lacan 2006, p. 337/405) His work hardly contests the generation of a new analytic jargon, far distinct from the language of "the shepherd, the husband, the general, or the cook." (Strauss 1988b, p. 16) Lacan instead excels in inventing and developing technical terms, closed to outsiders: the Other, the paternal metaphor, the name-of-the-father, foreclosure, the unary trait, *das Ding*, *objet petit a*, the Imaginary, the Symbolic, the Real. Lacan's later attempts to delineate the structure of subjectivity using mathematical topology, or of discourse in "mathemes" consisting of a small number of elements—however we assess whatever we can make of them—deliberately push his career-long effort of formalization as far as possible beyond what Lacan comes to term the "*semblants*" at play in ordinary communication. (*) We will return to these attempts in Session 10.

Jacques Lacan, as Strauss, made his name, and attracted such a following to him in the 1950s, by virtue of the stridency of his critique of the contemporary state of the human sciences—post-Freudian psychology in particular—and twentieth century liberal culture more widely. There are also proximities between this critique and that of Strauss. Of course, Lacan was not a political philosopher. Milner notes that what Lacan termed his "anti-philosophy" (*je m'insurge contre la philosophie*) also came to be an "anti-politics": an indifference to politics closer to Freud's position, or that of an Hellenic sage, than to a political thinker. (Milner 1995)* Yet Lacan was brought again and again, from his earliest essays to the last seminars, to comment on what the Greeks called *ta politika*: "the verdicts analytic experience allows us to come to in the present social order." (Lacan 2006, p. 98/120) Lacan's notion of the "decentering" of the subject in the webs of its identifications with others, and the "big Other" of words, figures and institutions bearing the force of Law, have encouraged others to apply Lacanian theory to politics. (Stavrakakis 2006) Lacan's preoccupation with securing psychoanalysis' place as claimant to a "genuine science,

whose claims have been inscribed in a tradition beginning with Plato's *Theaetetus*"(FFS*) also drew him to repeated considerations of the history and philosophy of science, in its ancient and modern forms.(Fink 2004)*

For Lacan as for Strauss, we live in "the historical era of the me (moi)."(Lacan 2006, p. 234/283) In his first, programmatic statements of the late 1940s and early 1950s, Lacan's denunciation of this era is every bit as strident as that of Strauss, although his primary references are Kojève and Heidegger, not Nietzsche:

The me [moi] of modern man ... has taken on its form in the dialectic of the beautiful soul who does not recognise his very reason for being in the disorder he denounces in the world. / But a way out of this impasse is offered to the subject where his discourse rants and raves. ... he will make an effective contribution to the collective undertaking in his daily work and will be able to occupy his leisure time with all the pleasures of a profuse culture which ... will give him the wherewithal to forget his own existence and death, as well as to misrecognise the particular meaning of his life in false communication. (Lacan 2006, pp. 233/281-282)

Lacan also consistently ties the discourse of the sciences to the malaises and "modern neurosis" psychoanalysis is called to address. What Lacan terms "the enormous objectification constituted by this science"(ibid.) does not proffer the prospect of liberation, of which the enlighteners had dreamed. The unprecedented profusion of knowledges and information, viewed from the perspective of the subjectivity of individuals within the expanding, 'realised" space it totalises (Lacan 2006, pp. 100/122-123), is essentially alienating. Here Lacan comes closer to Hegelian Marxian social theory, than to that of the Right. Modern humanity "is engaged in a technological enterprise on the scale of the entire species":

The question is whether the conflict between Master and Slave will find its solution in the service of the machine, for which a psychotechnics, that is already yielding a rich harvest of ever more precise applications, will strive to provide car-race drivers and guards for regulating power-stations. (Lacan 2006, p. 99/122)

This being said, Lacan's critique of the "ego's era" (Brennan*) goes in different directions than does Strauss'. For Lacan, the modern conception of the independent, Cartesian ego

is first of all untrue, before it is ignoble. Its ascendancy is the result of a massive, historically sanctified mesconnaissance: "It's autonomous! That's a good one!" (Lacan 2006, p. 360/421) Psychoanalysis, drawing also on researches in ethology (animal behaviour) examines how the ego, far from being autonomous, is founded in the child's earliest identification with others. In Jacques Lacan's first original contribution to psychoanalytic theory, Lacan famously posited the "mirror stage". This is the phase wherein human infants, unlike infants of other species, are observably fascinated with their own mirror image, and the imagos of the others who surround them: siblings, other babies, parents. For Lacan, the "jubilation" children show at the coordination of their movements with these images is telling. It reflects how the human infant espies in this image the first "anticipation" of its own bodily unity and motility: a motility and unity which at this point—when the baby is still unable to crawl or to stand—lies well ahead of its organic maturation. The human ego is, hence, an other: modelled from the start on the other(s) of image(s) the child finds in its social milieu. While identification with this other has a necessary, indeed basic, role in the child's formation, however, it means that the ego is tied from its beginning to aggression:

This ego, whose strength our theorists now define by its capacity to bear frustration, is frustration in its very essence. Not frustration of one of the subject's desires, but frustration of an object in which his desire is alienated ... (Lacan 2006, pp. 208/250-251)

We can see the reason for this in the phenomena of childhood transitivity: the "boohoo, so are you!" of games of mimicry; the strange way that, when one child at this stage is struck, the other cries; but mention sibling rivalry. From this very early period, Lacan maintains, human desire becomes "desire of the other". Like many of his formulations, this "desire is the desire of the other" involves a condensation (as well as a literal debt to Lacan's teacher, Kojève). Our desire is shaped by our own self-formation in identification with an other-image, first. This image, always more or less static, will henceforth always resist integration of the individual's evolving *erota*. Second, since who we become is shaped in identification with others, the objects these others desire become desirable to us—relatively independent of our biological needs, but for this reason alone. Lacan recurs to an observation Saint Augustine, "because he lived in a similar time", made of a young child observing another at the mother's breast to illustrate what he will later call the jealousy (*jealousy-jouissance*) of human beings' very early, imaginary aggression:

Vid ego et exportus sum zelantem parvalum: nondum loquebatur et intuebatur pallidus amaro aspecta conlectaneum suum ... (I myself have seen and known an infant to be jealous even though it could not speak. It became pale, and cast bitter looks at its foster-brother.) (Lacan 2006, p. 93/114)

The modern epoch's promotion of the ego, Lacan hence will argue, is not simply alienating. It produces a civilization—this is 1948—characterised by a “pre-eminence of aggressiveness”. Lacan sees this not simply in the horrifying wars and genocides of the twentieth century. (100/123) This pre-eminence “would already be sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that it [aggressiveness] is usually confused in everyday morality with the virtue of strength.” Lacan sees the dominant imago of the ego, and its “with me or against me” aggressiveness in Darwin, “a notion of selection based solely on the animal's conquest of space as a valid explanation for the development of life”:

Indeed, Darwin's success seems to derive from the fact that he projected the predation of Victorian society and the economic euphoria that sanctioned for that society the social devastation it initiated on a planetary scale, and that he justified its predations with the image of a laissez-faire system in which the strongest predators compete for their natural prey.(Lacan 2006, pp. 98/120-121)

Above all, after Freud, Lacan sees it in the shapes and prevalence of modern neurosis, the malaises of modern kultur. We will see tomorrow why the young Lacan's critique of modern egoism might in fact be termed Aristophanic, if Lacan did not find his ancient precedents instead in Plato's *Republic* VIII-IX, “in which Plato's wisdom shows us the dialectic common to the passions of the soul and of the city.”(Lacan 2006, p. 99/120)³ For from 1938 and Lacan's 'Doctoral Dissertation on “Family Complexes”', Lacan's critique of the modern era of the ego is underlain by observations concerning what he terms the “dehiscence of the family”(*). In particular, Lacan ties the “shackles that condemn modern man to the most formidable social hell” (101/123) to the decline of the father's socially sanctioned authority, as model for what Lacan will term subjects' symbolic, versus imaginary, identification:

Namely, to employ the jargon that corresponds to our approaches to man's subjective needs, the increasing absence of all the sanctifications of the superego and ego-ideal that occur in all kinds of traditional societies, forms that extend from the rituals of everyday intimacy to the periodical festivals in which the community

manifests itself. (Lacan 2006, p. 99/121)

It is in this light, increasingly, that Lacan will turn to premodern and ethnographic sources to inform his account of subjectivity. The decline of paternal authority, Lacan claims, is far from liberating subjects' repressed drives. Lacan is no libertarian. It succeeds only in leaving them increasingly at the mercy of their own earliest, imaginary identifications and aggression-laden misrecognitions. Hence, at this very point of his close proximity with the most revered motifs of conservative *kulturpessimismus*, Lacan also turns Dostoevsky's famous plaint concerning parricide or Deicide upon its head:

To the concupiscence gleaming in old man Karamazov's eyes when he questioned his son—'God is dead; thus all is permitted'—modern man, the very one who dreams of the nihilistic suicide of Dostoevsky's hero or forces himself to blow up Nietzsche's inflatable superman, replies with all his ills and all his deeds: 'God is dead, nothing is permitted anymore.' (106/130)

In this context, Lacan is both outraged and unsurprised by the predominant turn in psychoanalysis towards what was called "ego psychology", after Freud's death, particularly in the United States. For Lacan, as for many intellectuals from the old world, the USA is an object of lasting fascination and disgust. In America, Lacan echoes Kojève again: "history ... finds its limit; [it...] is denied with a categorical will that gives the industrial corporations their style ..." (E*) Ego psychology, after Hartmann, proposes that analysis should aim to "strengthen the ego" of the analysands. This should be done by encouraging their identification with the analyst himself. Lacan finds this conception of analysis so fundamentally incorrect that he proposes it be used only as a pedagogical device (*): to illustrate the very type of imaginary *mesconnaissance* which is the principal obstacle psychoanalysis must overcome. He reserves his most biting rhetoric to savaging this repression of the meaning of Freud, as he conceives it. Freud threw his pearls before swine, Lacan swaggers (*): having submitted to "the sociological poem of the 'autonomous ego' (435/523)[egs]

Everything about psychoanalytic technique as originated by Freud—including the position of the analyst, seated invisibly behind analysands (*; 287/346)—Lacan sees as reflecting the founder's desire to minimise the ego's resistance, rooted in its imaginary origins, to any opening or revelation of the unconscious. "The characteristic modes of the agency of the ego in [small-d] dialogue', Lacan writes, "are reactions of opposition,

negation, ostentation and lying" (A*). While the psychoanalytic clinic, in its founding "hope in dialogue to make reason triumph", hence looks back to Socrates and "the renunciation of aggression" philosophic dialogue presupposes, Lacan comments that "ever since Thrasymachus made his mad outburst at the beginning of that great dialogue, The Republic, verbal dialectic has all too often proved a failure" (86/126). In the historical era of the ego, then, philosophic dialogue must be supplanted, if any rational therapy of desire is to be expected:

For us, whose concern is with present day man, ... it is in the ego that we meet ... inertia: we know it as the resistance to the dialectical process of analysis. The patient is held spellbound by his ego, to the exact degree that it causes his distress, and reveals its nonsensical function. It is this very fact that has led us to evolve a technique which substitutes the strange detours of free association for the sequence of the Dialogue. (RE 12)

LAW AND PSYCHOANALYSIS: LACAN'S RETURN TO FREUD

How then did Jacques Lacan "make his name," to coin the phrase Lacan later uses to describe James Joyce's writing as *sinthome*—namely, what held the great author's known psychotic symptoms at bay*? For Lacan's derisory rhetoric contra the ego psychologists—amply attesting "a bias in favour of ... the partisan, the spectacular, and the bloody", so "appealing to the young" (Strauss 1958, p. 82)—does not by itself explain the following Lacan was to quickly establish in the early 1950s. We turn now towards the meaning of Lacan's return to the meaning of Freud's discovery of the unconscious: which, speaking in Freud's home city of Vienna, Lacan opens by pronouncing "a revolution in knowledge of Copernican proportions." (334/401) Freud had bequeathed to those who followed him a remarkable oeuvre as testimony to this revolution, which Lacan does not hesitate to suggest bespeaks Freud's genius. However, Lacan's identification with Freud's legacy—we are tempted to say, his use of Freud as his mouthpiece—does not prevent Lacan from consistently identifying and honing in on points of incompleteness, inconsistency, and failure in Freud's teaching. This teaching, we recall, spans reflections on individual ontogenesis (early childhood) and phylogenesis (the origin of the species); the establishing of a systematic "metapsychology" of the nature of the psyche, its drives, and the formations of the unconscious; the formalisation of a diagnostic heuristic of mental illness; and clinical writings on psychoanalysis as a therapeutic technique. However, Lacan notes, psychoanalysis after Freud was left by the master with a series of deep

enigmas and contradictions: was psychoanalysis a natural science whose foundations lay in biology, or a human, interpretive science? Could an account, on Freudian or scientific premises, be given of the efficacy of the talking cure, and of what Freud once termed the “magic” power of words to which it would seemingly attest? Does not Freud’s account of the origin of the species, indebted to Darwin as much as contemporary ethnography, shade unmistakably into myth, rather than science? (*) Does not Freud’s oeuvre divide between two accounts of the ego, one in which it is the seat of “reason and sanity”(*), the other which places it an object of primordial narcissism, at the bases of madness and the psychoses? What are the clinical implications and the wider meaning of Freud’s later insistence on a death drive—if it is coherent at all—which he felt necessary, even at the price of overturning his earlier theory of the drives?

Lacan’s early seminars are indeed largely instances of “the discipline of commentary” on Freud’s texts, by which he not mean “simply to situate what someone says in the context of his time.” (336/404) These texts, he tells his audience in Vienna, “prove to be comparable to those that, in other times, human veneration has invested with the highest qualities.” (336/404) We saw at our beginning the core of what Lacan claims is the fundamental register of Freud’s “intangible but radical revolution” (E 438/527), one which ego psychology had wanted to know nothing about:

In Freud’s complete works, one out of every three pages presents us with philological references, one out of two pages with logical inferences, and everywhere we see a dialectical apprehension of experience, linguistic analysis becoming still more prevalent the more directly the unconscious is involved. / What is at stake on every page in *The Interpretation of Dreams* is what I call the letter of discourse, in its texture, uses, and immanence in the matter in question. (424/509)

This is the root of Lacan’s “return to Freud’s work” (222/267). The unconscious as Freud discovered it is not the repository of preOedipal drives or archetypal images. The unconscious, as Freud’s topographical model of the psyche as a multiply-coding mnemonic system almost explicitly says, is structured like a language. (*) It is attested in its formations: symptoms, slips, and dreams. Lacan will for instance recur to Freud’s inability to remember the name of that painter of last things ‘Signorelli’, on a train trip through ‘Bosnia-Herzegovina’ from the North Italian town ‘Trafoi’, whence the Signor of psychoanalysis had heard news of his patient’s suicide. In the place of this repressed

signifier, as Freud details in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, he recalls Boticelli; Boltraffio; Herr(=‘signor’)-zogovina. Such formations of the unconscious are inexplicable unless we treat of symptoms as enigmas of language, “structured like a language: a symptom is language from which speech must be delivered” (223/269). Likewise:

We must take up Freud’s work again starting with the *Tramdeutung* [Interpretation of Dreams] to remind ourselves that a dream has the structure of a sentence; or rather, to keep to the letter of the work, of a rebus—that is, of a form of writing, of which children’s dreams are supposed to represent the primordial ideography, and which reproduces, in adults’ dreams, the simultaneously phonetic and symbolic use of signifying elements found in the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt and in the characters still used in China. / But even this is no more than the deciphering of the instrument. What is important is the version of the text, and that, Freud tells us, is given in the telling of a dream—that is, in its rhetoric. Elipsis and pleonasm, hyperbaton or syllepsis, regression, repetition, apposition—these are the syntactical displacements: metaphor, catachresis, antonomasia, allegory, metonymy, and synecdoche—these are the semantic condensations; Freud teaches us to read in them the intentions—whether ostentatious or demonstrative, dissimulating or persuasive, retaliatory or seductive—with which the subject modulates his oneiric discourse. (221-222/267-268)

It was however Freud’s fate to have been born prematurely, we might say.⁴ “Freud worked before the advent of the modern science of linguistics which, Lacan proposes, would have made possible the “sufficient ... formalisation ... to bring people to recognise the instance of the signifier”. Hence, from the start, others failed to recognise the “constitutive role of the signifier in the status Freud immediately assigned to the unconscious in the most precise and explicit ways”: (426/512)

... because when the *Traumdeutung* was published it was way ahead of the formalisations of linguistics for which one could no doubt show that it paved the way by the sheer weight of its truth. (426/512-513)

Instead, if anything, the “significations’ of psychoanalytic metapsychology (426/513) captured Freud’s audience: the Oedipus complex; infantile sexuality; the stages of sexual development; the ego, superego, id “trinity” or triumvirate. These allow psychoanalysis to be treated as another philosophical anthropology or anthropological myth, with the

novelty of Freud's clinically-based insight into the linguistic nature of the unconscious forgotten. Indeed, this "is what makes our responsibility so formidable" as clinicians and legatees of Freud, Lacan wryly comments:

... when, with the mythical manipulations of our doctrine, we bring [the analysand] yet another opportunity to become alienated, in the decomposed trinity of the ego, the superego, and the id, for example. (233/282)

Lacan's stress on the linguistic nature of the unconscious, then, also answers to the clinical phenomenon from whence it was born, to Breuer's and Freud's own astonishment. (*) This is the phenomenon of the "talking cure", named from out of the mouth of Anna O, its first beneficiary. Lacan goes so far as to say that psychoanalysis' post-Freudian forgetting in part must "go back to the analyst's guilty conscience about the miracle his speech performs":

He interprets the symbol and, lo and behold! the symptom—which inscribes the symbol in letters of suffering in the subject's flesh—disappears. This thaumaturgy is unbecoming to us. For we are scientists and magic is not a justifiable process ... (252/306)

The therapeutic power of the performed, inter-subjective activity of speech to cure—speech as distinct from language as system, what Lacan following Saussure calls *langue*—Lacan variously calls revelatory, or a power of divination. (Some readers in the present context may hear the Platonic, or Socratic, resonances in this.) Yet Lacan stresses how Freud, having experimented with the methods of narcosis and hypnosis associated with earlier forms of ritual, magical or religious catharsis, rejected these methods. "For if the originality of the method [of a scientific practice] derive from the means it foregoes, it is because the means that it reserves for itself suffice to constitute a domain whose limits define the relativity of its operations," Lacan comments. Psychoanalysis on these terms is a talking cure, on the side of *logos* and reason. Or else it is an obscurantism:

Its means are those of speech, insofar as speech confers a meaning on the functions of the individual; its domain is that of concrete discourse qua field of the subject's transindividual reality; and its operations are those of history, insofar as history constitutes the emergence of truth in reality ... (214/257)

However, it is one thing to isolate the function and field of speech as the Freudian Thing. It is another thing to explain the curative effect of psychoanalytic speech, its sine qua non. Lacan is clear. This effect points to a fundamental truth Freud was surprised by, from the time of his first analytic encounters with those female hysterics Lacan quips somewhere are as the patron Saints or first martyrs, of analysis:

I am asking where the peace that ensues in recognising an unconscious tendency comes from if the latter is not truer than what restrained it in the conflict ... If Freud contributed nothing more to the knowledge of man than the verity that there is something veritable, there is no Freudian discovery. (338/405, 339/406-407)

This is the truth that “I, the truth, speak”, as Lacan provocatively ventriloquises, in “The Freudian Thing.” (340/409) The truth of the subject’s desire and of his identity, Lacan means, is shaped in the decisive respect by their relations to the speech or “discourse of the Other”, what Lacan also calls the symbolic order:

For Freud’s discovery was that of the effect, in man’s nature, of his relations to the symbolic order and the fact that their meaning goes all the way back to the most radical instances of symbolization in being. To ignore the symbolic order is to condemn Freud’s discovery to forgetting and analytic experience to ruin. (227/275)

Indeed, like the oracle at Delphi whose fatal letters preformed Oedipus’ destiny, despite and in his conscious resistance to assuming their force:

... it is important to consider that speech constitutes the subject’s being not merely by the symbolic assumption, but that prior to his birth speech determines—through the laws of marriage, by which the human order is distinguished from nature—not only the subject’s status but even the birth of his biological being. (294/354)

To illustrate his meaning, Lacan recurs several times in the *Ecrits* to the case of the Ratman, whose florid obsessional symptoms would be truly comic if they were not so profoundly harrowing. All of these symptoms, as Freud analysis “seems to have unwittingly divined”, turn around a single, oracular ‘word chain’ ‘rat-ratte-spielratte’ in which the analysand’s destiny, and his neurosis, had come to be uncannily ciphered. The contingent links of

this chain tie the subject in unfathomable guilt to the shortcomings of his dead father. This father—the family’s discourse hinted—had incurred a dishonorable debt (ratte) playing spielratte in his loose-living, army days: a debt which, “in causing his father to be discharged from the army, determined the latter’s decision whom to marry.” That the “ratman”—as Freud named him— sparked by the story of a “cruel captain” in his own army service concerning punishment by the gnawing of rats, should have developed the compulsion to repay an unreal ratte “to the course of delusion in the great obsessive trance that leads him to ask Freud for help” is not coincidental, Lacan claims:

Note that this chain is certainly not the whole structure of his obsessive neurosis, but that, in the text of the neurotic’s individual myth, it crossbreeds with the web of fantasies in which the shadow of his dead father and the ideal of his lady-love are conjoined in a couple of narcissistic images. / But if Freud’s interpretation, by undoing this chain in all its latent import, leads the imaginary web of the neurosis to disintegrate, it is because this chain summons the subject, concerning the symbolic debt that is promulgated in his tribunal, less as its legatee than its living witness. (294/354)

That psychoanalytic interpretation can work through its speech, Lacan contends; that the desire involved in individuals’ symptoms seems satisfied by being recognised in this speech; that this can be so compels us to infer that the desire in play in these symptoms can only have been a desire for recognition, from the start. Of speech, Lacan at the same time contends that what psychoanalysis shows is that speech is always addressed to an Other capable of recognising its truth, from beyond the “wall” constituted of subject’s alienating imaginary identifications with its semblables, and the “empty talk” with which the ego’s imaginary passions ordinarily shape discourse :

The Other is, therefore, the locus in which is constituted the I who speaks along with he who hears ... / But in return, this locus extends as far into the subject as the laws of speech reign there, that is, well beyond the discourse that takes its watchwords from the ego, since Freud discovered its unconscious field and the laws that structure it. (358/431)

What can be termed the performative efficacy of the talking cure indeed points for Lacan to truths concerning language and human sociability recovered in contemporary anthropology and ethnography, through what he terms in 1948 “... the scientific collection

of the cultural forms we are destroying in the world.” (E 99/121) This is that speech is “a gift of language” (248/308). As well as what is said (its signified content) that is, the fact of communication is of foundational importance for human beings, in establishing the elementary bonds of trust and kinship which will make political community possible. Let me cite at some length here a remarkable passage:

... the law of man has been the law of language since the first words of language presided over the first gifts –it having taken the detestable Danaï, who came and fled by sea, for men to learn to fear deceptive words accompanying faithless gifts. Up until then, these firsts the act of giving them and the objects given, their transmutation into signs, and even their fabrication, were so closely entwined with speech for the pacific Argonauts—uniting the islets of their community with the bonds [noeuds] of a symbolic commerce—that they were designated by its name. / ...these gifts are already symbols, in the sense that symbols mean pact, and they are first and foremost signifiers of the pact they constitute as the signified: this is plainly seen in the fact that the objects of symbolic exchange—vases made to remain empty, shields too heavy to be carried, sheaves that will dry out, lances that are thrust into the ground—are all destined to be useless if not superfluous by their very abundance. (225/272)

This is the ironic truth in “the humor” Lacan sees in codes of Laws’ founding, empirically unlikely assumption: that no one is ignorant of the Law. (225/272) For no man—at least no man who is not also a psychotic or a “scoundrel” (*)—knows nothing of the Laws of speech:

In general, each person knows that the others will remain, like himself, inaccessible to the constraints of reason, failing an a priori acceptance of a rule of debate that cannot function without an explicit or implicit agreement as to what is the called its ground [fonds], which is almost tantamount to a prior agreement regarding the stakes ... Thus I won’t expect anything from these rules without the Other’s good faith and, as a last resort, will only make use of them, if I see fit or I am forced to, in order to beguile bad faith. (358/430-431)

“Man thus speaks, but is because the symbol has made him man”, Lacan contends. (229/276) This is why Lacan will recur in his own way to the opening words of the Gospel of John: “in the beginning was the Logos”.() The subject’ founding, pacifying symbolic

identification—what Lacan will call the Ego Ideal as distinct from the imaginary ‘ideal ego’ (*)—is with this transcendental “locus of the Other”. This locus, Lacan follows Levi-Strauss, is in turn however tied at its base to the fundamental prohibition of incest that divides human culture from nature. What Lacan terms this “primordial Law” defining human being puts in place rules of matrimonial exchange, “whose law concerning kinship names is, like language, imperative for the group in its forms, but unconscious in its structure.” (229/276) It is individuals’ originary identification with this primordial Law, and the “symbolic debt” the subject accrues by his failure ever to accede fully to it, which we will see in session 3 that Lacan holds to be the stake of what Freud had called the Oedipus complex, and hence of psychoanalysis as he reconceives it:

This is precisely where the Oedipus complex—insofar as we still acknowledge that it covers the whole field of our experience with its signification—will be said, in my remarks here, to mark the limits our discipline assigns to subjectivity: namely, what the subject can know of his unconscious participation in the movement of the complex structures of language ties, by verifying the symbolic effects in his individual existence of the tangential movement towards incest which has manifested itself ever since the advent of a universal community. (229/277)

Lacan sees psychoanalysis, that is, as repositioning human being as a being before the Law, despite the imaginary mesconnaissance encouraged by a scientific culture, and even in the transgressive desire in which individuals are congenitally disposed to pursue the fantasy of their sovereign autonomy. As Lacan could already write in 1950, in an intriguing article on psychoanalysis and criminology which closely predates the beginning of the series of Seminars which were to make his name:

The statement that the ‘law makes sin’ remains true outside of the eschatological perspective of Grace in which Saint Paul formulated it. /...For psychoanalysis is merely an extension of anthropology in its technique that explores in the individual the dialectic [of law and desire] which scand's our society's creations and in which Saint Paul's statement finds anew its absolute truth. (104/128)

PHILOSOPHY AND LAW: STRAUSS' RETURN TO PREMODERN POLITICAL RATIONALISM

There is an unexpected proximity to Strauss' concerns in this emphasis Lacanian psychoanalysis places upon the necessary subjection of the human individual to Law,

without whose authority only forms of aggression-tainted, narcissistic malaise can ensue. This proximity can be seen by Strauss' critical comment concerning Kojève's post-Hegelian philosophical anthropology. Kojève "constructs human society by starting from the untrue assumption that man as man is thinkable as a being that lacks awareness of sacred restraints ..." (Strauss 1959, p. 192) For Lacan, modern ego-centrism, and ego psychology, similarly misrecognise the constitutive role of Law, founded on the restraints against parricide and incest, in human subjectivity. The key transitional work in Leo Strauss' career, between the Young and the mature Strauss bears the title *Philosophy and Law: Essays Towards the Understanding of Maimonides and his Predecessors*. It is in the course of pursuing this understanding that Leo Strauss, as it appears now in 1938 (Lampert 2009, pp. 63-76), came to stumble unwittingly upon the pre-moderns' art of esoteric writing, with which we began here. *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (1948) is the book where this discovery bears its first fruits: its five essays collected from the previous decade, beginning in 1941. (Strauss 1988a, p. 5) The discovery of this form for the presentation of philosophical ideas is for Strauss co-temporal with Strauss' discovery of a different substance to pre-modern philosophy. This substance, most importantly, concerns the political meaning and situation of philosophy herself, in ways to which we will now ascend. (*)

The young Strauss' radical critique of liberalism cannot be adequately comprehended in abstraction from considering Strauss' situation as a young Jewish-German scholar, caught in what he would call the "theological-political predicament". (Strauss 1997, p. 1) Strauss notes that the liberal solution to the potential conflict between the demands of religion and politics is to separate church and state, private and public spheres. However, the sanctification of a private sphere in which "the state's legislation must not interfere", Strauss notes, permits the most base private prejudices, alongside a plurality of religious faiths. In Weimar Germany, Strauss would later reflect, liberalism permitted the persistence, and Hitler's political use, of centuries-old anti-semitism: "liberal society necessarily makes possible, permits, and even fostered 'discrimination'." (Strauss 1994, pp. 46-47*)

Young Strauss, certainly, always opposed the liberal solution to the question of how European Jews should deal with the continuing Galut or exile from Israel. According to Strauss, the solution of assimilation to Western liberal mores proposed by liberal Jews inspired by the model of Spinoza—and including Freud—was ethically ignoble, and politically unwise. Assimilation was ignoble, since it involved a letting go of the ancestral

beliefs and practices that had made the Jewish people unique, and sustained it throughout the Galut from the time of the destruction of the second temple. (*) Whereas his ancestors had recourse to these uniting beliefs and practices, moreover, faced with persecution, "the uprooted, assimilated Jew had nothing to oppose to hatred and contempt except his naked self." (PR*, Tanguay 16)

Yet the young Strauss could not accept an ancestral, Jewish messianic faith that the State of Israel could only be piously awaited, to be established by Divine intervention in the political world. For all these reasons Leo Strauss, from age seventeen, was attracted to "simple and straightforward Zionism" (T14). This was the project of men such as Herzl and Pinsker that the Jews should aspire, by their own political action, to build a secular state in Israel. However, Strauss never lost sight of what united merely political Zionism with liberal assimilation. Their common opposition to the Galut was also a common opposition to what Strauss would come to call "Orthodoxy": the ancestral faith of Jews in the revealed teachings of Torah, concerning God, the creation of the world, and the election of Israel. Strauss' divided attitude to the forms of cultural Zionism or "neoOrthodoxy" of Jewish thinkers such as Martin Buber and Franz Rozenzweig is revealing here. (*) On one hand, Strauss points out that the proposal of any return to Jewish cultural tradition does not weigh heavily enough the way that the world of Jewish tradition and religion had been destroyed in modernity. (T18) On the other hand, Strauss remained opposed to attempts such as those Buber and Rosenzweig—which influenced Emmanuel Levinas, of more recent fame, so deeply (*)—to try to reconcile the teachings of Torah with the modern scientific *Weltanschauung*. The means to do this was what Strauss called the "internalisation" or "idealising interpretation" of Jewish faith. This involves reinterpreting the "prophetic ethic" as the true meaning, and cultural genius, of Judaism; in this way bracketing the Torah's pre-scientific assertions concerning creation and miracles. These are reinterpreted as allegorical expressions of an essentially internal experience: the existential encounter of individuals with God. In this way, Young Strauss observed, neo-Orthodoxy involved less a return to Jewish traditional faith than a compromise solution. However, any such compromise, the Young Strauss radically proclaimed, was opposed to what he came to call intellectual "probity", which includes the attempt to understand and respond to an author or position on its own terms. "It therefore must be insisted that the 'internalising' of the basic tenets of the tradition robs these tenets of their meaning: it therefore turns out that not only every compromise between orthodoxy and Enlightenment, but also every synthesis of these opposed position, is finally untenable ..." (PL 25-26).⁵ Neo-orthodoxy, by contrast, surrenders the terms of Jewish orthodoxy,

dishonorably accepting:

... the wholesale surrender to science and history of the whole sphere in which science and history claim to be or to become competent, and ... the simultaneous depreciation of that whole sphere, as religiously irrelevant. (T21)

We can see then Strauss' theological-political "predicament" at this time, which his own youthful extremity or intellectual probity hones in upon with an unerring force. The predicament consists of a double bind. Strauss wished on one hand to preserve Jewish particularity in the face of persecution and liberal assimilation. This particularity, Strauss however noted, comes on its own terms from its religious tradition. On the other hand, Young Strauss was attracted to a political, this-worldly solution to the Jewish problem. This this-worldly nature alone however rendered merely political Zionism a betrayal of Jewish particularity, qua religious or "orthodox". Strauss himself would put this dilemma with characteristic power:

When Cultural Zionism understands itself, it turns into religious Zionism. But when religious Zionism understands itself, it is in the first place Jewish faith and only secondarily Zionism. It must regard as blasphemous the notion of a human solution to the Jewish problem. (T19)

Young Strauss' solution to this dilemma was as characteristically intellectually radical as it was politically reactionary. As he would put it in the 1935 "Introduction" to *Philosophy and Law*, in a series of precisely worded clauses:

... if therefore the alternative 'orthodoxy or Enlightenment' may today no longer, or rather, may today not yet be evaded; then one must first of all, and at the very least, climb back down onto the level of the classical question between the Enlightenment and orthodoxy, as onto a level on which battle was done and could be done about the one eternal truth. (PL 26)

While continuing to recognise the "honourable" nature of purely political Zionism, for his part, Strauss would recall that from this time he began to consider:

... whether an unqualified return to Jewish orthodoxy was not both possible and necessary—was not at the same time the solution to the problem of the Jew

lost in the non-Jewish modern world and the only course compatible with sheer consistency or intellectual probity. (T22)

There are however two intellectual obstacles in the way for the young man also attentive to intellectual probity as Leo Strauss was, in any such unqualified return to Jewish or other orthodoxy, and to premodern thought more widely. The first is the “radical enlightenment”’s critique of revealed religion. It is this critique, beginning in the great “theologico-political treatises” of Hobbes and Spinoza in the seventeenth century, that has succeeded so widely in discrediting any such return. As Strauss reflected in the important ‘Preface’ to his 1935 text, *Philosophy and Law*:

If ... the basis of the Jewish tradition is belief in the creation of the world, in the reality of biblical miracles, in the absolute obligation and the essential immutability of the Law as based on the revelation at Sinai, then one must say that the Enlightenment has undermined the foundation of the Jewish tradition. The radical enlightenment, Spinoza comes to mind, did just this from the beginning, with full consciousness and full intent. (Strauss 1935: 5)

The second is the advent of modern science, with which the radical Enlightenment was of course tied. This science’s account of nature, as the neoOrthodox positions Strauss opposes reflect, has seemingly rendered indefensible for any thoughtful human being the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmology to which premodern Jewish, Islamic, and Christian thought had become tied.

Strauss’ first book, the 1932 work, *Spinoza’s Critique of Religion* was still written, Strauss would later reflect, in the conviction that a return to pre-modern thought was in fact impossible. (*) With that said, Strauss’ powerful study serves to clear the way for exactly such an unlikely return. We will now consider how. Spinoza’s avowed aim in the Theologico-Political Tractatus, Strauss stresses, was ‘to liberate men’s minds, held fast in ... prejudice, so that they might philosophise freely’ (Strauss 1962: 144, 111–113). To do this, however, Strauss notes that Spinoza was unable to simply presuppose ‘the constitution of philosophy’, or the teachings of his own metaphysics in the Ethics (Strauss 1962: 144). Rather, Spinoza politicly chose to don the cap of Orthodoxy, posing the scriptures ‘as throughout and in every respect divine’ (Strauss 1962: 115), but with the subversive aim to ‘limit the authority of Scripture in its own realm.’ (Strauss 1962: 114). Spinoza attempted this immanent critique of scripture, first, by showing how scripture itself

contains contradictory statements on 'all the theological tenets over which philosophy and religion are in conflict': this is his negative critique of Orthodoxy.⁶ (Strauss 1962: 120, 138–139). Secondly, Spinoza argued on the basis of accepted theological doctrines of the identity of the will and intellect of God, and of His omnipotence (Strauss 1962: 147–156; Soffer 1994: 148–151, to the conclusion that both exceptional revelation to inspired prophets (Strauss 1962: 183–185) and miraculous events in general are impossible: this is his positive critique of revelation. Spinoza's reasoning is that both exceptional miracles and prophecy would presuppose that God's transcendent will was capable of interrupting the laws of His own creation—in this way diminishing the Divine mind. (Strauss 1962: 123–136, 185–191; Soffer 1994: 145–155). Equally foreclosed is the prophets' founding conception of divine Law, understood as a set of proscriptions which humans might freely violate. The reason is that the human freedom to act in ways (ex hypothesi) unforeseeable by the Divine Mind again speaks against the omniscience of that Mind, or its non-identity with God's will (Strauss 1962: 154–155).

Strauss' deeply Jacobian way of responding to Spinoza in *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* can be expressed through the following observation. At each point Spinoza believes he has been able to find enough common ground between philosophy and revelation to allow the former to meaningfully engage with the latter, Strauss draws the common ground from beneath Spinoza's feet (cf. Strauss 1989: 305–309). Spinoza's critique of the inconsistency of the bible presupposes for its effect acceptance of the one axiom which 'sums up all the presuppositions of Spinoza's bible science': 'the Bible is a Human book' (Strauss 1962: 258; 143, 144–146). Yet, argues Strauss, it is exactly this proposition that the believer as believer will deny. Spinoza's 'positive' critique of miracles, which purports to show the unknowability of (imputed) miracles on the basis of all human knowledge acquired hitherto can, as such (Strauss 1962: 123–136), at most show the improbability of miraculous suspensions of natural law. Again, the improbability of God's miraculous action approaches an adequate description of their specifically miraculous nature for believers (Strauss 1962: 135–136). The appearance of piety informing Spinoza's denial of the difference between the will and intellect of God, Strauss equally notes⁷, conceals Spinoza's more deeply impious presumption to be able to speak meaningfully as a finite man about the Divine (Strauss 1962: 152–153).⁸

The conclusion Strauss draws in *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* is hence that the radical enlightener's attempts to refute revealed religion, by showing it to be impossible, must fail. These must fail since they beg the question: proceeding on the basis of a

philosophic reason and human perspective whose sufficiency revealed religion begins by contesting. We can see then the reasons for Karl Jaspers' initial assessment of *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, that it must have been written by an Orthodox believer of remarkable dialectical powers. (ref) Leo Strauss himself took three key consequences from his study, each of which would in different ways shape his mature works. The first is that, given "the irrefutability of orthodoxy's ultimate premise" (PL 29), the Enlightenment's claim concerning the intellectual indefensibility of Orthodoxy fails:

... to grant that revelation is possible means to grant that the philosophic account and the philosophic way of life are not necessarily, nor evidently, the true account of everything: philosophy, the quest for evident and necessary knowledge, rests itself on an unevident decision, on an act of will, just as faith does (Strauss 1962: 29 [italics ours]; 1989: 304–305, 309–310).

We note in passing, with Tanguay, that in Strauss' later work, he will never appear to withdraw from this radical conclusion concerning the unevident, decisionistic base of philosophy.

Secondly, if the Enlightenment has nevertheless won a victory over Orthodoxy, then, we can only conclude that this can only have been due to political or polemical, but in either case sub-philosophical reasons or "weapons". (PL 29) The enlightenment's victory was less the issue of its reason than the victory of its rhetoric: in particular, its ridicule or its "mockery" of the improbable nature of Orthodox beliefs, and what Strauss will later call the Enlightenment's "propaganda" (TOM 298-299) concerning the boons its techno-scientific* progress can deliver human beings:

As Lessing, who was in a position to know, put it, they attempted by means of mockery to 'laugh' orthodoxy out of a position from which it could not be dislodge by any proofs supplied by Scriptures or even by reason. (PL 29-30)

Third, if the modern Enlightenment victory over orthodoxy was not the victory of reason over what Hobbes termed the "Kingdom of Darkness" presented it as (TOM*), a descent (we evoke Strauss' metaphor above) to pre-modern thought would indeed seem to become a possible and legitimate course, if not the only course available consistent with an "enlightenment" worthy of the name. (cf. TOM 173)

It is in his 1935 work *Philosophy and Law* that the first fruits of the young Leo Strauss' bold return to premodern thought bud, and begin to take on their mature form. While Strauss' *Spinozabuch* had shown up the prejudice that enlightenment can refute revelation, he still had to confront the second obstacle to a return to premodern thought we recognised above. To repeat, this is that the medieval thinkers to whom Strauss now directed his attentions in his search for a form of enlightenment "beyond the horizon" of liberal modernity based their positions upon a scientifically untenable, Aristotelian-Ptolemaic view of nature. Must not any study of Maimonides, Avicenna, and Al-Farabi such as *Philosophy and Law* have little more than antiquarian interest, given the untenability of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmology upon which their thought seems to rest?⁹ To put things differently: to show, negatively, that reason cannot refute revelation, as Kant for instance also did, does not by itself show, positively, that the content of revealed religion has any higher cognitive or moral value than the enlightenment that claimed to relegate it to the status of outmoded prejudice.

Central to Strauss' response to these questions in *Philosophy and Law*, and to the work itself, is the medieval Arab *falasifa*, and Moses Maimonides' account of prophecy: their so-called 'prophetology'. The position has two elements, to which Strauss devotes the culminating final two chapters of *Philosophy and Law*. First: we will see how important it becomes for Strauss to recognise the political situation in which these men thought. In particular, the *falasifa*, like Maimonides and their Christian contemporaries, faced the political and theoretical difficulties associated with pursuing philosophy in closed, religious societies of revealed truth. Is not philosophy the pursuit of knowledge of the whole on the basis of experiences and evidences given to human beings as human beings: i.e. not as revealed from God? Hence:

... if it keeps its seriousness, does [philosophy] not necessarily lead away from the one duty and task of man, of the Jew? What has the Jew to do with Plato or Aristotle that he should keep watch at their door to learn from them? Are not the works of these philosophers profane books that seduce the heart with fictitious opinions and erroneous views? Stated fundamentally: is philosophising forbidden, permitted, or even commanded?¹⁰

The answer the *falasifa* developed is that philosophising, despite appearances, is not merely permitted for the believing Jew or Moslem who loves to think. Interpreted correctly, religious Law, *shari'a* or *halakah*, positively commands philosophising. The

reason hails from a proper religious conception of the ends of Law. For the Arabic and Jewish medievals, in contrast to the lowered ethical and political standards of modern contractarian positions, Law has two ends. Merely human law makes sociability possible, so human beings can tend to the needs of the body—here is where we might be tempted to place Lacan’s position above. But divine Law, as revealed by the Torah or Koran, aims also at the perfection of subjects’ souls, in true opinions: each to the measure of his natural, or rather God-given, abilities. Hence, for the *falasifa* (Strauss draws principally in this part of his argument on Averroes):

Philosophy stands under the Law, but in such a way that it is commanded by the Law. And indeed, it is not even commanded as one among many human activities, rather its characteristic purpose is identical with the purpose of the Law ... The purpose of the Law is to summon men to bliss. Bliss consists of knowledge of the God. Now one can only know God from existing things ... the consideration of existing things as pointing to their Producer—that and nothing else is philosophising. Thus the purpose of philosophy is identical with the purpose of Law ...¹¹

In cases, like those of interest to Spinoza, wherein Scripture seems to contradict reason or philosophy, the legal commandment to philosophise issues in the right to interpret the maxims of the Law allegorically or figuratively. This is the founding apologetic premise, we recall, of Maimonides’ *Guide for the Perplexed*: the need to correctly interpret biblical passages which seem to imply the corporeality of God, the root condition for the possibility of idolatry, the sin of sins.¹² Important to note however is that this commandment to philosophise or to interpret allegorically is restricted to a few, the “people of demonstration”. “For the rest it is forbidden.”¹³ It is for this reason that, for the first time in 1935, Strauss begins to speak of pre-modern esotericism, contrasting what he claims to call a “medieval Enlightenment”:

With a certain right one can characterise Maimonides’ position as ‘religious enlightenment in the middle ages’... One may not, however, allow an instant’s doubt that the medieval philosophers were, in the original sense, precisely not enlighteners. They were not concerned with spreading light, with educating the many to rational knowledge, with enlightening. They constantly impress upon the philosophers the duty to keep rationally recognised truth secret from the unchosen many. ... if one considers that the modern in contrast to the medieval

Enlightenment in general propagates its teachings, one will not object to the assertion that the medieval enlightenment was fundamentally esoteric, while the modern enlightenment was fundamentally exoteric.¹⁴

The second, key teaching Strauss finds in the medieval *falasifa* and Jewish philosophers concerns the relationship of the philosopher with the figure of the prophet. For the medievals, interpreting Aristotle, all attainment of knowledge is the actualisation of the human potential to understand, our “hylic” intellect—being the lowest instance of the transpersonal, active or agent intellect. The agent intellect is determined in its being and working by God. In the case of the prophet, the Agent intellect however does not act solely upon the prophet’s rational faculty. Its superabundant emanations also affect the prophet’s imaginative capabilities.¹⁵ In Maimonides’ words: “... prophecy is an emanation of the Agent intellect, first upon the power of intellect and then upon the power of the imagination.”¹⁶

So the philosopher embodies the highest perfection of human being in intellectual potentiality alone. According to the medieval as Strauss still seems to have interpreted them in 1935, the prophet surpasses the philosopher, insofar as his intellectual perfection is supplemented by his surpassing imaginative capabilities. Alternately, the philosopher’s knowledge is restricted to the sublunar world, and it is conceptually mediated: like light reflected on polished stones, as against its original source.¹⁷ The prophet, by contrast, is given direct or unmediated insight concerning the highest truths or the “upper world”.¹⁸ He knows more, and more directly, than the philosopher.¹⁹ The third condition of prophecy is moral: the prophet as against the philosopher must be a man of surpassing moral purity or perfection who hungers above all for justice.²⁰ In Maimonides’ words, then, we can see why for these thinkers the prophet can be said to be “the highest stage of man and the most extreme perfection that can be found in the human race.”²¹ What then is the particular concern Strauss has with the prophetology of the Arabs and Moses Maimonides? Citing Avicenna, Strauss stresses that the primary register to the prophetology of these medievals was political: a fact reflected in Avicenna’s remark that Plato’s *Laws* should be read as a work of prophecy, anticipating the revelation of the true prophet.²² We will be returning to this thought, which Strauss modifies but does not contest in his later works. It is where Strauss stresses the Platonic, rather than Aristotelian shaping of the medieval Arabs and Jews’ thinking—in a way that he would that avoids the second obstacle cited above concerning the impossibility of a return to the medieval, versus the modern, enlightenment. Strauss’ thought, from here onwards, will importantly

reverse a common doxa concerning Aristotle's and Plato's philosophies. For Strauss as for his teacher Hermann Cohen, Aristotle's praise of intellectual perfection and contemplation in the *Nicomachean Ethics* X and *Metaphysics* * positions his philosophy as more, not less, other-worldly than Plato's. For Plato, by contrast, the philosopher who ascends towards theoretical insight must again go down again into the city or cave.²³ At this point, he faces the need to convey what he has learnt in a way that the many can understand, and that will not provoke their persecution. There is hence a politics to Platonic philosophy. And here, Strauss comes to contend, we can also understand the political import of the prophet's surpassing imaginative capacities, in particular, as perceived by the medieval enlighteners.²⁴

Having been given by God to understand the highest theoretical and practical truths, the prophet can also convey these truths in images and stories that the uneducated can understand. He is, within both the Jewish and Arabic orbits, above all the maker of Laws to govern the ruling of cities, and directing the ways and souls of believers.²⁵ Strauss repeats in *Philosophy and Law* already that the key function of the prophet in Maimonides' thought, if not of the Torah per se, is political.²⁶ The Young Strauss can concede that, without becoming believers, it is not given to us to know or decide the divine truths the medievals held to be given to the prophets. However, this is not to deny that the excellences of the prophet as a human being approximate closely to the natural, rational perfections of the philosopher.²⁷ The prophet, to take Al Farabi, must love the truth, have a good memory, love learning and learn easily, not be greedy for sensual pleasures, and have the courage to defend and impress his opinions to the many.²⁸ In other words, he must have the same, humanly observable or natural qualities Plato assigns to the philosopher-king in the *Republic*. In Strauss' words:

They [the *falaifa*] understand the prophet, as the prophetic lawgiver, as a philosopher-king in the Platonic sense, as a founder of an ideal Platonic city (either in the sense of the *Republic* or in the sense of the *Laws*).²⁹

If you will, then, Leo Strauss' thought in *Philosophy and Law* is that Maimonides and his predecessors provide the basis for a rational account of the basis of Law. In this account, we can rationally decide between and concerning the excellences of different societies. We can do this because we can rationally adjudge the relative perfections of their founders, and the extent to which these laws allow for or engender the highest human excellences which these founders pre-eminently exemplify. The prophetology

of the Islamic-Jewish medievals thus allows them a mode of reconciling of revelation with reason—one which Strauss does not see as falling under the banner of an ignoble “internalisation” or “synthesis” of either. In his *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Strauss will give the following reason, to whose thought we will have to return in sessions 7 and 10:

... the precarious status of philosophy in Judaism as well as in Islam was not in every respect a misfortune for philosophy. The official recognition of philosophy in the Christian world made philosophy subject to ecclesiastical supervision. The precarious position of philosophy in the Islamic-Jewish world guaranteed its private character and therewith its inner freedom from supervision. (Strauss 1988a, p. 23)

From the perspective of Young Strauss, concerned with the vulgarisation and relativising of modern thought, a horizon beyond modern liberalism, this teaching also speaks to a form of Platonic political philosophy which would foreclose or counter value-relativism.³⁰ Yet the Strauss of *Philosophy and Law* as it were remains Strauss “in the mode of his becoming”, as it were. In particular, Strauss does not in *Philosophy of Law* pursue the thought his distinction there between an esoteric medieval enlightenment for the few, and an exoteric public enlightenment, in the later direction it already might point towards. To recall: the commandment to philosophise finds its proximate need in the contradictions, or seemingly non-rational, meanings of Torah or Koran. This commandment issues in allegorical readings which must however be kept private, or restricted for the few “men of demonstration”. It follows that the explicit text of the Holy Books as usually interpreted must be directed at the many, for whom they are intended to be edifying and sufficient; as opposed to the few, capable of reading between their lines to unlock its esoteric meanings. Strauss will hence argue, as early as his 1936 ‘Remarks on the Political Science of Maimonides and Farabi’, that the Biblical teaching of particular providence (that God cares for and attends to every individuals’ particular fate) for example is a necessary teaching or noble deceit of political utility only:

... it will be objected that the agreement between Plato and the prophets is specious, it being given that Plato affirms the dogma of particular providence only because of its political utility: a city governed by laws, and not by philosophers, cannot be perfect unless the belief that God rewards or punishes men according to their actions is there established. [Laws, 663d-e] We do not dispute this. But it is in precisely this sense that Maimonides accepts the

biblical doctrine. (REF)

Yet Strauss at this point seems still to take the medievals' word concerning the complementary superiority of the prophet, because of his imaginative as well as intellectual excellence, over the philosopher. He does not question the higher, theoretical basis of this opinion, or rather the medievals' conviction in this opinion: that the prophet, unlike the philosopher, has access to higher truths, beyond the sublunar world of Aristotelian-philosophic wisdom. The young Strauss also remains blind to the possibility that Maimonides, Avicenna, and Farabi might have themselves practiced the type of two-layered or "double" teaching they divined as their legal reem* to philosophise. The two thoughts, the reader will note, are closely proximate. For if the medievals Leo Strauss returns to did believe that "philosophy is the necessary and the sufficient condition of happiness" (FP at T91), as Strauss would soon write concerning Farabi, then they would indeed have done well to have written with care, lest the force of Law they presented as commanding their philosophy be brought down upon their own heads. Certain it is from Strauss' now-published correspondence with Jacob Klein that it is precisely these two, related thoughts that dawned upon the young Leo Strauss in the opening months of 1938. As chance or providence would have it, this was soon after Strauss' forced emigration to the United States, where Strauss would make his name. "You cannot imagine with what infinite refinement and irony Maimonides handles 'religion'", Strauss confides in Klein on February 26, 1938:

One misunderstands Maimonides simply because one does not reckon with the possibility that he was an 'Averroist': consider it and all the difficulties in principle just dissolve ... When in a few years I explode this bomb (in case I live so long) a great battle will be kindled ... to pull Maimonides out of Judaism is to pull out its foundation (549) .. This will yield the interesting historical determination—the determination that Maimonides in his beliefs was absolutely no Jew—is of considerable significance: the incompatibility in principle of philosophy and Judaism ('clearly' expressed in the 2nd vee of Genesis) would be demonstrated *ad oculus*. (Lampert 2009, p. at 64)

The incompatibility in principle of philosophy at least, and what Strauss will call "the city"—if not "religion" in general—is a founding condition, if it is not the highest concern, of how Strauss will after 1938 come to understand the Platonic political philosophy with which his name is now associated. It is to these matters that we must turn tomorrow ∞

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NOTES

1 Strauss notes here that the values the social scientist invariably smuggles in are their own. He points out that the reduction of the salient types of regime in much social science to the opposition of democratic-liberal or authoritarian is a parochial, liberal democratic perspective. L. Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988b, p. 24.

2 Strauss' "Restatement on Xenophon" begin with these strident, opening words: "a social science that cannot speak of tyranny with the same confidence which medicine speaks, for example, of cancer, cannot understand social phenomena as what they are. It is therefore not scientific. Present day social science finds itself in this condition." Strauss 1958, p 179.

3 "Ours is an immense community, midway between a 'democratic' anarchy of the passions and their hopeless levelling out by the 'great winged horses' of narcissistic tyranny ..." (99/122)

4 The condensation here is happy, recurring as it does at once to Lacan's stress on man's premature birth as such, and the prophet Moses, with whose identification by Freud we will recur. Opening "The Freudian Thing", Lacan lifts his "restraint" as a foreigner in Vienna long enough to say: "Perhaps even prophets whose own countries were not entitled to them must be eclipsed at some time, if only after their death." Following Strauss' hermeneutic, if not Lacan's, noting Freud's 'Moses complex' would lead a careful reader to wonder concerning Lacan's positioning.

5 "It therefore must be insisted that the 'internalising' of the basic tenets of the tradition orb these tenets of their meaning: it therefore turns out that not only every compromise between orthodoxy and Enlightenment, but also every synthesis of these opposed position, is finally untenable ..." (PL 25-26)

6 The implication he takes is that, on all such matters, there is space within the bounds of revealed religion for philosophical reason to assume interpretive authority—an argument we will see Maimonides and the Arabic falsafa also had availed themselves

of.

7 The work of the previous paragraphs comes from M. Sharpe, 'CheVouis? Political-Philosophical Remarks on Leo Strauss' Spinoza', *Bible and Critical Theory*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2007, pp. 416-417.

8 Maimonides' alleged conception of this 'identity', by contrast, was instead an expression of his avowed inability to predicate concerning God (Strauss 1962: 152). The latter's defence of the possibilities of prophecy, miracles and *lex divina*, in turn, were predicated – contra Spinoza – on the wholly consistent prioritization of the spontaneous will of God over what we take to be his Divine Mind. The reason is that to speak of the Divine Will, or so contends Strauss, is '... the surpassing means of adumbrating [exactly] the incomprehensibility of God' (Strauss 1962: 154 (italics mine); 1989: 307).

9 See particularly Green, *Jew and Philosopher*, pp. 97-100.

10 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 62.

11 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 63.

12 See Strauss, "How to Begin to Study Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed", pp. 149-150 [paragraphs 14-15].

13 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 64.

14 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 82 (italics in original).

15 See Harry Austryn Wolfson, "Halevi and Maimonides on Prophecy", *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series, Vol. 32, No. 4 (April 1942), pp. 345-370.

16 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 85.

17 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 88.

18 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 87.

19 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 89.

20 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, pp. 89-90.

21 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 85. Compare S. Daniel Bresilauer, "Philosophy and Imagination: The Politics of Prophecy in the View of Moses Maimonides", *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (January 1980), pp. 153-171.

22 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 103.

23 See Green, *Jew and Philosopher*, pp. 100-104.

24 And—incidentally—the need to at least qualify French post-Marxist Cornelius Castoriadis' claim that the role of the imagination has been systematically overlooked in the history of philosophy since Aristotle. See for example Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* trans. Kathleen Blamey (MIT Press, Cambridge 1998).

25 Strauss *Philosophy and Law*, p. 102.

26 See Strauss' reflections on Maimonides' suggestion that the ancient political books

of the philosophers are not needed by the Jews, since they have the Torah which provides a better, which is to say divine, basis for political community, at Leo Strauss, "On Maimonides' Political Science", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, Vol. 22 (1953), pp. 116-117. "...[O]ne would be justified in suggesting that Maimonides' prophetology as a whole is a branch of political science", p. 120.

27 See Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, pp. 12-13. See also especially Andrew Patch, "Leo Strauss on Maimonides' Prophetology", *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (Winter 2004), pp. 83-85; also Green, *Jew and Philosopher*, pp. 104-105.

28 Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 104.

29 Strauss, "Place of the Doctrine of Providence in Maimonides", p. 543.

30 See Green, *Jew and Philosopher*, pp. 105-107.